

PLSC 100: Political Theory

John Felice Rome Center

Fall 2024

Dr. Francesco Mariani

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Mon. & Wed. | 10:30 - 11:45

Office Hours: Mon. 11:45 - 12:45

(by appointment)

Course Description

This course aims to illuminate some of the fundamental thinkers and concepts of political theory. By tracing a trajectory from the origins of Western philosophy to the 21st century, the course intends to highlight the reciprocal relationship between philosophy and politics. Through the analysis of the thought of major philosophers, it will emerge how philosophy has from the beginning understood politics as its own inescapable mission and how different historical epochs, depending on the contingencies of the moment, have reformulated the nexus between thought and action, between knowledge and political transformation. Many themes still essential to contemporary philosophical-political debate will thus be addressed and discussed: knowledge and power, competence and democracy, individual and community, freedom and moral principles, state and sovereignty, war and peace.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the various approaches of the philosophical questions related to political theory, with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions, and be able to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

This course will also enable students to:

- (a) distinguish alternative paradigms on political theory, the individual's understanding and evaluation of his or her role in the world, the relationship between the individual and the community;
- (b) look for and appreciate the reasons given in support of the different views, to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others;
- (c) grasp the historical and cultural determinacy of any philosophical conception of politics;
- (d) identify in the different philosophical conceptions the point of balance between historical material elements, on the one hand, and theoretical and spiritual, on the other hand;
- (e) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision;
- (f) insert their own reflections into the dialogue;

Required Texts/Materials

Assigned and supplementary readings posted on Sakai;
Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* (available online)
Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* (available online)

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one absence.
- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two absences.

This course meets twice a week, thus a total of two absences will be permitted. **Absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade**, for every absence after the “approved limit”. Attendance is mandatory in class including on all scheduled Friday class days. The collective health of the JFRC is everyone’s responsibility. Do not attend class if you are ill.

Assessment Components

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|--------------------------------|------|
| • Midterm Exam (in-class test) | 35 % |
| • Final Exam (take-home paper) | 35 % |
| • Participation | 15 % |
| • Presentation | 15 % |

Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (use of AI included) are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.



Assignments and Final Examination Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. As per the JFRC academic policies, students who miss any scheduled exam or quiz, including a final exam at the assigned hours will not be permitted to sit for a make-up examination without approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Permission is given rarely and only for grave reason; travel is not considered a grave reason. Make-up exams will only be given for documented absences.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Assignment
Mon. 9/2	Introduction to the course	
Wed. 9/4	The Apology of Socrates I	<i>The Apology of Socrates</i>
Mon. 9/9	The Apology of Socrates II	<i>The Apology of Socrates, Crito</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 9/11	Plato's Republic I	<i>The Republic</i> (Book I-III-VII, excerpts)
Mon. 9/16	Plato's Republic II	<i>The Republic</i> (Book IV-VI, excerpts)
Fri. 9/20	Machiavelli I	<i>The Prince</i> (Chap. 6-7-9)
Mon. 9/23	Machiavelli II	<i>The Prince</i> (Chap. 15-18-25)
Wed. 9/25	Hobbes	<i>Leviathan</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 9/30	Rousseau	<i>Second Discourse</i> (Section II)
Wed. 10/2	Rousseau	<i>The Social Contract</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 10/7	General review	
Wed. 10/9	Midterm exam	



Mon. 10/21	Kant I	<i>What is Enlightenment?</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 10/23	Kant II	<i>Perpetual Peace</i> (Section I)
Mon. 10/28	Kant III	<i>Perpetual Peace</i> (Section II)
Wed. 10/30	Masters of Suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche, Freud	Ricoeur (<i>Freud and Philosophy</i> , excerpts)
Mon. 11/4	Marx I	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 11/6	Student presentations	
Mon. 11/11	Marx II	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 11/13	Nietzsche	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 11/18	Freud	<i>Civilization and its Discontents</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 11/20	John Rawls I	<i>A Theory of Justice</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 11/25	John Rawls II	<i>A Theory of Justice</i> (excerpts)
Wed. 11/27	John Rawls III	<i>Political Liberalism</i> (excerpts)
Mon. 12/2	Student presentations	
Wed. 12/4	Student presentations	
Fri. 12/6	Study Day	
Mon. 12/9	Review	
Wed. 12/11	Final exam	