

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS: EXERCISES IN POLITICAL THEORY

Gov 1011 Fall 2017

Professor Yarbrough
Office Hours: Tu-Th 4:00-5:30pm and by appointment

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This course seeks to introduce students to some of the fundamental questions of political life: What is the relationship of the individual to the political community? What is the purpose of political life? Virtue? Freedom? Glory? What is virtue? How does the classical understanding of virtue differ from the Biblical view on the one hand and the modern view on the other? What is the significance of human nature for politics? What is the relationship of property to justice and liberty? Of religion and politics? Are men and women equal? How should we live and what may we hope for?

The following books are required readings and are available for purchase or rent through Bowdoin's textbook partner, Chegg, at www.chegg.com/bookstore/bowdoin. Please use the editions listed, as translations can vary widely. Since we will be reading these texts closely, it is essential that students can easily locate the passages under discussion.

Plato, *Four Texts on Socrates*, trans. West (Cornell)
Aristotle, *Politics*, 2nd ed., trans. Lord (Chicago)
The Bible, Authorized King James Version (Oxford)
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Mansfield (Chicago)
John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Harlan Davidson)
Jean Jacques Rousseau, *First and Second Discourses*, trans. Masters (St. Martin's)
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Mansfield & Winthrop (Chicago)

I have also placed a number of readings on E-Reserve, which can be accessed through the Library website. **N.B. THIS IS NOT BLACKBOARD**

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Leon Kass, "A Genealogy of Justice"
Hillel Fradkin, "God's Politics"
The Declaration of Independence
Selections from *The Federalist Papers*
Selections from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

Strongly recommended: Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*

Course Requirements:

Students are required to prepare and bring to class one or two questions that the assigned text raises. We shall use these questions as a jumping off point for our classroom discussion and textual analysis.

I will collect these entries, look them over, and grade them broadly. **No hand-written questions!** You are permitted occasional extensions, but as a rule, you must have them prepared and ready to hand in at the beginning of class. **They should not exceed one quarter of a page.**

Students are required to write five “thought papers” on assigned topics of no more than four pages on the readings. These will usually include analysis of two readings. In writing these papers, students must confine themselves to the text and not consult any secondary source materials. Failure to observe this rule will be penalized, and, if sources are unattributed, will lead to charges of academic dishonesty. Papers must be typed **and stapled**. They are due at the beginning of class. (If a student cuts class to finish the paper and turns it in after class, it will be considered late.) Hard copy only; please do not email me your papers. Students are also responsible for that day’s reading assignment, including the daily question, so organization and time management are essential. Late papers will be penalized a minimum of five points. Papers are graded on argument and analysis as well as proper English usage. **The final paper will be due by 5:00pm on the last day of classes (Friday, December 8, 2017).**

I encourage students to consult with me during regularly scheduled office hours. It is most helpful if you come with an outline of what you have been thinking about writing.

Course grade will be determined as follows:

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| Five papers | 75% |
| Class participation and daily questions | 25% |

Reading Assignments:

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| Aug. 31 | Introductory remarks |
| Sept. 5 | <i>Apology of Socrates</i> , from Plato’s <i>Four Texts on Socrates</i> |
| Sept. 7 | <i>Apology of Socrates</i> , re-read to see what you missed the first time |
| Sept. 12 | <i>Crito</i> , from Plato’s <i>Four Texts on Socrates</i> |
| Sept. 14 | Selections from Aristotle’s <i>Ethics</i> , Book II (ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE) |
| Sept. 19 | Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book I |
| Sept. 21 | Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book III, chs. 1-9 |

First paper (Socrates) due Friday, Sept. 22

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| Sept. 26 | Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book III, chs. 10-18; Book IV, chs. 1-9 |
| Sept. 28 | No class |

Oct. 3 *Bible*, Genesis, chs. 1-22; Exodus, chs. 19-20, 32-34
Leon Kass, "A Genealogy of Justice" (ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
Hillel Fradkin, "God's Politics" (ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Oct. 5 *Bible*, Gospel of Matthew, chs. 5-25

Second paper (Aristotle) due Friday, Oct. 6

Oct. 10 **Fall Break – No classes**

Oct. 12 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, chs. 1-5

Oct. 17 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 6-9

Oct. 19 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 10-15

Oct. 24 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 16-21, 25-26

Oct. 26 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 1-4

Oct. 31 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 5-6

Nov. 2 Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 7-9, 14, 19

Third paper (Bible, Machiavelli) due Friday, Nov. 3

Nov. 7 The Declaration of Independence (ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
The Federalist # 1, 10, 37, 51, 72 (ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)
Selections from *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Nov. 9 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, pp. 78-98 plus Rousseau's notes

Nov. 14 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, pp. 101-141 plus notes

Nov. 16 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, pp. 141-161 plus notes

Nov. 21 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, pp. 161-181 plus notes

Nov. 23 **Thanksgiving – No classes**

Nov. 28 Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 3-15, 52-53, 187-190, 212-214, 227-229, 235-245

Nov. 30 Tocqueville, pp. 275-288, 384-390, 417-428

Fourth paper (Locke, Rousseau) due Friday, Dec. 1

Dec. 5 Tocqueville, pp. 479-484, 489-492, 500-509, 521-522

Dec. 7 Tocqueville, pp. 567-576, 661-673
LAST CLASS WILL BE AT MY HOME

Final paper due Friday, December 8, by 5:00pm