

POL 10a Introduction to Political Theory

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Requirements

This is a basic introductory course to political philosophy. Through a reading of major works of political thought from Plato to John Stuart Mill, we will explore the concepts of justice, liberty, tolerance, and equality.

Students will be required to write two papers, and take an in-class quiz. The first paper will be a short, 3-4 page analytical assignment. A single topic will be assigned for this. The final paper will be a longer, 6-7 page critical essay. A series of possible topics will be handed out in class for this paper. The first paper and the quiz will each contribute 25 percent towards the final grade, and the last paper will count for 40 percent. 10 percent of the grade will be determined on the basis of class participation and preparation.

Students are required to complete the readings before the class for which they are assigned. This is a short and intensive course, and there will be no time to make up later if you fall behind in the readings. The writing assignments, as well as being analytical and critical, are designed to make sure readings are done on time. Attendance is mandatory and, since this is a short course, no more than one excused absence is ordinarily allowed.

Books for Purchase

The following books are required for the class and will be available for purchase at the Brandeis book store:

Plato, *The Republic* (Basic Books, trans. Allan Bloom)

Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (Penguin, ed. Macpherson)

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, ed. Macpherson)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings (The Second Discourse on The Origins of Inequality; The Social Contract)* (Hackett, trans. Donald Cress)

Mill, *On Liberty*, (Hackett, ed. Elisabeth Rappaport)

Topics and Reading Schedule

Weeks 1-2: **Course Introduction: What is Justice?**

Plato's *Republic*, Book 1

Is Justice Better than Injustice? The Just Regime for Soul and Society.

Republic, Books 2-4

The Just Order and How it Might be Attained

Republic, Books 4-6

Justice on Earth? The Cave and the Descent of Regimes

Republic, Books 7-9.

To be Just is to be Happy: The Philosopher vs. the Tyrant

Republic, Books 9-10

The Transition to Modern Political Thought

Hobbes' *Leviathan* "Author's Introduction."

Leviathan, Part I Of Man: Chapters 5-6, 10-13

First short paper topic handed out in class

Week 3: **Hobbes' Social Contract: Absolutist Origins of Liberal Thought**

Hobbes: *Leviathan* Part 1: 14-16

Leviathan, Part II: Of the Commonwealth Chapters 17-21, 29-30

Limited Government: Locke's State of Nature & Social Contract

Locke: *The Second Treatise of Government*. Chapters 1-9, 18-19

In-class quiz

Week 4: **Freedom and Equality in Tension**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, in *Basic*

Political Writings. Preface, Part I & II (skip dedication to Geneva)

Rousseau, Discourse on the Arts and Sciences, in *Basic Political Writings*

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*.

Final paper.