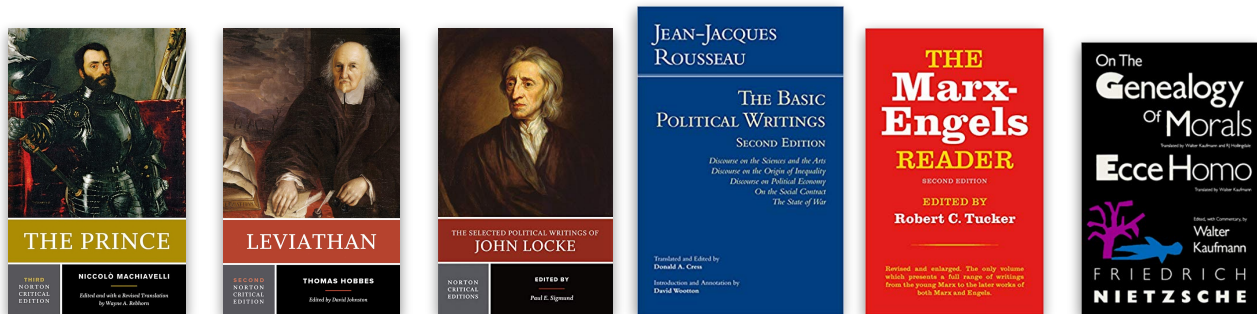


MODERN POLITICAL THEORY

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Writing in 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels captured something essential about the modern condition: “All fixed, fast-frozen relations,” they write, “are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air.” Arguably, the term “modernity” signifies flux above all. Spanning approximately 400-500 years, it seeks to make sense of a relatively sudden and relentless upheaval in every sphere of human endeavor—both unsettling and, as yet, unsettled. It is a period of great scientific and cultural achievement, from the Age of Enlightenment to the Industrial Revolution. It is also a period of great political innovation, from the emergence of the modern state to radical new ideas about democracy, equality, and liberty. Such ideas challenge earlier assumptions about the nature of political power and inspire a number of revolutions (including one here Boston that you may have heard about). This course will trace important shifts in European political thought, beginning with Machiavelli, proceeding with the social contract theorists—Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau—and the emergence of classical liberalism, to the progression of these ideas in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. In considering the range of issues to which these canonical texts extend insight, we must remain attentive to the ways in which modern political theory is entangled with European colonialism and the global slave trade. In the twentieth century, moreover, it was “modern” political ideas that made possible some of the worst atrocities of all time. Hence, we will not read these texts uncritically, but as fellow thinkers engaged in an intellectual conversation across the centuries. Through close readings of primary texts and a consideration of contemporary responses, we will question our own political sensibilities and the very foundations of the political world we inhabit.

READINGS



Please acquire the editions specified here, some of which contain contemporary analyses. The university book store has copies available. Visit www.suffolkstore.com for more info. In addition to these major works, a number of short readings will be provided online.

- ▶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Wayne A. Rebhorn (New York: Norton, 2020). ISBN: 978-0-393-93691-9
- ▶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. David Johnston (New York: Norton, 2020). ISBN: 978-0-393-62371-0
- ▶ John Locke, *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, ed. Paul E. Sigmund (New York: Norton, 2005). ISBN: 978-0-393-96451-6
- ▶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, ed. Donald A. Cress (Bloomington, IN: Hackett, 2012). ISBN: 978-1-60384-673-8
- ▶ Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978). ISBN: 978-0-393-09040-6
- ▶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, ed. Walter Kauffman (New York: Vintage, 1989). ISBN: 978-0-679-72462-9

Reading Political Theory

Canonical texts in political theory are difficult to read. There's no way around it. Each of the thinkers we will discuss present nuanced and multi-layered arguments that cannot be skimmed—not if you expect to get anything out of the experience, anyway. This means that you will need to set aside time to grapple with complicated ideas, to think through ambiguities of argument, and to consider the practical implications of what these thinkers propose. With our smart phones and social media, contemporary attention spans have atrophied. Most of us are simply unused to sitting with a difficult text for an extended period of time and allowing ourselves the freedom to ponder... yet this is precisely what political theory requires. You might consider Machiavelli's vivid description of his own approach:

“When evening comes, I return home and go into my study. On the threshold I strip off my muddy, sweaty, workday clothes, and put on the robes of court and palace, and in this graver dress I enter the antique courts of the ancients and am welcomed by them, and there I taste the food that alone is mine, and for which I was born. And there I make bold to speak to them and ask the motives of their actions, and they, in their humanity, reply to me. And for the space of four hours I forget the world, remember no vexation, fear poverty no more, tremble no more at death: I pass indeed into their world.”

When you sit down to read, try forgetting the world for a time. Switch off your phone, tremble no more at death, and allow yourself to ponder.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, 10%

Attendance is mandatory and absolutely critical to your success in the class. Each student will be permitted no more than one absence before it begins to negatively impact his or her

attendance grade. *I do not need to know why you were absent.* Frankly, it's none of my business—but I urge you to save any absences for sick days or emergencies, etc. Seven absences will result in immediate failure of the course. I offer a small bonus to those who manage to attend every single class as well as a maximum of two extra credit assignments which each cancel out an absence. I will document your attendance using a simple system. Here is an example:

Absent: (1/17), (1/19),* 1/24; Late: 1/26, 1/31

This student was absent on January 17, 19, and 24 but the parentheses indicate that two of those absences were excused. Everyone gets a single free absence so that explains one of them—but the asterisk indicates that this student also submitted an extra-credit assignment to avoid penalties for another absence. Therefore two of the three absences have no effect. Only the absence of 1/24 impacts this student's grade (as well as the two lateness penalties on January 26 and 31, respectively). Assuming this student maintains perfect attendance for the rest of the semester, his or her final attendance score will stand at 70%, i.e. a 20% absence penalty plus two 5% lateness penalties. Everyone is allowed to submit a maximum of one extra-credit assignment to make up for one absence. This means that you might conceivably earn a 100% attendance score even if you miss three sessions.

The following chart does not take lateness penalties or extra credit into account, but this is the general breakdown of your attendance grade:

0 absences:	120%
1 absence:	100%
2 absences:	80%
3 absences:	60%
4 absences:	40%
5 absences:	20%
6 absences:	0%
7 absences:	Immediate failure.

Participation, 10%

I expect you to participate in classroom discussions and activities. In order to do this effectively, you must have completed the assigned reading beforehand. Comments on our course blog will also count as participation credit, provided you submit a hard copy of your comment/s to me.

Role Playing Games, 10%

We will conduct two role playing games this semester: one on the U.S. Constitutional Convention and another on the League of the Just, which produced *The Communist*

Manifesto. To prepare for each game, you will work in teams to produce a group speech that reflects your assigned ideological interests and philosophical stance. You will grade each other collectively for this assignment. More details to come.

Blog Posts, 20%

<http://politicaltheory.edublogs.org/>

You will submit posts to our course blog every Friday that reflect upon the readings assigned that week. Each post should be at least 300 words and I urge you to be creative when it comes to form and content. You might, for example, reflect at length on a specific passage or draw connections to current events. However you choose to approach the weekly post, I have two firm rules:

1. Do not quote entire sentences from the text. Quoting a short phrase is sometimes acceptable, when referring to specific formulation that would be lost otherwise—for example, when Locke describes slavery as “so vile and miserable an estate”
2. Do not summarize the readings. These are meant to be short analytical responses. It’s not necessary to argue for any particular interpretation, but you might use these posts to think through some of the ideas you find most interesting, outrageous, amusing, or downright confusing—and to explore how your own views relate.

Your final blog post should be a longer consideration (500 words) of your posts throughout the semester. All posts will be graded according to a simple rubric (see appendix) and I will drop the lowest two scores from your final grade.

Political Theory Podcast, 20%

We will work in groups to produce an original podcast on an issue and thinker of your choice. You will grade each other collectively for this assignment. More details to come.

Essays, 30%

You will write two essays on a thinker of your choice. Each of these essays should be 1250-1500 words and will be graded according to the rubric in the appendix.

Three weeks before the first draft of each essay is due (see course plan for exact dates), your blog post for that week will introduce your general topic and working thesis. On the day the first draft is due, we will conduct an in-class peer review. Instructions will be provided at that time, but I encourage you to bring a laptop to class if you have one. You will then have another two weeks to incorporate comments and submit a final draft.

GRADING

Your final grade for this course will be weighed according to the following scale.

Attendance:	10%
Participation:	10%
Role Playing Games:	10%
Blog Posts:	20%
Political Theory Podcast:	20%
Essays:	30%

Grades will be posted to Blackboard as they become available.

Extra Credit

STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

I will offer a small amount of extra credit for attending the departmental Student Research Conference, either as a presenter or as an audience member. From the conference description:

One of the highlights of the spring semester is our departmental Student Research Conference. Students present their research to faculty and peers and receive valuable feedback. It is an opportunity to celebrate YOU and see you in action through oral presentations, poster sessions, and round table discussions.

The 2020 Political Science and Legal Studies Student Research Conference will be held on Thursday, April 2, 8 AM - 4 PM.

Monday, Feb 3: Full paper submission (submit your entire paper)

Monday, Feb 10: Abstracts reviewed and acceptances sent out

Monday, March 2: Faculty feedback due to students

Monday, March 23: Resubmission of final papers from students

Monday, March 30: Poster submission deadline

All Student Research Conference paper submissions must papers completed for a course from 2019 or earlier. No papers from spring 2020 will be accepted. For more information about the conference, please visit the SRC Blog: <https://sites.suffolk.edu/gvtsrc/>

POLITICAL THEORY & MUSIC

I am thinking of writing a piece on music and political theory pedagogy. I will provide a small amount of extra credit if you research a political theorist's music background, i.e., music's role in their life and especially their work, their own performance practices, and any music immediately inspired by their political ideas in their own time.

POLITICAL THEORY TALKS

We are fortunate to reside in a city with such a vibrant intellectual life. I will notify the class about any public talks by political theorists and offer a small amount of extra credit for attending and writing a short reflective response. Please also let me know if you learn of any events that might be worth announcing to the class.

COURSE POLICIES

The Basics

- ▶ Please do not eat in class. Non-alcoholic drinks are fine.
- ▶ I do not allow computers, tablets, or smart phones to be used in class—except on peer review days.
- ▶ Routine lateness will lower your attendance score, as will leaving class early.

Inclusivity

Some of the issues covered in this course may be closely intertwined with deep-seated beliefs. I enjoy a lively classroom discussion, but it must always be conducted in a respectful manner, free of invective, and conscious of what may be profound differences of opinion. To this end, it is absolutely essential that we cultivate an environment that is attentive to and respectful of diversity in its many forms—including the intersections of race, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class/socioeconomic background, ability, age, culture, national origin, religion, and political and philosophical opinion.

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the philosophy of knowledge: the foundations, method, and scope of what it means *to know something*. This course aims to provide you with a theoretical footing on which to cultivate a clearer sense of your own political identity. Such a task demands a critical orientation directed at the texts and a kind of epistemological humility when it comes to our own preconceptions about politics. No text should be read uncritically—especially not political theory, a field of gadflies, rabble-rousers, and provocateurs! But we should not allow

our critical stance to fool us into believing that have all the answers. We are all working thorough these difficult issues together, myself included!

Correspondence

If you need to get in touch, you must email me from your official university account: kpetersen-overton@suffolk.edu

However, I should point out that there is ordinarily no good reason to email me. Unless you are writing to tell me that there is problem accessing the PDFs or there's some immediate confusion about an assignment, please save it for a face-to-face discussion.

Technology

Apart from the two sessions devoted to peer review, I do not allow technology to be used in the classroom. There's a good reason for this. Numerous studies show that students taking notes by hand learn more effectively and receive higher grades than those taking notes on a device. Moreover, devices are distracting. In a class that will involve lots of discussion with one another, screens, alerts, and notifications can distract you and your classmates, and can impede the conversations that will be essential to our experience in the course this semester.

Plagiarism

Besides being a disservice to your own education, plagiarism is academic fraud. Any student caught plagiarizing a major assignment will fail the course and have their case turned over to the Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC) for investigation. Suffolk University adheres to the following statement:

"Students are expected to practice ethical behavior in all learning environments and scenarios, including classrooms and laboratories, internships and practica, and study groups and academic teams. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, use of unauthorized electronic devices, self-plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, and other types of academic misconduct are treated as serious offenses that initiate a formal process of inquiry, one that may lead to disciplinary sanctions. Some cases of academic misconduct may be reviewed and resolved at the academic departmental level; other more egregious forms of academic misconduct necessitate a full review by the Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC)." Source: www.suffolk.edu

The work you submit must be your own, *without exception*. Copying and reassembling lines from various sources is plagiarism. Memorizing passages from the internet or any other sources and then regurgitating it verbatim is plagiarism. Use footnotes or parenthetical citations to give credit for direct quotes, paraphrased sentences, or borrowed ideas.

COURSE PLAN

- 1/13 RECOMMENDED: Sheldon Wolin, "Political Philosophy and Philosophy" in *Politics and Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3-26.
- 1/15 Jane Bennett, "Modernity and Its Critics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 211-24.
Chandan Reddy, "Modern," in *Keywords For American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 160-164.

I. The Modern State

- 1/17 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 3-42.
Paul Thomas, "State," in *Keywords For American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 233-236.
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 1/20 NO CLASS
Catch up and read ahead.
- 1/22 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 43-84.
- 1/24 Machiavelli, selections from *Discourses on Livy*, in *The Prince*, 106-135.
Machiavelli, "Letter to Francesco Vettori," in *The Prince*, 168-173.
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 1/27 Machiavelli, selections from *Discourses on Livy*, in *The Prince*, 136-165.
- 1/29 Isaiah Berlin, "The Question of Machiavelli," in *The Prince*, 179-193.
Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, "Machiavelli's Gendered Politics," in *The Prince*, 226-243.
- 1/31 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 1-6; 8 (§1-20).
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 2/3 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 10-11; 12 (§1-12); 13-14.
- 2/5 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 15-18.
- 2/7 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 19 (§1-8); 21 (§1-3); 29; 30 (§1-20).
▶ DUE: Blog Post (Working Thesis, Essay #1)

- 2/10 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 20.
Jane S. Jaquette, "Defending Liberal Feminism: Insights From Hobbes," in *Leviathan*, 561-578
- 2/12 Michel Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*" *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 239-263.

II. Life, Liberty, Property

- 2/14 Locke, *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 5-27.
Nikhil Pal Singh, "Liberalism," in *Keywords For American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 139-145.
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 2/17 NO CLASS
Catch up and read ahead.
- 2/19 Locke, *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 28-58.
- 2/21 Locke, *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 58-80.
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 2/24 Locke, *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 80-104.
- 2/26 Locke, *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 105-125.
- 2/28 No reading assigned. Catch up and read ahead.
- IN CLASS: Peer Review
▶ DUE: Essay #1, Full First Draft
- 3/2 Richard Ashcraft, "Radicalism and Lockean Political Theory," in *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 354-357.
Mark Goldie, "Conservative Revolutionary or Social Democrat?" in *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 357-360.
James Farr, "'So Vile and Miserable an Estate': The Problem of Slavery in Locke's Political Thought," in *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 374-379.
- 3/4 Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence"
Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 48-55.
Steven M. Dworkin, "Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution," in *The Selected Political Writings of John Locke*, 388-398.

- 3/6 Donna Edwards, et al., "Constitution in Crisis," *Harpers Magazine*, October 2019.
- IN CLASS: Rethinking the Constitutional Convention Role-Playing Game
 - ▶ DUE: Group Speech
 - ▶ DUE: Blog Post

3/9 SPRING BREAK

3/11 SPRING BREAK

3/13 SPRING BREAK

- ▶ DUE: Essay #1, Final Draft

III. Revolution & Reaction

3/16 Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," in *The Basic Political Writings*, 45-69 (plus notes).

3/18 Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," in *The Basic Political Writings*, 69-92 (plus notes).

3/20 Rousseau, "On the Social Contract," in *The Basic Political Writings*, 155-191.

- ▶ DUE: Blog Post

3/23 Rousseau, "On the Social Contract," in *The Basic Political Writings*, 191-224.

3/25 Rousseau, "On the Social Contract," in *The Basic Political Writings*, 224-252.

3/27 Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 48-58.

Judith N. Shklar, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Equality," *Daedalus* 107, no. 3 (1978): 13-25.

- ▶ DUE: Blog Post (Working Thesis, Essay #2)

3/30 "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen," in *The French Revolution*, ed. Paul H. Beik (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1970), 94-97.

Maximilien Robespierre, "On the Principles of Revolutionary Government," in *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror*, ed. Jean Ducange, trans. John Howe (New York: Verso, 2017), 98-107.

Maximilien Robespierre, "On the Principles of Public Morality," in *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror*, 108-125.

4/1 Edmund Burke, selections from *The Portable Conservative Reader*, ed. Russell Kirk (New York: Penguin, 1982), 3-47.

- 4/3 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Janet Todd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 84-104; 280-283.
▶ DUE: Blog Post

IV. Lineages of the Modern

- 4/6 Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 681-682.
Marx, "Marx on the History of His Opinions," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 3-6.
Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 12-15.
Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 26-46.
- 4/8 Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 143-145.
Marx, selections from *The German Ideology*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 147-175.
- 4/10 Marx, selections from *Capital*, v. 1 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 294-329; 361-376.
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 4/13 Marx, "The Communist Manifesto," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 473-500.
- 4/15 *What if Marx Was Right?*, directed by Ilan Ziv (Icarus Films, 2015).
- IN CLASS: League of the Just Role-Paying Game
▶ DUE: Group Speech
- 4/17 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 15-34.
Melvyn Bragg, host "Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality," In Our Time (podcast), January 12, 2017, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b087rt4z>.
- IN CLASS: Peer Review
▶ DUE: Essay #2, Full First Draft
- 4/20 NO CLASS
Catch up and read ahead.
- 4/22 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 34-56.
- 4/24 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 57-96.
▶ DUE: Blog Post
- 4/27 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 97-112; 120-136; 145-156; 159-163.
- 4/29 NO CLASS

5/1 NO CLASS

- ▶ DUE: Essay #2, Final Draft
- ▶ DUE: Political Theory Podcast

APPENDIX

Blog Rubric

4	Exceptional The blog post is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. The post demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers other political theorists when appropriate. The entry reflects in-depth engagement with the reading. The post makes creative use of multimedia, which clearly complements and advances its written content.
3	Satisfactory The blog post is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Fewer connections are made between ideas, and though new insights are offered, they are not always developed. The post reflects moderate engagement with the topic. The post makes use of multimedia, which complements its written content in more limited ways.
2	Underdeveloped The blog post is mostly description or summary and few connections are made between ideas. The post reflects passing engagement with the reading. Multimedia is either absent or introduced without obvious context.
1	Limited The blog post is unfocused, simply rehashes previous posts, contains mostly long quotations without corresponding analysis, and displays little to no evidence of student engagement with the topic. Multimedia is either absent or introduced without obvious context.
0	No Credit The blog post is missing, consists of short disconnected sentences