



**POL 302W Political Philosophy
Spring 2019**

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Prof. Bernd Bucher
Instructor's Email: bbucher@fus.edu
Office Hours: TBA
Class location: LAC 8
Class meeting times: Monday / Thursday 10:00 – 11:15

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to familiarize students with the major currents of political thought from Thucydides to the present. The reading of secondary and primary sources provides the basis for in-depth class discussion of the ideas of major political philosophers and how they relate to the historical, political, economic and social developments of their times.

III. RATIONALE

This course is not only central for those majoring in international relations, but counts towards the major in social justice and sustainability.

IV. COURSE GOALS

This course seeks to familiarize students with both classical and modern political philosophy and the contexts in which preeminent political thinkers articulated their positions. Political Philosophy deals with the fundamental assumptions underlying all forms of human association. Studying the history of political philosophy encourages us to question our own taken for granted positions in the light of the historical development of political thinking and to come to a better understanding of the principles underlying our contemporary societies.

At a broad level, course aims to:

- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Practice synthesizing information from classroom discussions, reading assignments and individual research.
- Acquire a theoretical repertoire to explore and understand issues related to social justice and sustainability
- Develop professional skills such as conflict resolution, and advocacy.

V. SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the field of political philosophy. Upon completion of this class, students should be familiar with a broad range of classical and modern political thinkers and their central arguments.

Students should have developed the ability to critically discuss a range of contemporary challenges facing our societies in a philosophically informed way.

VI. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

The required reading will be made available on moodle.

The readings are not individually listed in the course schedule. They will all be available on our moodle page at the beginning of the semester. Please note, that there are reading requirements for every class, except otherwise indicated on moodle.

VII. ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Students will be assessed on the basis of a variety of assignments, with a particular emphasis on the acquisition of analytical and critical thinking. Thus active participation will figure into the overall grade. Students will have to give one presentation and hand in 2 answered reading guides. While this course does not have a final exam, students must hand in a final essay of 3000 words. Students are also expected to actively take part in the simulation at the end of the semester.

VIII. ASSESSMENT DETAILS (tentative)

1 Presentation	20%
2 Answered reading guides	20% (10% each)
1 Final essay (3000 words)	40%
Overall participation	20%

Note: Students must complete and pass all assignments to pass the course!

XIX. GRADING POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Examinations are given letter grades according to the following numerical scale:

A: 94-100	B+: 88-89	C+: 78-79	D+: 68-69	F: 0-59
A-: 90-93	B: 84-87	C: 74-77	D: 64-67	
	B-: 80-83	C-: 70-73	D-: 60-63	

The course grade is an average of examination letter grades according to the following grade points:

A: 4.0	B+: 3.3	C+: 2.3	D+: 1.3	F: 0.0
A-: 3.7	B: 3.0	C: 2.0	D: 1.0	
	B-: 2.7	C-: 1.7	D-: 0.7	

X. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE (POLICIES / REQUIREMENTS)

Regular attendance is required. Each student will be allowed two absences during the course of the term. If you miss class three to four times, your overall participation grade will drop by one letter grade. Being absent five times or more will lead to a failing grade. The roll is called at the beginning of each session.

Please note:

The use entertainment devices is strictly forbidden during class. Laptops are permitted, but using laptops for non-class purposes (e.g. Facebook, e-mail, chatting, etc.) will result in student dismissal from class.

XI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: STATEMENT ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

A student whose actions are deemed by the University to be out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives or the spirit of good conduct as fostered by the University and Swiss community, may be placed on Disciplinary Probation or become subject to dismissal from the University. Cheating is a dishonest action out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives and spirit of the scientific community. Cheating reflects negatively on one's personal integrity.

Consequently, the University has adopted the following code:

When an examination is in progress, all unauthorized books, notes, papers and notebooks must be left outside the classroom, or, where this is not feasible, left beneath the student's seat unopened.

So far as logistically possible, students will be asked to distribute themselves around the room during an exam so as to leave the widest possible space between them.

During the examination only the blank paper required for the examination and a pencil, pen or other tools as permitted by individual instructors may be on the desk. Should an instructor see written crib notes in evidence during an exam, the presumption will be that the student is using those notes for cheating on an exam. If a student must leave the classroom during an examination due to physical duress, the student must turn in the exam and will not be allowed to return during the examination period. No make-up examination will be administered.

It is within the prerogative of the instructor to take a student's paper during an exam and to ask that student to take an oral exam, or another exam, at the instructor's choice.

A student found cheating will be reported to the Dean and may be called before the Student Appeal and Grievance Hearing Board for further disciplinary action.

A student found cheating on an exam will receive an "F" for that examination at a minimum. If it is a final examination, the student will automatically receive an "F" for the course.

A student whose paper or assignment has clearly been plagiarized will receive an "F" for the course. Notification will be sent to the Dean. A second offense in that, or any other, course may result in dismissal from the University.

Cases of academic dishonesty may be handled by the instructor in whose course the violation occurred - if the matter is a result of student ignorance or is a first offense. The instructor will assess the severity of the violation and impose an appropriate penalty. In the event of a repetition of dishonesty, the matter will be referred to the Dean, and the student will risk expulsion.

To be clear: I have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to plagiarism or cheating of any kind. This includes contracted essays! Anyone found in violation of our academic integrity standards can expect me to apply the strictest interpretation of rules available to me.

XII. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

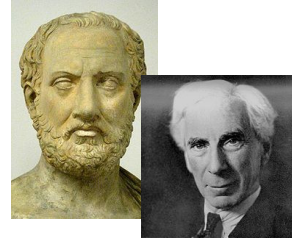
Please refer to moodle for details. Most readings are chapters from the History of Political Philosophy published by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey.

XIII. COURSE SCHEDULE (tentative)

Week 1

21.1.2019 Introduction and course requirements

24.1.2019 Approaching Political Philosophy



Week 2 Classical Political Philosophy

28.1.2019 The Peloponnesian War and Thucydides

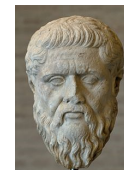
30.1.2019 Guest lecture by Prof. James W. Davis: 'The future of war' (18h auditorium)

31.1.2019 The Talks at Melos and Pacifism (Russell)

Week 3 Classical Political Philosophy

4.2.2019 Plato and the origin of the city, the idea of the good and the Philosopher King

7.2.2019 Plato's city and totalitarianism



Week 4 Classical Political Philosophy

11.2.2019 Aristotle and the zoon politikon

14.2.2019 No class



Week 5 Classical Political Philosophy

- 18.2.2019 The best city and slavery by nature Machiavelli and the Prince
21.2.2019 Classical political philosophers and contemporary issues –
 presentation preparation

Week 6 Presentations

- 25.2.2019 Presentations library session
28.2.2019 Presentations

Week 7 Presentations and Recap

- 4.3.2019 Discussion of presentations and feedback
7.3.2019 Recap

Week 8 Academic Travel

Week 9 Academic Travel

Week 10 Modern Political Philosophy

- 25.3.2019 The Lord of the flies and human nature
28.3.2019 Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, power and the state

Week 11 Modern Political Philosophy

- 1.4.2019 Machiavelli and Hobbes
4.4.2019 The Federalist Papers and Rousseau

Week 12 Modern Political Philosophy

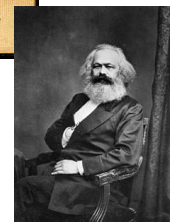
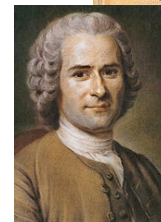
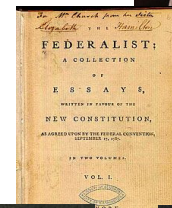
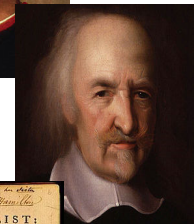
- 08.4.2019 Marx
11.4.2019 Marx and contemporary politics

Week 13 Essay writing

- 15.4.2019 Essay writing in political philosophy
16.4.2019 Essay meetings, scheduled individually
18.4.2019 No class

Week 14 Modern Political Philosophy

- 22.4.2019 No class – Easter break
25.4.2019 Rawls: Justice as Fairness



<u>Week 15</u>	<u>Modern Political Philosophy</u>
29.4.2019	Rawls continued
2.5.2019	Recap

Exam week:

13.5. 8:30 – 10:30 Philosophy in Action (Island with limited resources scenario)

Final Exam: **There is no final exam for this course**
Deadline for essays: **13.5 (12:00, turn-it in)**

XIV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to moodle for details.

XV. Essay and simulation

Essay requirements

Students are encouraged to focus on a specific question from the perspective of a philosopher we discuss in class, or a philosopher of choice (e.g. the problem of legitimate resistance in Hobbes, Plato's approach to education, Nietzsche and the creation of values). This will provide the opportunity to thoroughly engage with the thinking of a philosopher.

Apart from the formal requirement of the essay encompassing roughly 3000 words, and having to meet academic standards (references, structure, ect.) students are free to choose a topic and develop their project in accordance with their own philosophical curiosity.

Simulation setting

The simulation starts with a scenario in which our course ends-up been stranded on an island with limited (but not scarce) resources. With no chance of being rescued soon, our group of survivors (of the 'HMS Polis' disaster - which was caused by the shortsightedness of the navigator) need to discuss how life on the island should be organized.

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Fortunately, the survivors are well versed in political philosophy and are therefore in a good position to reflect on the basic principles and structure which are to underlie our new island society.

This setting calls for students to draw on the ideas discussed in class and apply them to a hypothetical scenario. It will therefore be important to specifically prepare for the simulation.

