Introduction to Western Political Thought:
The Enduring Themes

Course Objectives:
We are, all of us, women and men, political beings. We accept, reject, despise or honor the arrangements which structure our social and political universe. Even those who ignore the political world are paradoxically political—to ignore is to accept. Throughout Western history theorists have discussed the political world in terms of certain themes that have seemed to them central in informing their ideals and visions about politics. It is around these themes that this survey of western political philosophy is structured. The course will explore these themes historically and in terms of their relevance for American political values in 2008.

Course Mechanics:
The course meets for lectures on Tuesday and Thursday and for a mandatory small discussion section on a day to be determined. There will be occasional short quizzes in section, one course-wide prelim (taken in class time), a short paper (6-8 pages) and a final exam. The course grade will be determined as follows: 15% for quizzes and section participation; 20% for prelim; 30% for paper; 35% for final exam.

Books:
There are two texts for the course.
1. Plato, Republic (Oxford University Press) to be used in the first week.
2. Cohen and Fermon, editors, Princeton Readings in Political Thought (Princeton University Press) to be used throughout the term.

Syllabus:

1. Introduction (22 January)

II. Wisdom (24, 29, 31 January, 5 February)
The Greek Polis and Modern Political Institutions
The Role of Politics and Public Life in Antiquity
Plato’s Vision: A Wise Elite

Reading:
Plato, Republic, 57-70; 99-101; 115-124; 140-154; 170-182; 190-249; 302-304.

III. Citizenship (7, 12 February)
Political Participation and Freedom
Of “Diners” and “Cooks’
Aristotle’s Reply to Plato

Reading:
Aristotle, The Politics (Readings 107-124)

IV. Love and Obedience (14, 19, 21 February)
The Politics of the Old Testament
Christ and Love
Paul and Obedience
St. Augustine and the Misery of this World
St. Thomas Aquinas: Of God’s Higher Justice and Law

Reading: New Testament, selections to be distributed; St. Augustine, City of God (Readings, 129, 133-143); St. Thomas Aquinas, Politics and Law (Readings, 144-152).

V. Power (26, 28 February)
Machiavellianism: The Case Against Machiavelli
Ends and Means
Machiavelli Vindicated?

Reading: Machiavelli, The Prince (Readings, 167-187); The Discourses on Livy (Readings, 188-193).

PRELIM: 6 MARCH

VI. Freedom (4, 11,13 March)
The Pre-Capitalist World
The New Age of Bourgeois Europe
Hobbes and the Politics of Freedom

Reading: Hobbes, Leviathan (Readings, 205-242).

VII. Rights (25, 27 March)
Locke and Rights
Property and Consent
The Negative Liberal State

Reading: Locke, Second Treatise on Civil Government (Readings, 243-279).

VIII. Democracy (1 , 3, 8 April)

The Nature of Democracy
Rousseau on Equality
Rousseau and the General Will
Reading: Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality (Readings, 293-314); Social Contract (Readings, 280-292).

IX.  Gender (10, 15 April)
The Enlightenment and de Gouges
Wollstonecraft’s Answer to Rousseau


PAPER DUE: 22 APRIL

X.  Tradition (17 April)
Edmund Burke: The Conservative Prophet

Reading: Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France (Readings, 349-355).

XI.  Individuality (22 April)
Economic Liberalism and The Invisible Hand
Nineteenth Century Liberalism and Free Speech


XII.  Class (24, 29 April)
Marx on History and Economics
Marxist Humanism: Alienation and Freedom
Marx on the State and Revolution

Reading: Marx, Estranged Labor (Readings, 438-447); The Communist Manifesto (Readings, 448-464).

XIII.  Race (1 May)

Reading: Fanon, Wretched of the Earth (Readings, 615-622); Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter From Birmingham Jail (Readings, 623-636); Malcolm X The Ballot or the Bullet (Readings, 636-642).
English 665: Race, Gender, and Crossing Water: Narratives of Mobility & Escape in the 19th Century U.S.

This course sets out to explore a series of narratives that imagine movement through and across water in both actual and metaphorical terms. These narratives will include such classics as Beloved, Moby-Dick, and Huckleberry Finn. They will also include lesser read stories such as The Morgesons and Ten Nights in a Bar Room. As a class, we will attempt to ask questions about the different boundaries that water sets on considering geographies of race and gender. We will read theoretical texts as well as primary material from the nineteenth century. Students will be expected to make an oral presentation about such material as well as to write a long research paper for the class.

Week 1: Wednesday, January 26 Introduction, Walden

Week 2: Wednesday, February 2 Blanche of Brandywine excerpts; Sab

Week 3: Wednesday, February 9 Clotel; Whitman, "Out of the Cradle"

Week 4: Wednesday, February 16 Poe, "Fall of the House of Usher"; poetry

Week 5: Wednesday, February 23 Ten Nights in a Bar Room and What I Found There

Week 6: Wednesday, March 2 Harriet Martineau/Dickens (Jim Adams)

Week 7: Wednesday, March 9 The Morgesons (Amanda Claybaugh)

Week 8: Wednesday, March 16 Typee (Katherine Reagan)

**Spring break: March 19 – March 27**

Week 9: Wednesday, March 30 excerpt from Douglass, Narrative; begin Moby-Dick

Week 10: Wednesday, April 6 Moby-Dick

Week 11: Wednesday, April 13 end Moby-Dick; begin Huck Finn

Week 12: Wednesday, April 20 Huckleberry Finn

Week 13: Wednesday, April 27 Beloved

Week 14: Wednesday, May 4 Reports