

University of Toronto  
**Introduction to Political Theory: Visions of the Just/Good Society**  
Summer 2019

**Course Instructor:** Constantine Vassiliou

**Office:** SS3058

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 3-5pm [SS3058]

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### **Course Description**

What is justice? How does political activity contribute, if at all, to a flourishing human life? What are the arguments for and against political equality? How may pre- and Early-Modern considerations on questions concerning gender inform current-day debates? By exploring these guiding questions in the company of Plato, Aristotle, Christine de Pizan, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke, this course serves as an introduction to ancient and early-modern political philosophy in the European tradition. Our goal is to interpret core texts in this tradition through careful reading and writing. In reflecting on the affinities, differences, and tensions generated by each thinker's vision of the good society, we will also aim to develop the faculties required for thinking critically about our own political horizons.

### **Pedagogical Aims in this Course**

Successful Students in POL200 will:

- develop the skills necessary for writing interpretive/argumentative essays in political theory
- develop the reading skills necessary for following the argumentation and grasping the wisdom contained in some of the most important, foundational texts in Western political philosophy
- acquire fresh perspectives for critically assessing the moral and ethical dimensions of contemporary issues in politics
- develop a healthy skepticism towards fashionable ideas and ideologies, while building the confidence to enlarge and defend their own civic outlook

### **Required Texts**

Plato, *Republic*, Translated by G.M.A. Grube (rev. by Reeve) (Hackett)

Aristotle, *Politics*, Translated by Carnes Lord (University of Chicago Press)

Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings*. Translated by David Wootton (Hackett)

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Translated by Ineke Hardy (Hackett)

Hobbes, *Leviathan*. (Hackett)

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, (Hackett)

*Some other texts assigned for this course as required readings will be posted on Quercus.*

## **Evaluation**

Tutorial/Lecture Participation	15%
Passage Interpretation (Assignment 1200 words)	25%
Comparative Essay (2000-2500 words)	30%
Cumulative Final Exam	30%

## *Paper Expectations*

PAPERS MUST CITE PRIMARY SOURCES. This will be repeated, but there will be no exceptions. Paper evaluation will be based largely on demonstrated familiarity with the readings.

Sources should be cited correctly, using Chicago style format: Use of secondary sources is discouraged, but if used they must be cited.

Essay topics will be emailed out well before the essays are due

Late papers will be penalized 2% a day.

## *Turnitin*

Students will be expected to submit their papers to turnitin. Submission guidelines will be provided by the instructor.

**PLAGIARISM GUIDELINES:** You should familiarize yourself with the university's policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University's policy on plagiarism. You must write your papers specifically for this class; you should not borrow material from another class; and you should not use another person's words or ideas without attribution, whether those words or ideas come from conversations, the internet, or printed materials. If you are in doubt about whether you are committing plagiarism, feel free to ask the lecturer or a discussion leader; but a good rule of thumb is that if you are in doubt, then cite a source. Students are strongly advised to keep all rough and draft work related to a particular assignment until the assignment has been marked and returned. It would be wise to examine the guidelines on writing provided. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

## Reading and Lecture Schedule

*n.b. Skeletal notes and discussion questions will be posted on Quercus prior to each lecture*

- 1) **Introduction, Plato, Republic** Book 1 May 6<sup>th</sup>
- 2) **Plato, Republic** Book I May 8<sup>th</sup>
- 3) **Plato, Republic** Books II, III May 13<sup>th</sup>  
*\*Tutorials begin this week!*  
*\*Passage Interpretation assignment will be posted on Quercus\**
- 4) **Plato, Republic** Books IV, V May 15<sup>th</sup> [In-class Passage Interpretation Exercise]
- 5) **Plato, Republic** Books VI, VII May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
  
*\*Wednesday Tutorials in Session for this week\**
- 6) **Plato, Republic** Books VIII, IX, X May 27<sup>th</sup>  
  
*\*Passage interpretation assignment due today\**
- 7) **Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 10.9; Politics** Books 1, 2 May 29<sup>th</sup>  
  
*Readings from Nichomachean Ethics will be posted on Quercus*
- 8) **Aristotle, Politics** Books 3, 4 June 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 9) **Aristotle, Politics** Books 5, 6 June 5<sup>th</sup>
- 10) **Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies**, Part 1 June 10<sup>th</sup>
- 11) **Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies**, Part 2, June 12<sup>th</sup>
- 12) **Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies**, Part 3, June 17<sup>th</sup>,  
  
*\*Monday Tutorials in Session for this week\**
- 13) **Machiavelli, The Prince**, Chapters 1-14 July 3<sup>rd</sup>  
  
*Comparative essay questions will be posted on Quercus*
- 14) **Machiavelli, The Prince**, Chapters 15-26 July 8<sup>th</sup>

- 15) **Machiavelli, *Selected Passages from Discourse on Livy***, July 10<sup>th</sup>
- 16) **Hobbes, *Leviathan*** Chapters 1-13 July 15<sup>th</sup>
- 17) **NO CLASSES**
- 18) **Hobbes, *Leviathan*** Chapters 14-20 July 22<sup>nd</sup>
- 19) **Hobbes, *Leviathan*** Chapters 21-31 July 24<sup>th</sup>
- 20) **Locke, *Second Second Treatise of Government*** Chapters 1-10 July 29<sup>th</sup>
- 21) **Locke, *Second Second Treatise of Government*** Chapters 11-19 July 31<sup>st</sup>
- 22) **Locke, *Letter on Toleration***, August 7<sup>th</sup>
- 23) **Exam Review!** August 12<sup>th</sup> **Comparative essay due today!**