HU4701 – Political Philosophy

Instructor: Professor Michael Bowler
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Office: Walker 319B
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 – 2:00

Course Description:

This course is a broad introduction to political philosophy. Throughout the semester we will be examining the philosophical foundations of political relations and institutions, most specifically in relation to the notion of a political state and its governance. That is, we will explore such fundamental questions as: What makes for a just state? How should the state be organized? Who should rule (i.e., have authority) in the state? What makes for a good citizen? Why is the rule of law important? What is the foundation of law? How does the state come about? Why do people submit themselves to the authority of the state? What is the relation between the individual and the state? Is the individual or the state more fundamental? What is the relation between socio-economic conditions and the political superstructure of the state? What role should government and the state play in the economic life of its people? Should equality or liberty be the primary organizing principle of the state? In examining these issues we will read selections from the writings of a broad spectrum of the greatest classical and contemporary political philosophers.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students should have a working knowledge of many of the key issues of political philosophy, be acquainted with the views of both contemporary and historical political philosophers, and be able to think philosophically about the issues raised by political philosophy.

Required Texts:


Course Prerequisites: None.

Course Requirements:

There will be two exams throughout the semester. Each will cover approximately one-half of the material for the class. The exams will consist of essay questions and will be an hour and fifteen minutes in length. On a regular basis I will give short quizzes at the beginning of class to determine whether or not you are doing the assigned reading. If you have done the reading you should have no problems doing fine on the quizzes. Finally, you will be graded on participation, i.e., asking questions which generate class discussion and participation in those discussions, and attendance. Excessive absences will be guaranteed to negatively affect your grade. Promptness is expected as a general rule. If you are consistently late to class your grade will be negatively affected. No make-up exams will be given except in cases of officially excused absences with the prior approval of the instructor at least a week before the exam or for documented illnesses.
Grading:

The breakdown for grading purposes is as follows:

Exams: 35% a piece for a total of 70%
Quizzes: 20%
Class participation and attendance: 10%

Grading System:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88% - 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% - 87%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% - 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% - 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student’s control. A grade of incomplete may be given only when approved in writing by the department chair or school dean.</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up within the next semester in residence or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.</td>
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Course Policies:

Please be courteous and respectful to everyone within the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to: Turning off all electronic devices before coming to class (which includes: Cell phones, blackberries, PDAs, computers, etc.), not talking with others during class, not reading newspapers or other materials during class, not eating during class, etc., etc. Come to class ready to participate and pay attention and remember that your fellow students are trying to do the same.
Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, especially from the Web, is of particular concern. Anything you copy directly or paraphrase from another source, whether that source is electronic, paper, or flesh and blood, must be cited. If you have any questions or doubts in a particular case I would be more than happy to discuss that case with you and to clarify what counts as a violation of academic integrity.

University Policies:

Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance the University's policies.

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements. The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following:

Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or the Affirmative Action Office, at 487-3310.

Academic Integrity: http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

Affirmative Action: http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aa/

Disability Services: http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability
Course Itinerary:

**January**
- **10th**: Introductions/Syllabus

**Classical Ancient and Medieval Theories of Political Philosophy**
- **12th**: Plato's *Republic*, pp. 1-4, 31-85
- **17th**: Plato's *Republic*, pp. 85-149
- **19th**: Aristotle, *Politics*, pp. 150-154, 175-224
- **24th**: Aristotle, *Politics* (continued)
- **31st**: Aquinas (continued)

**Modern Political Philosophy and Social Contract Theory**

**February**
- **2nd**: Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* and *Discourses*, pp. 253-281
- **7th**: Machiavelli (continued)
- **9th**: Winter Carnival Recess
- **14th**: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 282-310
- **16th**: Hobbes (continued)
- **21st**: John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, pp. 311-342
- **23rd**: Locke (continued)
- **28th**: Review for first exam

**March**
- **1st**: First Exam
- **6th**: Spring Break
- **8th**: Spring Break
- **13th**: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and *Of the Social Contract*, pp. 351-398
- **15th**: Rousseau (continued)

**The American “Experiment”**
- **20th**: Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, *The Federalist Papers*, pp. 468-3494
- **22nd**: Hamilton and Madison (continued)

**Economic Political Philosophy: Capitalism, Communism, and Class**
- **29th**: Adam Smith (continued)

**April**
- **3rd**: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, pp. 566-595
- **5th**: Marx and Engels (continued)

**Contemporary Debates**
- **12th**: Rawls and Nozick (continued)
- **17th**: Review for second exam
- **19th**: Second Exam