VESALIUS COLLEGE
Spring 2017
POL302G

Political Theory for International Affairs

ECTS credits: 6

Contact Details for Professor

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Tel. +32 495778492

Classes:
Monday 15:00 - 18:00
Room: The Hague

Office hours:
by appointment

Course Description

This course explores some key themes, questions, approaches in modern and contemporary political theory, which are particularly relevant to international affairs. Many of the most important concepts normally employed in this domain, both at the theoretical and the practical levels, have their roots in the tradition of political theory. The course thus provides an opportunity for the students to engage directly with some of the most important political theorists and texts, in order to gain a first-hand perspective on the origin of such concepts. This means that the course will privilege major figures in the history of modern and contemporary political theory, whose works have played a crucial role in shaping the way we understand those basic concepts.

The course will be divided into three broad traditions of political thinking. These are: “Political Realism and the State”, “Liberalism, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism”, and “Critical Theories”. Each of these traditions will take four sessions, each of which will be
devoted to an important political theorist, whose work has given a substantial contribution to that particular theoretical approach. In the sessions on “Political Realism and the State” we will focus on the works of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Weber, and Schmitt; and we will study themes such as the relation between ethics and politics, the meaning of the ‘state of nature’, the role and function of the state, and the friend/enemy distinction in the political arena. In the sessions on “Liberalism, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism” we will study Kant, Rawls, Habermas, and Arendt, and analyze questions such as the idea of international peace among democracies, global justice, deliberative democracy, and human rights. Finally the sessions on “Critical Theories” will cover the works of Marx, Gramsci, Foucault, and Butler, and the themes of communism, cultural hegemony, biopolitics, governamentalty, and feminism.

The course aims to offer an in-depth understanding of these three traditions of political theory and their respective theorists, in order to allow the student to develop a critical perspective on the ways in which some basic political concepts are employed in the domain of international affairs. Therefore it will be based on a careful study of a selection of emblematic texts of these influential authors, accompanied by the analysis of secondary literature to put such texts in context and relate them both to relevant political events and the on-going intellectual debates to which they contribute.

**Course Prerequisites**

“Introduction to Political Theory” (POL102G)

**Learning Objectives**

The objectives of this course are the following:

**Knowledge**

- To acquire knowledge on three major traditions in political theory, which are particularly relevant to understand the theory and practice of international relations. These are: “Political Realism and the State”; “Liberalism, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism”; and “Critical Theories”.
- To consolidate the understanding of the following political theorists: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Weber, Schmitt, Kant, Rawls, Habermas, Arendt, Marx, Gramsci, Foucault, and Butler.
- To be able, in writing and discussion, to identify chief differences among theorists from different traditions, with particular attention to disagreements over major questions such as: the relation between ethics and politics; the nature and scope of the state; the foundation and scope of democracy, justice, and human rights; the meaning of political emancipation and exclusion; the main actors and factors in history; and in more general the idea of politics itself.
- To acquire a set of key notions, concepts, and insights from political theory, in order to undertake the study of international affairs with a theoretically informed critical approach.
- In particular, to be able to recognize the theoretical origins of important concepts and themes normally employed in the field of international affairs such as: realism, sovereignty, the state, liberal cosmopolitanism, deliberative democracy, Marxism, post-structuralism, cultural hegemony, feminism, biopolitics, governamentality, etc.

Skills

- To increase the capacity for close reading and critical interpretation of political theory texts.
- To get acquainted with secondary literature on canonical authors and with the controversies concerning their interpretation.
- The general ability to critically compare, contrast, and synthesize the theories and concepts of the authors discussed and to apply them in a creative manner to conceptual debates and real-life global problems.
- To manage to draft autonomously an essay that includes a critical reading and an independent analysis of the influential political thinkers, theoretical traditions, and themes, in political theory, and an analysis of a specific concept/notion/problem in these texts.
- To work in a group to prepare for leading the seminars and to participate actively in a discussion on classical texts of political theory.

Attitudes

- To acquire a passion for life-long learning, commitment to one’s work and the ability to be open and critical towards one's own and others’ perspectives.
- To acquire through the close reading, contextualization and comparison of these authors an international mind-set and multicultural openness.

Course Materials

Reading assignments are indicated in the outline given below. All the mandatory readings as well as a number of other texts written by these classic authors are available either in electronic version on PointCarré or in paper version at the VUB library. Students are not required to purchase a textbook for this course. However, the texts of the classic authors studied in this course are generally published also in cheap paperback editions and can thus also be acquired individually. Some of these texts can also be found online for free.

Besides the mandatory reading, the syllabus includes a list of additional reading material for each session. This material can be consulted according to your own interest and may certainly help you to further understand the topic covered in class and to find readings for your essay. The list is far from exhaustive: these authors have generally written a lot of texts and publications on these authors and on the topics they have dealt are extremely
numerous. Students responsible for leading the seminars should choose a selection of texts from the ‘additional reading’ list and use them to guide the seminar discussion.

**Bibliography** (only the compulsory readings are listed here)


**Grading Scale of Vesalius College**

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Course Assessment

The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- Seminar Leadership 20%
- Essay 30%
- Mid-term Exam 25%
- Final Exam 25%

**TOTAL** 100%

### Description of activities and grading criteria

- **Seminar Leadership** (20%)  
  Classes will be based on interactive teaching and in-class student participation. The course is designed to include lectures followed by seminars, where a number of key themes invoked in the texts will be discussed. The required readings will be discussed extensively in class and students will be asked to contribute to the discussion and to present their ideas, questions, and doubts. It is therefore crucial that all the students read the texts before class (which also helps to prepare for the exams).

  Every week a group of students will be in charge of leading, under the supervision of the teacher, the discussion in the seminar after the lecture (the selection of the groups and the respective topics will be done in the first two weeks). Those responsible for leading the discussion (the number of students will be decided depending on the size of the class) should prepare well and in advance, think through how they want to structure the discussion, and come up with relevant questions based on the reading assigned. A number of questions related to the readings are provided in the syllabus for each week/session. These questions should be clarified, articulated further, and complemented with other questions by those responsible for the discussion, with the aim of stimulating the debate and making emerge difficult points, divergent interpretations and perspectives
on the topic. In order to do that they should make use also of the additional readings suggested for each class (at least one).

Those responsible for leading the seminars should also prepare beforehand a handout (1 or 2 pages) to be distributed in class with a brief description of the main questions they want to debate and the reasons why they are relevant.

Grading criteria

The activities of leading the seminars will be evaluated on the following criteria:

a) Seminar leaders demonstrate the knowledge of the compulsory readings.
b) Seminar leaders demonstrate the knowledge also of at least one of the additional readings listed in the syllabus.
c) Seminar leaders have prepared a list of questions that stimulate the discussion, engage the class in expressing their views and impressions gained from the readings.
d) Seminar leaders explain to the class why the questions they want to discuss are relevant to the general topic of the course.
e) Seminar leaders have prepared a handout with the questions and the main points for discussion to be circulated in class.
f) Seminar leaders keep the flow and momentum of the discussion by ensuring that the whole class is engaged for the duration of the seminar.
g) Seminar leaders demonstrate creativity by going beyond the weekly reading and linking the discussion to the broader issues discussed in the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar preparation</th>
<th>A 81-100</th>
<th>B 80-69</th>
<th>C 68-62</th>
<th>D 61-53</th>
<th>F 0-49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar leader</td>
<td>Seminar leader prepared well before the seminar, structured the discussion and shared the workload with the rest of the group</td>
<td>Seminar leader helped to share the workload and prepared in advance of the seminar well, however with some room for improvement</td>
<td>Seminar leader did what was required to prepare for the seminar but did not demonstrate any initiative in advance preparation</td>
<td>Seminar leader showed up to the seminar but did not participate much in advance preparation</td>
<td>Seminar leader did not show up to the seminar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Seminar delivery    | Presented overall well but did not engage fully with the class, read from notes and fell short of demonstrating the knowledge | The presentation was below the level required for this assignment | Did not present |
|---------------------| Presented overall well but did not engage fully with the class, read from notes and fell short of demonstrating the knowledge | Did not present |
the knowledge of the texts, showed capacity to keep the class engaged in the discussion and creativity in connecting the discussion to the main themes of the course

they are relevant, demonstrated the knowledge of the readings, and showed capacity to keep the class engaged in the discussion and creativity in connecting the discussion to the main themes of the course

of the readings

• **Written mid-term and final exams (25% + 25%)**

Both the mid-term and the final exam will be in-class exams. The content of the mid-term exam (week 7) covers all the reading material scheduled before that date. It will concern all the authors and topics covered under the general theme “Political Realism and the State”, and half of those included under the theme “Liberalism, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism” (i.e. Habermas and Arendt are not included in the mid-term exam).

The final exam will be held at the end of the course (week 15, but the precise date will be announced during the course). It will cover all the reading material scheduled after the mid-term exam. It will concern the remaining thinkers and topics of the general theme “Liberalism, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism” (i.e., Habermas and Arendt), and all those covered under the theme “Critical Theories”.

Both exams will consist of three questions, two shorter and more ‘factual’ ones where you will be asked to explain specific ideas, and concepts proposed by the authors discussed, and a longer essay question that will be more engaging, requiring for example a comparison of the understanding of two authors of a particular concept, or a comparison between two different traditions of thinking on a particular question. The week before each exam there will be a revision session to clarify doubts and questions.

**Grading criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A (17-20)</th>
<th>B-A- (14,5-16,9)</th>
<th>C-B- (12,3-14,5)</th>
<th>D-C- (10-12,2)</th>
<th>F (0-9,9)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completeness</td>
<td>The answer correctly addresses the question, giving</td>
<td>Some omissions or errors in providing the key components</td>
<td>The answer sufficiently addresses the question but not correctly</td>
<td>The answer is incomplete and fails to address the</td>
<td>The answer is left in blank or altogether</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syllabus: Political Theory for International Affairs

Spring 2017
**Essay (30%)**

At the end of the semester (week 13), students will turn in an essay. The essay must address a theoretical question, develop a coherent argument, and evaluate in depth a particular argument related to the topics covered by the course. In particular, the essay should offer a close critical analysis of one or more of the author(s) discussed in class. You will have to analyze and/or compare the viewpoint of these authors on subjects discussed during the course, such as the nature of the state, the meaning of politics, the relation between ethics and politics, the relation between power and truth, the causes of political and social exclusion, etc. The essay should be based on a critical reading of the author’s text(s), analyzed by means of a relevant selection of secondary literature. You are free to choose the authors you want to analyze (it is best to limit yourself to maximum two authors), you can either opt for an in-depth analysis of one author or a comparison between authors. You are equally free to choose the topic you intend to analyze (but make sure not to choose a too broad topic: too broad topics generally lead to weak and uninteresting essays).

You should, however, submit a short description of the essay topic beforehand (week 8): this description should also include the author(s) and text(s) you intend to analyze and a tentative selection of secondary sources. You can choose a course-related topic according to your own interests, but you should communicate it to the professor to make sure it is appropriate.

Deadline for sending the short description of the essay topic: **March 6 (Week 8)**
Deadline for the essay: **April 24 (Week 13)**.

The essay should be between **3500 and 4500 words long** (including bibliography and footnotes).
The citations and bibliography should consistently be in the style of one of the major political science journals.

A copy of the essay must be submitted via Turnitin and via email to gballacci@gmail.com with “POL302 Essay” in the Subject Header.

The short description should be sent via email to gballacci@gmail.com.

All essays should have a title page (with your name, the course title, the essay title), and a word count.

Grading criteria

a) Capacity to propose a well-reasoned and focused argumentation on an issue throughout the essay. A well-structured essay includes an introduction stating its purpose and ends with a conclusion that refers back to the purpose stated in the introduction.

b) Capacity to situate the argument of the essay within the academic debate on that topic, to emphasize the gaps in the literature that it is addressing/filling, and to explain why this is relevant.

c) Capacity to analyze texts of canonical authors, to provide a close and critical reading of them.

d) Evidence of understanding of the ideas, concepts, and theories studied in the course and in the reading material.

e) Capacity to find, select, and discuss relevant academic secondary literature on the argument discussed and to use this literature adequately in the essay. While the use of other material than academic literature is not forbidden, it is crucial that the core reflections of the essay are related to on-going academic debates. A too strong reliance on non-scholarly sources will have a negative influence on the grade of the essay.

f) A grammatically correct text without spelling errors.

g) Clear documentation of your sources, with correct references. You are free to choose your reference system, but you need to be systematic in its use. References should always respect the principle that they should allow a reader to trace back the book/article/internet article without problems. Internet sources should be treated as other sources (author, title, date of publication need to be mentioned, if not available mention that instead; you also need to include the full web-address and date of access).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A- to A (16.1-20)</th>
<th>B- to B+ (13.8-16)</th>
<th>C- to C+ (11.5-13.7)</th>
<th>F to D+ (0 to 11.4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well-reasoned and focused argumentation,</td>
<td>The essay is well-structured, with a clear introduction</td>
<td>The essay is overall well-structured, but with</td>
<td>The structure of the essay is not always coherent, and the</td>
<td>The structure of the essay is defective, the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with good introduction and conclusion (graded on 20)  | and conclusion, and is to the point without irrelevant digressions  | some weaknesses in its internal coherence, or in the clarity of introduction and conclusion  | introduction and conclusion are not well-focused  | argument is presented in an incoherent way, no introduction or conclusion  
---|---|---|---|---  
Analysis of primary texts, close and critical reading (graded on 20)  | Provides excellent critical understanding of the passages relevant for analysis  | The essay displays a good understanding of the texts, but occasionally misses a point or misinterprets the texts  | The essay displays only a moderate understanding of the texts  | The essay displays an insufficient understanding of the texts  
---|---|---|---|---  
Understanding of theories and concepts (graded on 20)  | Provides excellent critical understanding of theories and concepts  | Provides overall good critical understanding of theories and concepts, but with some weaknesses in argumentation  | Understanding of theories and concepts is too often flawed, argumentation sometimes weak and incoherent  | Displays a weak or no understanding of the theories and concepts involved  
---|---|---|---|---  
Use of relevant academic secondary literature (graded on 20)  | Essay is built upon a good selection of relevant academic secondary literature (at least 12 sources), displaying diversity both in opinions and in background, which are well-used in the essay  | Predominantly relevant academic secondary literature (8 to 12 sources), with enough diversity both in opinions and in background, in general well-used in the essay  | Has an adequate number of academic secondary literature (at least 8 sources), but not all of these sources are relevant, and they do not display enough diversity both in opinions and in background, and are not always well used  | Inadequate number of academic secondary literature (less than 8 sources), not well chosen and lacking diversity; relies predominantly on non-scholarly sources  
---|---|---|---|---  
Referencing (graded on 10)  | Correct and complete references, in a coherent style  | A small number of inconsistencies or of incomplete references  | Several inconsistencies or incomplete references  | Predominantly incomplete references, no coherence in reference style  
---|---|---|---|---  
Language (graded on 10)  | Correct, with a minimal amount of grammar and spelling errors, and/or use of  | Some grammar and spelling errors, and/or use of  | Frequent grammar and spelling errors, and/or use of  | Essay characterized by systematic  
---|---|---|---|---

1 In writing on recent events, the use of non-academic sources is legitimate (e.g. media sources), for general information on a topic the use of Wikipedia is acceptable. These sources, however, will not be included in the count of relevant sources.
Additional Course Policies

**Late essays policy:** The College considers late submissions as disruptive and disrespectful practices and strongly recommends students to work on their time management. Late essays will be assessed as follow:

- 1 out of 20 point (10/100%) will be subtracted for each day delay.
- Works submitted after seven days delay are graded with an “F” (0).
- Unless an incomplete is granted, no submission is possible after two weeks delay.

In the event of exceptional circumstances that impede the delivery of assignments within the due date, a student may request prior to the assigned due date an extension without penalty. Students must accompany this request with a medical certificate or other proofs of the extreme circumstance that impeded the fulfillment of the task. Professors will examine the request and decide whether an extreme circumstance exists or does not exist. ‘Extreme circumstances’ must be significant, unpredictable and serious. As follows, these include medical treatment or distress for a family crisis or loss. These do not include time management problems, technical problems with the computer, inability to find sources, attending a wedding.

**Academic Honesty Statement**

Academic dishonesty is **NOT** tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity. Students caught receiving or giving illicit aid during an examination will receive an “F” for the examination. Documented plagiarism of an essay will be given a “D” in instances of one or two sentences, and an “F” in more severe cases, and no revision will be allowed in either instance. Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

**Course Schedule**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic of the Session and Activities in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>W1</strong></td>
<td><strong>16 Jan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLITICAL REALISM AND THE STATE</strong></td>
<td>Introduction and general overview of the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Machiavelli and the birth of an autonomous political thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W2</strong></td>
<td><strong>23 Jan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hobbes, the state of nature and the absolute state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W3</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 Jan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weber, the ethic of conviction and the ethic of responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 Feb</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schmitt, the concept of the political and the friend/enemy distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W5</strong></td>
<td><strong>13 Feb</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kant and the perpetual peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W6</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 Feb</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Review for the mid-term exam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawls and global justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W7</strong></td>
<td><strong>27 Feb</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mid-term exam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W8</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 March</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Proposals for the essay are due</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Habermas, deliberative democracy and cosmopolitanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W9</strong></td>
<td><strong>13 March</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arendt and the right to have rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W10</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 March</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marx, the critique of liberalism, communism, and the materialist conception of history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W11</strong></td>
<td><strong>27 March</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gramsci, Marxism, and the theory of cultural hegemony</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Detailed Course Schedule

Week 1 - 16 January
POLITICAL REALISM AND THE STATE (1/4)

Introduction and general overview of the course

Machiavelli and the birth of an autonomous political thought

Compulsory reading


Joseph V. Femia (2004), Machiavelli Revisited, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, Ch. 5.

Additional reading


*Questions*

1) In which sense does the view on the morality of politics developed by Machiavelli differ from that of the intellectual traditions he inherited?
2) Must politicians sometimes adopt dirty means for justifiable ends, as Machiavelli suggested?
3) Which are the necessary qualities of a prince according to Machiavelli? And how do they contrast with the qualities traditionally indicated for a ruler?
4) What is Machiavelli’s view on human nature?
5) Which is the role Machiavelli assigned to fortune, and how should a virtuous prince act to master it?

**Week 2 - 23 January**

**POLITICAL REALISM AND THE STATE (2/4)**

*Hobbes, the state of nature and the foundation of the absolute state*

**Compulsory reading**


**Additional reading**


*Questions*
1) Why is the state of nature one of perpetual war according to Hobbes?
2) How does Hobbes define a commonwealth? And which are for him its major characteristics?
3) Why and how does Hobbes argue that the power of the sovereign should be undivided?
4) What are the causes that Hobbes outlines in Chapter 29 that weaken the commonwealth, and what is his remedy against it?

**Week 3 - 30 January**

**POLITICAL REALISM AND THE STATE (3/4)**

**Weber, the ethic of conviction and the ethic of responsibility**

**Compulsory reading**


**Additional reading**


**Questions**

1) What is the mark of what Weber regards as a ‘responsible’ politician?
2) Is integrity always to be admired - be it in personal life or public life?
3) Should politicians be willing to compromise? And if so, when and for what reasons?
4) How does Weber’s realism differ from that of Machiavelli and Hobbes?

**Week 4 - 6 February**

*POLITICAL REALISM AND THE STATE (4/4)*

**Schmitt, the concept of the political and the friend/enemy distinction**

**Compulsory reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Questions**

1) What is the idea of the state and sovereignty that Schmitt envisages?
2) Does a people exist prior to any constitutional framework according to Schmitt? And in this case, how does he explain that?
3) In which sense do you think for Schmitt the domain of the political differs from other domains such as the ethical?
4) How could you explain Schmitt’s critique of liberalism?
Week 5 - 13 February

LIBERALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND COSMOPOLITANISM (1/4)

Kant and the perpetual peace

Compulsory reading


Additional reading

Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with A Cosmopolitan Purpose”, in Kant: Political Writings, pp. 41 – 53.

Immanuel Kant, “Metaphysics of Morals”, in Kant: Political Writings, pp. 131-175.


Questions

1) Why are ‘republican’ states for Kant more inclined toward peace than despotic ones?
2) Why do you think Kant considers that there be no coercive international institutions?
3) Do you think Kant considers the league of states as the ultimate goal or as a transition stage on the path toward a world federation of states?
4) Why does Kant reject the idea of a global state? Do you agree with him?
5) Why is Kant’s notion of ‘cosmopolitan right’ important?

Week 6 - 20 February

LIBERALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND COSMOPOLITANISM (2/4)

Review for the mid-term exam
Rawls and global justice

Compulsory reading


Additional reading


Questions

1) In which sense is Rawls’s liberal theory universal in its reach?
2) In what way does Rawls follow Kant’s ideas in the essay ‘Perpetual Peace’?
3) To what extent can Rawls’ approach to justice in the international arena be considered state-centric?
4) What does a ‘realistic utopia’ mean for Rawls?
5) What is the function of the original position? Do you think it is a useful instrument to think about justice and politics?
6) What do you think about Rawls’ suggestion that what he calls ‘decent societies’ should be tolerated by liberal societies?

Week 7 - 27 February

Mid-term exam

Week 8 - 6 March

Proposals for the essay are due

*LIBERALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND COSMOPOLITANISM (3/4)*

Habermas, deliberative democracy and cosmopolitanism
Compulsory reading


Additional reading


Questions

1) In which sense is the model of democracy proposed by Habermas different from the republican and the liberal ones?
2) What is the relation between procedure, deliberation, and state legitimacy in the model of democracy proposed by Habermas?
3) What kind of tension does Habermas detect between the nation state and the global neoliberal market? And what kind of proposal does he provide to deal with it?
4) To what extent are a global civil society and some forms of global governance possible for him?

Week 9 - 13 March

LIBERALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND COSMOPOLITANISM (4/4)

Arendt and the right to have rights

Compulsory reading


Additional reading


**Questions**

1) What does Arendt’s notion of the right to have rights mean?
2) How is such notion related to her view of politics?
3) Which are in your opinion the differences between Arendt’s conception of rights and the liberal one?
4) How does Arendt define freedom? And in which sense does her notion of freedom differ from other views such as the liberal one?

**Week 10 - 20 March**

**CRITICAL THEORIES (1/4)**

**Marx, the critique of liberalism, communism, and the materialist conception of history**

**Compulsory reading**


Additional reading

Karl Marx, “Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”, in *Selected Writings*.

Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach”, in *Selected Writings*.


Questions

1) How do liberal thinkers and Marx differ on the relation between the individual and the political community, and who comes closest to a view supportive of individual human rights under protection of state and law?
2) Why does Marx switch his attention to the study of the capitalist economic system?
3) Which are the historical stages of development Marx defines in the *German Ideology*, and what are for him their crucial characteristics?
4) How does Marx understand and interpret the role of ideas in the *German Ideology*?
5) How does Marx envision the role of communists in the “Communist Manifesto”?

Week 11 - 27 March

*CRITICAL THEORY (2/4)*

Gramsci, Marxism and the theory of cultural hegemony

Compulsory reading

Antonio Gramsci (1980), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quentin Hoare and


**Additional reading**


**Questions**

1) How would you explain Gramsci’s concept of ‘hegemony’ and in which sense does such concept make his Marxism different from the classical one?
2) What is the role of the intellectuals in society for Gramsci? And what that of the political party?
3) What is the relation between ideas and material reality according to Gramsci?

**3 April - 14 April  Spring recess**

**Week 12 - 17 April**

**CRITICAL THEORY (3/4)**

Foucault, power/discourse, biopolitics, and governamentality

**Compulsory reading**


Additional reading


Questions

1) What is the relation between power, truth, and discourse according to Foucault? And what differences on this point do you see between him and Gramsci?
2) How would you explain Foucault’s ideas of ‘biopower’ and ‘biopolitics’?
3) How would you explain the differences between the notions of government and governmentality according to Foucault?
4) Would you define Foucault a ‘realist’?

Week 13 - 24 April

**Final essays are due**

**CRITICAL THEORY (4/4)**

**Review for the final exam**

**Butler’s postmodern feminism**

**Compulsory reading**


Additional reading


Questions

1) In which sense does Butler argue that ‘gender’ is a kind of performance?
2) In which sense does Butler’s feminism differ from the traditional one?
3) What is her idea of the subject?
4) Would you consider Butler a feminist thinker, and why?
5) Which are the differences and similarities you detect between Foucault and Butler?

Week 14 - 1 May  

Holiday - No class

Week 15 - 8 May  

Final exam
Major Learning Objectives, Teaching Methods, Testing and Feed-back Questionnaire

Summary:

Number of assignments used in this course: 4 (1 essay, 2 written exams, 1 leading seminars)
Number of Feedback occasions in this course (either written or oral): 4 total feedbacks (3 written, for the exams and essay, and 1 oral, for the leading seminars activity)
Number and Types of Teaching Methods: 3, lectures, seminar discussions and in class participation
Does your course require graded student oral presentations?: yes (leading seminar activity)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Course Learning objectives addressing the Major Objectives</th>
<th>Methods used to Teach Course Objectives</th>
<th>Methods (and numbers/types of assignments) used to test these learning objectives</th>
<th>Type, Timing and Numbers of Feedback given to Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The bachelor has a profound knowledge of key traditions, approaches, thinkers, and themes in political theory and is able to apply this knowledge in current international affairs</td>
<td>To get critical acquaintance with canonical thinkers and theoretical traditions in modern and contemporary political theory</td>
<td>Lectures, in-class discussions and seminars</td>
<td>Essay, exams, in class participation, and seminar preparation and performance</td>
<td>Written feedback on essay, at the end of the semester; written and oral feedback on exams after each exam session (maximum 10 working days after the exam, but likely a week after the exam) Students receive also oral feedback for their performance as seminar leaders at the end of the class</td>
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<td>The bachelor has a demonstrable insight in key theoretical frameworks, which inform the academic literature on international affairs. She/he is able to apply these</td>
<td>To acquire knowledge on the history of modern and contemporary political thought, and in particular on three main theoretical traditions (“Political Realism”</td>
<td>For each theoretical tradition studied during this course, an introductory lesson will explain the key themes and questions that characterize and situate it in the context of political</td>
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<td>frameworks in order to understand and interpret the current processes and dynamics in international affairs</td>
<td>and the State”; “Liberalism, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism”; and “Critical Theories”), whose themes and perspectives are particularly important in the field of international relations</td>
<td>theory</td>
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<td>The bachelor has insight into the broad societal context and is able to take this societal context into account in the analysis and interpretation of current problems in international affairs.</td>
<td>Acquiring knowledge on major political thinkers: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Weber, Schmitt, Kant, Rawls, Habermas, Arendt, Marx, Gramsci, Foucault, and Butler; and in particular, on why their theories are relevant to international affairs.</td>
<td>The course is divided into three main thematic sections: political realism, liberalism, and critical theory. Each section includes four major thinkers, whose theories deal with a particular dimension of the themes and perspectives that characterize the tradition in which they are included. Beyond exploring in depth these aspects, each session will also provide a general introduction to the works of these thinkers</td>
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<td>The bachelor knows and is able to apply common qualitative research methods to the analysis of international affairs</td>
<td>Increasing the capacity for close reading and critical interpretation of political theory texts Getting acquainted with secondary literature on these influential theorists,</td>
<td>Close readings of texts from the authors discussed In-class readings and research for essay</td>
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<td>The bachelor has an open and academic attitude, characterized by accuracy, critical reflection and academic curiosity</td>
<td>and with the controversies concerning their interpretation</td>
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<td>The bachelor is able to apply a multi-disciplinary perspective in his analysis of international affairs</td>
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<td>The bachelor is able to work in a multi-cultural team.</td>
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<td>The bachelor recognizes the importance of lifelong learning</td>
<td>Acquiring a passion for lifelong learning, commitment to one’s work and the ability to be open and critical towards one's own and others' perspectives</td>
<td>Letting students read classic authors of political theory and secondary literature on them</td>
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<td>The bachelor is able to communicate clearly, fluently and accurately; as well in a written report as in an oral presentation</td>
<td>To manage to draft autonomously a 3500/4500 words essay that includes a critical reading and an independent analysis of the texts of (a) political</td>
<td>Essay</td>
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<td>The bachelor is able to include theoretically informed political and ethical judgments in her/his analysis of current problems in international affairs and assesses the impact of these judgments on the solutions proposed for current international affairs</td>
<td>thinker/political thinkers and an analysis of a specific concept/notion/problem in these texts</td>
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