I. Scope and Purpose

Few thinkers have had as significant an impact on the development of political thought as Thomas Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* is one of the most important works of philosophy written in English. Not only is Hobbes important as a thinker in his own right, but he was active in 17th century England, a time and place of political, social, and religious turmoil. These conflicts – centering on the nature of sovereignty, the limits of authority, religion and its place in the polity, to name but a few themes – would not only shape debates in 18th century America over the design and implementation of the Constitution, but continue to be with us today.

Given the historical importance of Hobbes’s thought, and the conceptual and normative salience of 17th century English political thought, participants in this course will work to achieve the following objectives:

1. To read and analyze 17th century English philosophical texts and works thematically related to them.

2. To explore and analyze how political theories are formulated, and to critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

3. To explore and analyze how different political theories relate to each other.

4. To explore and analyze the ways in which works of political theory may inform, illuminate, and enrich contemporary political discussions.

II. Evaluation

A. Papers

All students in this course will write three papers. These three papers will be worth 55% of your grade, with the lowest grade being worth 15%, and the two highest being worth 20% each. The first will be written from the perspective of James I, Coke, Parker, Filmer, or Milton. In this paper, you are to develop a sustained criticism of the argument of one of the thinkers you did not
choose from the group. The second paper will develop a Hobbesian criticism of the United States Constitution. The third paper be written from the perspective of Hobbes, Locke, the authors of the *Federalist* papers, or Patrick Henry, and will also develop a sustained criticism of the argument of one of the thinkers you did not choose from the group. The first paper will be due in class no later than Monday, February 13; the second paper will be due in class no later than Wednesday, March 28; the third paper will be due in class no later than Monday, May 7.

The papers are to be 6-8 pages in length, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, black ink, and stapled. 6-8 pages translates to roughly 1500-2000 words. Papers that do not meet these specifications will not be accepted. Papers will not be accepted late, and emailed papers will not be graded. Detailed guidelines on paper evaluation will be handed out well in advance of the first due date.

B. Exams

All students in this course will take a final exam. This is exam is scheduled for May 14 from 12:25-2:25. The final exam will be worth 35% of your course grade. You may not reschedule either exam barring documented medical or family emergency or religious observance.

C. Participation

Attendance and participation in class will count for 10% of your grade. Doing well on this part of your grade means active and thoughtful participation, not mere attendance. This will require you to attend lectures and to do the readings. Missing more than one class without an excuse will severely harm your participation grade.

D. Pop Quizzes

Should I feel that the class is not making an adequate effort to do the readings, pop quizzes may be administered in class. If they are given, quizzes will be factored into the participation grade.

III. Class Expectations

You can expect me, as your instructor, to come to class prepared, to be available for assistance during office hours or by mutually convenient appointment, to answer email and phone correspondence in a reasonable amount of time (provided your email uses proper punctuation, grammar, spelling, appellation, and is signed), to provide feedback on your performance, to hand back written work in a reasonable amount of time, and to provide clear instructions and guidelines.

I expect you, as students, to come to class prepared to engage in discussion and on time, to be attentive and respectful in class, to check your university-registered email regularly, to read and understand the syllabus and other course guidelines, in addition to adhering to all university policies and policies stated in the syllabus. Students in this class may use laptops in this class.
under two caveats: first, if you are using a laptop, I may call on you during class to participate; second, if laptop use becomes a distraction, I may ban their use.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with severely.

IV. Grading

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A $\geq$ 93.5
- AB = 87.5-93.4
- B = 82.5-87.4
- BC = 77.5-82.4
- C = 69.5-77.4
- D = 60-69.4
- F $\leq$ 59.9

V. Material

There are 2 required texts for this course, both of which should be available in used form. I have ordered them from the University Book Store.


Readings labeled *packet* are in the course packet, available for purchase at Bob’s Copy Shop (208 North Charter Street).
Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Monday, January 23: No reading; class introduction

Wednesday, January 25: James I/VI, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*

Monday, January 30: Coke, *Second and Twelfth Part of the Reports*

Wednesday, February 1: Parker, *The Case of Shipmoney*

Monday, February 6: Filmer, *The Anarchy of a Mixed Monarchy*

Wednesday, February 8: Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*

Monday, February 13: *Coriolanus* (film); **First Paper Due**

Wednesday, February 15: *Coriolanus* (film)

Monday, February 20: Hobbes, *On the Life and History of Thucydides*


Monday, February 27: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 6-10


Monday, March 5: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 16-20


Wednesday, March 28: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 42, cont’d, 43; **Second Paper Due**

March 31 through April 8: Spring Break


Wednesday, April 11: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 44-47, cont’d

Monday, April 16: *King Lear* (film)
Wednesday, April 18: *King Lear* (film)

Monday, April 23: Locke, *Second Treatise*

Wednesday, April 25: Locke, *Second Treatise*

Monday, April 30: *Federalist Papers* 1-8

Wednesday, May 2: *Federalist Papers* 9-10, 39, 47, 51

Monday, May 7: Patrick Henry, *Speeches before the Virginia Ratifying Convention*, June 5 and 7, 1788

Wednesday, May 9: Course Conclusion