What would Machiavelli say about the invasion of Iraq? What would have been John Stuart Mill’s take on Obamacare? What would Aristotle say about economic inequality in America? What would Immanuel Kant have said about immigration reform? What would John Rawls thing about the possibilities for liberal democracy in the Arab Middle East?

This course explores classic texts in the history of Western political thought. There are two main arguments in favor of reading these texts. One is that the past is the source of the present. The ideas explored in these texts are the sources of our own thinking, whether we know it or not. That does not make them right or wrong, but you are curious about yourself you should be interested to know where your mind gets its material. It is also interesting to see the way constellations of ideas that today seem mutually contradictory seemed to go together naturally a century or a millennium ago. There may be a warning there—Plato advocated a form of a totalitarian state. Does that mean that if I recognize Platonic elements in my own thinking I am headed down a slippery path toward justifying totalitarianism? Or there may be a different kind of warning. If I take something for granted that every major classical writer agrees is wrongheaded, should I consider the possibility that they understood something I do not? In the graded assignments for this class you are asked to show that you have studied and understood the assigned texts: we hope you will also think hard about the possibility that you have something to learn from them. We will also try to show you how modern debates in political theory grow out of earlier philosophies.

The other reason for reading these texts is that the past has nothing to do with the present. As the man said, “the past is another country, they do things differently there.” The present tense of “do” is the best part of that line: it emphasizes the fact that the past is always present, but always strange. We constantly appeal to the past in one way or another, whether to the wisdom of ancient Rome, the intentions of the American Founding Fathers, or the great religious texts of the Abrahamic traditions. But when we sit down and read those texts carefully we may be startled at the strangeness of them. Which should provoke a whole slew of interesting questions, starting with this one: if the texts and thinkers you believed to be the source of your beliefs are unutterably strange, then were did your beliefs actually come from? (“I am a purely original thinker and I made them up myself” won’t do, unless you were raised by wolves.)

In choosing the readings for this course I have tried to accommodate three mutually incommensurate goals: to provide an introduction to the range of Western political thought, to engage texts that are demonstrably sources for modern political thinking, and to keep the cost of textbooks and the reading load from getting out of hand. To achieve these goals I have asked you to buy two books, and have uploaded additional materials to a course moodle:
(If you are enrolled in the class, you should be able to access this moodle with your usual login information – if you are unable to do so, check the status of your registration!)

Readings are listed below. Page numbers in parentheses, unless otherwise indicated, can be found in the Broadview Anthology. The graded work in this class comprises three midterm exams, a final exam, and graded assignments in section. The breakdown of grading is as follows:

- first midterm: 15%
- second midterm: 20%
- third midterm: 20%
- final exam: 30%
- participation in section, including graded assignments: 15%

All exams are take-home essay exams. Your answers are to be typed and stapled to a cover sheet (specific requirements will be distributed with exam instructions). These are open-book, open-note exams that you will be permitted to write with a partner if you so choose. Further details will be distributed with examination instructions.

**Introduction**

9/3    What is the meaning of “political” in the term “political theory”?

*Key questions for the semester:*

- **What is the source of authority?**
- **What should be the relationship between the individual and the collective?**
- **What should be the relationship between State and Society?**
- **What is the purpose of the polity?**

“Basic Concepts” [moodle]

**I. Jerusalem**

9/8    Hebrew Bible, Part 1

1. First Creation – Gen. 1
2. Second Creation – Gen. 2
3. The Fall – Gen. 3
4. Cain and Abel – Gen. 4
5. Noah: Third Creation – Gen. 6-9
6. The Tower of Babel: Fourth Creation – Gen. 11
7. Abram/Abraham: Fifth Creation – Gen. 15
8. Sodom and Gomorrah: morality tales – Gen. 18-19

[all on moodle]

9/10   Hebrew Bible part 2 –

9. Mt. Sinai: Sixth Creation? – Exod. 18, 20, 21
11. Forty Years in the Desert – Numbers 14
12. The Third Giving of the Law – Deut. 16, 17, 20
13. “That the people of Israel might know war”: declension and of history – Judges 1-3
14. The war against Benjamin – Judges 19-21
15. The story of Saul and Amalek – Samuel 15

II. Athens

9/15 Aeschylus – the Athenian creation story
   Eumenides [moodle]
   "Introduction to Eumenides" [moodle]

9/17 Plato, Republic part 1 – idealism and republicanism
   Book VII (90-93)
   I, II 368d - end (29-59)

9/22 Plato, Republic part 2 – what is “justice”?
   Book III-IV (59-74)
   Book V (74-89)
   Book VIII (93-107)

9/24 Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War – Athens at war
   Pericles Funeral Oration
   The Mitylenean debate
   The Corcyran civil war
   The Melian debate [all in moodle]

   ***FIRST MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED***

9/29 Aristotle, Politics – republicanism and the science of politics
   Preface (113-19)
   Politics Books I and III (128-38, 154-70)

   ***FIRST MIDTERM DUE***

10/1 Aristotle, Politics part 2 – virtue, corruption, and the best state
   Book IV 1-4, 7-11, 14 (170-74, 175-79, 180-81)
   Book V (184-90)
   Book VII (190-194)
III. Roman and Christian Republicanisms

10/6 Polybius and Cicero – virtue, politics, and the wheel of history –
Polybius, “Histories”
Cicero, “On the Republic”
“Background – Rome” [all on moodle]

10/8 Augustine, *The City of God* [moodle]

IV. The Renaissance -- Florentine Republicanism

10/13 civic republicanism in the Renaissance -- Machiavelli
"Background – Renaissance and Machiavelli" [moodle]
Machiavelli – *Discourses on Livy*
  Book I: Intro., Chapt.s 1 and 2 (228-33)
  Book II: Intro., Chapt. 2 (233-38)
  Book I: Chapt.s 18, 55, 58 [moodle]

10/15 the failure of civic republicanism –
Machiavelli, continued—*The Prince*
  Chapt.s 8-11 (203-208)
  Chapt.s 13-26 (211-27)

***SECOND MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED***

IV. Social Contract Theory

10/20 Hobbes: the authoritarian social contract -- *Leviathan*
  Chapt.s 13, 14, 17, 18 (258-66, 276-83)

***SECOND MIDTERM DUE***

10/22 Locke: the liberal social contract -- *Second Treatise on Government*
  Chapt.s 1-5 (332-45)
  Chapt. 8 §§ 95-104 (356-59)
  Chapt. 9 (364-65)
  Chapt. 19 §§ 211-230 (386-91)

10/27 Rousseau: the republican social contract part 1
“Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality” (422-55)

10/29 Rousseau, part 2
“On the Social Contract”
Book I, Chapt.s 5-9 (470-74)
Book II, Chapt.s 1-7 (474-81)
Book IV, Chapt. 8 (515-20)

V. The Modern Nation State

11/3 the American experiment: “making democracy safe for the unvirtuous”
Madison, Hamilton, Jay, Federalist Papers #’s 9, 10, 51, 78 (548-62)
Brutus essays I and XV [moodle]

11/5 the French experiment: radical republicanism
Background – French Revolution
Declaration of the Rights of Man, 1789
Declaration of the Rights of Man, 1793
Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and Citizen, 1795
Robespierre, “On Political Morality”
Robespierre, “The Cult of the Supreme Being,” and the Republican Calendar
Babeuf, “Doctrines” and “Manifesto of the Equals”
[all on moodle]

11/10 conservatism: reaction to revolution
Burke, “Reflections on the Revolution in France” (604-10)
Kirk, “Ten Conservative Principles” [moodle]

11/12 classical liberalism – John Stuart Mill
“On Liberty” (627-52)
“Considerations on Representative Government,” Chapt. 16 (654-58)

11/17 nationalism and romanticism
[all readings in The Nationalism Reader]
Herder, “Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind”
(NR 48-57)
Fichte, “The Foundations of Natural Law” and “Address to the German Nation”; (NR 60-79)
11/19 cosmopolitanism and postcolonialism
[all readings in The Nationalism Reader]
Frantz Fanon, “The Wretched of the Earth” (NR 274-83)
Sun Yat Sen, “Three Principles of the People” (NR 240-47)
Brecher, “The National Question’ Reconsidered from an Ecological Perspective” (NR 344-58)

***THIRD MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED***

VI. Beyond the State

11/24 Marx part 1 – historical materialism
“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts” and “German Ideology” (692-715)

***THIRD MIDTERM DUE***

11/26 Marx part 2 – communism
“The Communist Manifesto,” parts 1 and 2 (717-27)

12/1 feminism
Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of Rights of Women” – Chapt. 4-end (586-603)
deBeauvoir, “The Second Sex” (785-95)

12/3 multiculturalism
Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship (994-1010)
Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference (977-92)

VII. A Return to First Principles

12/8 From Justice to Liberty
Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (797-813)

12/10 modern liberalism
Rawls, Theory of Justice (861-90)

***TAKEHOME FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED: DUE DECEMBER 19***