

**OLIVET NAZARENE UNIVERSITY  
SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**HISTORY OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY  
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY, 8:00-9:15**

PSCI/PHIL 422  
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Fall 2000  
Office Burke 002  
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**REQUIRED BOOKS:** (Note: These books are in order of how we read them instead of in typical alphabetical order)

Voegelin, Eric. The New Science of Politics. (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1987).

N.K. Sandars, Translated and introduction. The Epic of Gilgamesh. (USA: Penguin Books, 1972).

The Republic. Plato. Translated and edited by Raymond Larson. (Harlan Davidson: Crofts Classics, 1979).

Confessions. St. Augustine. Translated and edited by Henry Chadwick. (Oxford University Press: The World's Classics, 1992).

Inferno. Dante. Translated by Allen Mandelbaum. (Bantam Books, 1980).

Prince. Machiavelli. Translated and edited by Thomas Bergin. (Harlan Davidson: Crofts Classics, 1947).

Two Treatises of Government. John Locke. Edited by Peter Laslett. (Cambridge U. Press, 1988).

The Communist Manifesto. Karl Marx. Edited by Frederic Bender. (W.W. Norton and Company, 1988).

**RECOMMENDED READING**

Arnhart, Larry. Political Questions: Political Philosophy From Plato to Rawls. (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1993).

Copleston, Frederick. A History of Philosophy: 9 volumes. (New York: Image Books, 1993).

Ebenstein, William. Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991).

Gaarder, Jostein. Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994).

Hallowell, John. Main Currents in Modern Political Thought. (USA: Henry Holt, 1950).

Morgan, Michael. Classics of Moral and Political Theory. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996).

Tinder, Glenn. Political Thinking: The Perennial Questions. (USA: Harper Collins, 1995).

Wiser, James. Political Philosophy: A History of the Search for Order (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1983).

## **PURPOSE**

This course acquaints the student with the major political philosophers in the Western tradition. The course begins with a study of pre-Socratic philosophy and Greek political philosophy, then moves on into the origins and rise of the Christian tradition in the Middle Ages, the birth and development of modern political philosophy, and then culminates in the contemporary context of postmodernism, the disintegration of modernism.

We shall study political philosophers' ideas regarding the best state, the nature of laws, the desirability of revolution, the nature of justice, among other ideas. Students will be challenged to master the major political concepts of each of the central thinkers in the Western tradition.

Students will also be challenged to learn to think critically in a political fashion. There are several central questions with which political theorists grapple and students will be challenged to think through these questions on their own and develop their own answers to the perennial questions of political theory.

Students will be challenged to analyze different political and philosophical ideas. Students will not only learn the major ideas of political philosophers but will also compare and contrast their ideas. For example, who is closer to the truth in terms of the nature of the law, the Sophists, whom Socrates and Plato were opposing, or St. Thomas? Students will be encouraged to grapple with the philosophers' ideas instead of merely memorizing them.

Students will learn to read for content and to read critically. Students will do significant amounts of reading of very difficult materials. You should learn to read for content and analysis throughout the semester.

You will be challenged to put together all of your ideas in nine papers. You will be required to submit papers which demonstrate your mastery of the philosophers and your ability to analyze and assess the philosophers' ideas.

You will constantly be challenged to develop your own political theory. Based on what you're reading and thinking about, what are your own ideas about the best society, the nature of the law, the desirability of revolution, etc.?

Finally, you should come to see the relevancy of political theory. Political theory is not only about abstract questions. Rather, theory and its consequences permeate all of Western political life,

from divided government, to the nature of the state, to the justifiability of revolution, to the nature of human rights, etc. For example, when we talk about abortion in the U.S. we talk about a RIGHT to life. This is a peculiarly modern western liberal notion. So, students will be challenged to grasp the relevancy of political theory.

At the end of this course, students should have a deeper understanding of the major political and philosophical ideas that have driven Western civilization for the past four millennia. Students should possess a working knowledge of the major thinkers, ideas, experiences, and developments of Western political philosophy. Above all, students should be equipped to assess the contemporary political situation in light of the past and offer critical Biblical insight into what ought to be done in building a healthy and just society in the twenty-first century.

### **FINAL GRADE EVALUATION**

The student's final grade will be based upon the following criteria, in which I use the traditional 90, 80, 70, 60 grade scale:

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| 9 Papers             | 9/10 |
| 1 Acting Performance | 1/10 |

Your grade in this class will be determined by the quality of your writing. You will write nine 5-7 page papers in this course. You will write one paper over every book that we read. Each paper will be due the class period after we finish discussing the particular philosopher. Specifically, you should accomplish two tasks in your papers: first, you must demonstrate a mastery of each philosopher's main arguments; second, you must demonstrate that you have grappled with each philosopher's main arguments in a personally meaningful way. Thus, you should be writing to convey a sense of content mastery and analytical assessment.

Please note: Brevity is a virtue. To write papers on all of these philosophers, in only five to seven pages will be a challenge. So please keep the following facts in mind, which the New York Times has noted: the Lord's Prayer contains 56 words, the 23rd Psalm 118 words, the Gettysburg Address 226 words, and the Ten Commandments 297 words, while the U.S. Department of Agriculture directive on pricing cabbage weighs in at 15,629 words!!!

To write this way is a tall order! You will be reading some of the greatest minds in the Western tradition. Be bold! Be brave! Be courageous! This is a challenging course! But you will learn and you will be learning from the greatest thinkers in the Western tradition!

On the student acting presentation: These will be held on December 14. You should prepare a five minute speech in which you answer the question, what is justice according to this individual. In other words, what is this philosopher shooting for in terms of what society should look like. You should also explain a difficulty that many have in understanding your philosopher's work. For example, you might want to start, Many people have been confused about my idea concerning x. You should also bring his most famous book and read and explain some of the most important passages. You should also research some of the philosopher's life and work that into your speech. Consequently, you should come dressed up in a costume which looks like the philosopher. You should also attempt to be humorous either overall or by writing a joke. Also, bring a question for another philosopher. You should bring questions for two or three different philosophers since

someone else might take your question. Remember you are that philosopher. Your grade will be based on 50% in terms of style and 50% in terms of substance.

**\*\* ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE. IN FAIRNESS TO THOSE WHO DO THEIR ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME, LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. BARRING INJURY OR AN ACT OF GOD, IF YOU MISS A DATE, YOU RECEIVE A ZERO.**

## COURSE OUTLINE

### DATE    TOPIC

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| August 31                      | Introduction                                   |
| September 5, 7, and 12         | Voegelin's "Pauline Vision of the Resurrected" |
| September 14, 19, 21           | Voegelin's <u>New Science of Politics</u>      |
| September 26, 28               | <u>The Epic of Gilgamesh</u>                   |
| October 3, 5, 12, and 17       | Plato's <u>Republic</u>                        |
| October 19, 24, 26             | Augustine's <u>Confessions</u>                 |
| October 31<br>November 2 and 7 | Dante's <u>Inferno</u>                         |
| November 9, 14, 16             | Machiavelli's <u>Prince</u>                    |
| November 21, 28, 30            | Locke's <u>Second Treatise on Government</u>   |
| December 5, 7, 12              | Marx's <u>Communist Manifesto</u>              |
| December 14                    | Student presentations                          |

NOTE: Your papers are due the class period immediately following the end of the discussion of the philosopher; thus, your due dates are the following: Paper #1 on Voegelin September 14, Paper #2 on Voegelin September 26, Paper #3 on Gilgamesh October 3, Paper #4 on Plato October 19, Paper #5 on Augustine October 31, Paper #6 on Dante November 9, Paper #7 Machiavelli November 21, Paper #8 on Locke December 5, Paper #9 on Marx December 14.