

# Modern Political Theory: Freedom and Discipline in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Eres password:** kh110da

**Office Hours:** Wed. 1-3, SSB 349, or by appointment

**TA:** Kai Ostwald

**Overview:** Political theory is often taught to students of political science as a historical overview of great thinkers. This type of political theory is important and has an important role of introducing classical themes and encouraging a common vocabulary with philosophy, anthropology, ethics, geography, history, sociology, and other important social science and humanities disciplines.

This class is intended as a kind of supplement to this necessary historical work traditionally taught in political theory. In it, we will attempt to not only survey some of the great thinkers of the last century, but students will be pushed to **connect what we read, discuss, and write about in the context of their own experience** as ‘modern’ or ‘post-modern’ people, citizens, or visitors.

The idea here is that no one learns anything unless they can connect it to their life in some meaningful way. While I can’t force you to do this, I will try my best to create both a space for discussion and an assignment structure which encourages a variety of responses to draw on your individual expertise. In this way, we will attempt to apply the lessons and tools from the last century of progress in political theory. I hope this will give you the chance to pick something you are interested in to work on.

**Expectations:** Political theory is about reading and writing, and we will work on strategies for doing both effectively. A degree in political science will have certain advantages and disadvantages in your future job or academic markets, we will try to talk about these as well as strategies for doing work which will help you compete at this level.

As this is a three day a week class, I’ve set the assignments up so that there is a small amount of written work every two weeks or so meant to tie two given weeks together (this will be explained in more detail in lecture), and an occasional quiz on readings which will consist of two passage identifications from the last week’s reading to encourage you to keep up. There will be four short quizzes scattered through the 10 weeks, with your worst score dropping off. The dates are below. The final short assignment is an essay preparation for the midterm where you will be asked to give a provisional thesis addressing the prompt and some potential support paragraphs.

Finally, you will have two larger written assignments, a midterm essay and a final essay. There will be no in class final exam for this class, instead you will turn in your final essay on the day of the final. Late work will be severely penalized, dates are given here in the syllabus from Day 1, please schedule ahead. Please note that these two assignments need to be turned in to **Turnitin.com**

**Class ID: 6897411**

**Password: 110d**

Let me just note here that **plagiarism is a very big problem**, and one with which I am unfortunately very familiar. **It is better to turn in a drunken rambling written in crayon than to get caught with someone else’s work.** All plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment, report to academic affairs, and possible academic probation. Second violations are much more serious and can result in class failure, probation, and even expulsion. Trust me, it’s a lot of work for me and for you, just don’t.

**Assignments and Grade Structure:**

Quizzes: (x5pts each, worst dropped) = 15%

Short passage identification. Give author, context, and connection to class theme for full points.

4 = 5% each, scattered through weeks for attendance encouragement, worst dropped.

1: 10/11/13

2: 10/23/13

3: 11/18/13

4: 12/2/13

Reactions (x5pts each) = 15%

1 page double spaced putting two of the weeks readings into conversation. Explain what the main point of each paper is, then make some observation about how they connect. Choose one outstanding quote from each. Prepare in advance.

3 = 5% each, due on Monday in class

1: 10/7/13: Zinn/Buckley comparison

2: 10/28/13: Compare theories of relationship between man and technology

3: 11/25/13: Effect of decolonization and forgotten 'developing' world

Prep (x5pts) = 5%

1: single page with thesis and potential outline due in class

11/4/13 potential thesis

Essays = (x25pts + x40pts) = 65%

1. Midterm (x25pts) = 25%

4-6 pages on topic selected.

Assigned 10/30/13

Due 11/15/13 at beginning of class.

2. Final (x40pts) = 40%

6-8 pages on topic selected

Assigned 11/27/13

Due 12/12/13 by 230pm.

**Lecture Plan and Dates:**

9.27 Fri- First Lecture: Intro and Class Summary

**Week 1: On the Use and Abuse of History**

9.30 Mon- Nietzsche, 'On the Use and Abuse of History for Life,' 1874: available for free online at [webpace.utexas.edu](http://webpace.utexas.edu), this is the copy we will use for citation in class.

10.2 Wed- Nietzsche, continued.

10.4 Fri- Coles, introduction to *Beyond Gated Politics* (ERES)

Reaction 1 Assigned- Compare uses of history in Zinn and Buckley

**Week 2: Rationalization, Vocation, and the Interwar Period**

10.7 Mon- Buckley, 'The New Conservatism' (1969) or *Committee and its critics* (13-33), and Zinn, 'Tyranny is Tyranny' (59-74) (both on ERES)

Turn in Reaction Paper

Intro to Weber's Rationalization and Protestant Ethic Theses

10.9 Wed- Weber, 'Politics as Vocation' lecture

10.11 Fri- Final thoughts on Weber

Wolin, 'Political Theory as Vocation' (ERES)

Quiz 1 at start of class

**Week 3: Totality, Communism, Fascism, and the Exception**

- 10.14 Mon- Lenin, *What is to be done?* 53, 119-124 (ERES)  
Introduce Schmitt
- 10.16 Wed- Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, sovereignty, friend/foe
- 10.18 Fri- Schmitt continued, discussion of beginning of fascism in Europe  
Beginning of Heidegger, 'Self-Assertion of the German University' 1933. (ERES)

**Week 4: Dwelling and the Vita Activa**

- 10.21 Mon- Heidegger continued, 'Building Dwelling Thinking,' in *Basic Writings* (ERES)
- 10.23 Wed- Arendt, 'Total Domination,' 'Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility,' 'The Answer of Socrates,' in *Portable Arendt*  
Quiz 2 at start of class
- 10.25 Fri- Arendt, 'The Public and the Private Realm,' 'Labor, Work, Action,' in *Portable Arendt*  
Reaction 2 assigned.

**Week 5: Critical Theory in Europe and in Exile**

- 10.28 Mon- Benjamin, 'Theses on History,' in *Illuminations* (253-264) (ERES)  
Discussion of concepts of aura and the storyteller  
Reaction 2 due in class
- 10.30 Wed- Horkheimer and Adorno, 'The Culture Industry' in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (120-168)  
Discussion of Freud and adaptations of the repressive hypothesis  
Midterm assigned.
- 11.1 Fri- All Saints Day, Day of the Dead, no class

**Week 6: World War and the Echoes of the Atom Bomb**

- 11.4 Mon- Aron, *The Century of Total War*, 'at the crossroads of history,' 149-165, 357-368 (ERES)  
Potential thesis due
- 11.6 Wed- Camus, 'Myth of Sisyphus,' selections from Absurdity essay
- 11.8 Fri- Anders, 'Theses for the Atomic Age' 1962, 'Reflections on the H Bomb' 1956 (ERES), *The Pilot of Hiroshima* (Jungk intro. xi-xxiii, 1-20 First letters and Commandments, letter from Hiroshima 25-26, letter to judge 63-65) (ERES)

**Week 7: Discipline and power in an Era of Cold War**

- 11.11 Mon- Veterans Day Holiday
- 11.13 Wed- Foucault, '2 Lectures,' in *Power/Knowledge*  
Review of events of 1968
- 11.15 Fri- Foucault, 'Prison Talk' and 'Truth and Power,' in *Power/Knowledge*  
Midterm Due.

**Week 8: Post-colonial theory and post-modern conditions**

- 11.18 Mon- Foucault, 'Body/Power,' threshold of biological maturity, biopower (ERES)  
Agamben and the camp (ERES).  
Quiz 3 at start of class.
- 11.20 Wed- Chakrabarty, 'Post-coloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' pasts?' *Representations*, No. 37, Winter 1992, (ERES) *Habitations* (2002) intro xix-xxiv, 20-37  
Spivak, 1988 'can the subaltern speak?' (ERES)
- 11.22 Fri- Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 1980, Intro: xiv-xxxvi, 327-343, list of terms 373-377

Reaction 3 assigned.

**Week 9: The idea of the post-modern and critical theory today**

- 11.25 Mon- Brown, 'Critical Theory in Dark Times,' in *Edgework*, 2006 (ERES)  
Reaction 3 due.
- 11.27 Wed- Jameson, *Postmodernism: or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Intro: ix-xxii, 356-391  
Discussion of Virilio on speed and information bomb  
Final Paper Assigned.
- 11.29 Fri- Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 10: The end of history?**

- 12.2 Mon- Fukuyama – *The End of History*, 1990, Intro: xi-xxii, Ch1. 1-12, Ch4. 39-52, Ch7. 82-88,  
Ch31. 328-339 (ERES)  
Quiz 4 at start of class
- 12.4 Wed- Fukuyama continued
- 12.6 Fri- Green disasters at the frontiers of new forms of sovereignty  
Hardin – Life on a Lifeboat (ERES)  
Crutzen - Anthropocene

**Finals Week:**

- 12.12 Thurs- Paper due by 230pm online at turnitin and printed at class room.