

POLI 13: Power and Justice

Introduction to Political Theory

Fall 2018, UC San Diego

9:00-9:50 AM, Mondays and Wednesdays

Instructor: Ike Sharpless

Teaching Assistants: John Gotti (Wednesday sections) and Ben Brewer (Friday sections)

Office hours

Instructor (Sharpless): *Tuesdays from 10 AM to noon*, in the seating area outside of the Loft and above the Triton fountain (2nd floor of the Price Center)

TA (Brewer): *Fridays from 1 to 3 PM*, at the outdoor seating area next to the University Art Gallery building in Muir College (by Mandeville Lane)

TA (Gotti): *Mondays from 2 to 4 PM*, at Art of Espresso

contacts

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Some central course questions:

- What distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate uses of power? How does it relate to justice?
- How does the metaphor of the body politic concern the relation between the parts and wholes of different political communities?
- What is the proper domain of the authority of the state over its individuals (or over foreigners)? How is it constituted and what does it entail, especially with regard to the role of violence?
- How does Machiavelli's "economy of violence" address the question of dirty hands?
 - How does a leader with *virtù* manage the realm of appearances and the masks they wear?
 - (Why) does a political community constantly need to return to its founding principles?
- What is the proper domain of freedom of thought, speech, and action, respectively?
 - What distinguishes living truth from dead dogma? How do we keep the truth "alive"?
- And how is the life of political action made manifest throughout the history of political theory?

Required texts:

- Plato, *Republic* (Grube and Reeve, 2nd ed.), 9780872201361 (ISBN)
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writing* (ed. Wootton), 9780872202474 (ISBN)
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (ed. Rappaport), 9780915144433 (ISBN)
- Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, collected two volume edition (includes both *Thinking* and *Willing*), 0156519925 (ISBN)

Course objectives: that you 1) learning to critically but sympathetically read classical primary texts; 2) have a systematically better understanding of the relation between power and justice than you did prior to the course; and 3) have a sense of the importance of learning from history, as well as of the options on offer in terms of major political perspectives or ideologies, old and new (specifically, we will spend some time with: idealism, realism, authoritarianism, liberalism, libertarianism, republicanism, and Marxism).

Course expectations: You can expect the following from me. I will: treat you with respect; respond to

any queries as promptly as possible; come to class each day prepared to discuss the material; provide any knowledge and guidance I can in office hours or during discussion; supervise the grading of your work to ensure fairness and consistency; and provide an online atmosphere in supplement to lecture and sections that will link our class material to contemporary and historical events and patterns. In response, I expect you to: treat each other with respect; read the syllabus carefully; come to class each day having done the required reading and ready to participate; and to commit to the spirit of inquiry after the nature of politics, of good governance, and of political leadership and citizenship and the respective privileges and duties of each.

GRADING

Midterm: 20%

Final exam: 30%

Attendance

lecture – 10%

section – 10%

Packback: 30%

- Each week, at least one hour prior to *either* the Monday or Wednesday class: **ask one** question (2%) **and comment on two** other questions (.5% each)
- **The first week is free, giving you 3% automatically** and a chance to sign up for, and get acclimated to, the packback system.
- Questions are being valued more than comments because your questions should demonstrate that you have done the reading and are thinking about some aspect of the upcoming day's lecture. Questions that fail to demonstrate this will be given only partial credit.
- You need to post your question prior to lecture—by no later than 8 AM the morning of lecture, but preferably by the evening before.
- Your **comments** can come later in the week or at the same time as your questions, and needn't be tied to the upcoming reading in the same way as the questions, necessarily. Recall that you need to leave at least two comments each week on other people's questions (including mine, if you'd like) to get full credit

OUTLINE OF LECTURES

Mon Oct 1 – outline of course expectations and content; introductions

Wed Oct 3 – Plato's *Republic*, book I

- focus while reading on Thrasymachus' argument about justice and Socrates' various responses (beginning at 336a, or page 12)

Mon Oct 8 – Plato's *Republic*, book II (32-59)

Wed Oct 10 – Plato's *Republic*, end of book VI and start of book VII (179-197, or 505c4-525c3)

Mon Oct 15 – Plato's *Republic*, book VIII (213-240)

Wed Oct 17 – Machiavelli, “Letter to Vettori” and *Prince*, dedication, chapters 1, 2, 5-8, 10 and 11 (or pages 1-6, 17-30, and 34-38)

Mon Oct 22 – Machiavelli's *Prince*, chapters 15-19 (pages 47-62) and 22-26 (pages 67-80)

Wed Oct 24 – Machiavelli's *Discourses*, Book I: Preface and chapters 1, 2, 5 through 8, 11, 12, 55, and 58 (pages 84-92, 95-105, 113-118, and 150-158)

Mon Oct 29 – Machiavelli's *Discourses*, Book II: chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 161-171), and chapter 27 (184-187); Book III: chapters 1, 3, 7-9 (pp. 189-199) and chapters 31, 34, 41, and 43 (pp. 205-217).

Wed Oct 31 – Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, parts I, II, and IV

Mon Nov 5 – J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, chapters 1 and 2 (pages 1-52; if you're short for time, focus on Mill's examination of the role of Christianity as it relates to freedom of thought, as developed from 39-52)

Wed Nov 7 – J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, chapter 4 (73-92)

Midterm during this week's (Nov 5-12) sections

Mon Nov 12 (no class)

Wed Nov 14 – J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, chapters 3 and 5 (53-71 and 93-113)

Mon Nov 19 – Malcolm X, “[The Ballot or the Bullet](#)” (as an hour-long [speech](#))

Wed Nov 21 – Michael Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative” (11 pages)

Mon Nov 26 – Arendt's *Life of the Mind*, Volume 1: Thinking, pages 141-179 (or chapters 15-17)

Wed Nov 28 – Arendt's *Life of the Mind*, Volume 1: Thinking, pages 98-125 (chapters 12 and 13) [note the reverse order of the reading for this week – the focus of this class is on language and metaphor]

Mon Dec 3 – Arendt's *Life of the Mind*, Volume 2: Willing, introduction and chapters 5-7 (3-11 and 34-62)

Wed Dec 5 – Arendt's *Life of the Mind*, Volume 2, chapter 13 (149-157), and Appendix: Judging (255-272)

Final exam, Wednesday, December 12, from 8-11 AM