

Introduction to Political Theory

Spring Semester, 2008



L32 106



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Mon., Wed., 1-2:30, PLACE
Off. hrs: Tues., 3-5 PM & by appt.
Eliot 335

This course offers an undergraduate-level introduction to the field of political theory. We will focus on three major themes in the field: social justice, power and freedom, and democracy, reading some canonical texts, such as Bentham's Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation and Marx's Capital, but emphasizing contemporary works, such as those of John Rawls, Michael Walzer, Michel Foucault, and Robert Dahl.

Course Requirements

1. You must complete the readings in a timely fashion and participate actively in class discussions. To encourage you to prepare well for class, we will have at least six short, unannounced quizzes based on course readings. Together, your top five quizzes count for 25 percent of your grade (5 percent each).
2. You will write three in-class, essay-style examinations, each focused on one of the main themes we will cover. Together, these exams count for 75 percent of your grade (25 percent each).

Course Materials

1. Most of the readings for this class are available online through E-Res.
2. The following books are on sale at the campus bookstore:
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1971)
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974)
Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Basic Books, 1983)

Course Syllabus and Schedule of Class Meetings

[B] = Book, on sale at campus bookstore
[E] = Article or book excerpt, available online through E-res

Introduction and Overview

- Monday, January 14: Course overview (no readings)
- Wednesday, January 16: Jonathan Kozol, *Amazing Grace*, excerpts [E]
- Monday, January 21: [Martin Luther King Day \(no class meeting\)](#)

1. Justice

- Wednesday, January 23: Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chs I-II [E]
- Monday, January 28: Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, pp. 302-43 [E]
- Wednesday, January 30: Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, pp. 361-384, 417-19 [E]
- Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" [E]
- Monday, February 4: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-45, 60-83 [B]
- Wednesday, February 6: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 83-108, 118-161 [B]
- Monday, February 11: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 3-87 [B]
- Wednesday, February 13: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 88-119 and 149-174 [B]
- Monday, February 18: Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, chapters 1 and 2 [B]
- Wednesday, February 20: Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, chapters 4-6 [B]
- Monday, February 25: In-class review (no new readings)
- Wednesday, February 27: [In-class essay exam](#)



2. Power and Freedom

Monday, March 3:

Robert Dahl, "Power as the Control of Behavior" [E]
Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* pp. 89-103 [E]

Wednesday, March 5:

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edition, ch. 1 [E]

[Spring break]

Monday, March 17:

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, ch. 3 [E]



Wednesday, March 19:

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" [E]

Monday, March 24:

Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?" [E]

Wednesday, March 26:

Philip Pettit, "Freedom as Anti-Power" [E]

Monday, March 30:

In-class review (no new readings)

Wednesday, April 2:

In-class essay exam



3. Democracy

Monday, April 7:

Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, chs. 6 and 7 [E]

Wednesday, April 9:

Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, chs. 8 and 9 [E]

Monday, April 14:

Jon Elster, "The Market and the Forum" [E]

Wednesday, April 16:

Bruce Ackerman and James Fishkin, "Deliberation Day" [E]

Monday, April 21:

Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation" [E]

Wednesday, April 23:

Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, chs. 1 and 4 [E]



Monday, April 28:

In-class review (no new readings)

Wednesday, April 30:

In-class essay exam