

# Graduate Field Survey in Political Theory



Spring Semester 2009

L32 568



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Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m., Eliot 213  
Off. hrs: Thursdays, 2-4, Seigle 232

class website: <http://groups.google.com/group/political-theory-grads-2009>  
class listserv: [political-theory-grads-2009@googlegroups.com](mailto:political-theory-grads-2009@googlegroups.com)

*This course is a graduate survey designed to introduce students to the scope, concepts, and methods of political theory. Its intended audience is students in the field (including minors) and in cognate disciplines. Over the course of the semester we will ask, “What is political theory, and how does one ‘do’ it?” exploring methodological debates in the history of political thought and in contemporary theory. We will ask, “What is the best approach to analyzing and evaluating political phenomena?” considering as possible answers utilitarian, Kantian, Marxian, feminist, and poststructuralist approaches. We will engage debates about key concepts in the field, as well, devoting one week each to the study of power, freedom, equality, justice, and democracy.*



## Course Requirements

1. Because our schedule of readings is ambitious, you will not be expected to read outside the syllabus or to write a research paper. However, you absolutely must complete all readings carefully and in a timely fashion and participate actively in class discussions. **Participation—quality, not just quantity—counts for 25 percent of your grade.**
2. In addition, a clear, concise, and thoughtful reaction paper—one single-spaced page (normal font, normal margins)—is due via the class listserv by 6:00 a.m. each day we meet. Your paper should engage—i.e., question, critique, support, and/or apply—the readings. Do not write summaries. For most classes, you will be free to choose the focus of your paper. For some, I may suggest questions.

Please paste the text of your paper into the body of an email and write your last name and the number of our class meeting in the subject heading (e.g., Smith, class 3). You should not write a reaction paper for the first class of the semester, for the classes for which you are discussion leader, or for the class immediately following your turn as discussion leader (see #3, below). Thus you will write a total of seven reaction papers. **These count for 35 percent of your grade (5 percent each).**

3. You must sign up, alone or with a partner, to be discussion leader for at least one class in each of the three main sections of the course. Your in-class responsibilities as discussion leader are to summarize the key points from the readings, spending ten minutes maximum on summary; to highlight the main points your classmates made in their response papers (posted on the listserv); and to formulate at least three provocative questions that will prompt an analytic / critical discussion of key aspects of the readings.

You have two additional responsibilities when you serve as discussion leader: first, you must write a clear and concise version of the text of your presentation, for circulation. Please paste this text into the body of an email; write your last name, the word “presentation,” and the number of our class meeting in the subject heading (e.g., Smith presentation, class 3); and email this document to the listserv, ideally by noon on the day of class, certainly no later than an hour before the start of class. Please also bring hard copies with you to distribute. Second, after the classes for which you serve as discussant, you must write a one-page narrative summary of the discussion; paste the text of your summary into the body of an email, write your last name, the words “narrative summary” and the number of our class meeting in the subject heading (e.g., Smith narrative summary, class 3); and email this document to the listserv no later than an hour before the start of the following class. **Your performance as discussion leader and your written summaries count for 40 percent of your grade.**

## Course Materials

1. Readings marked [L] are available for download and printing in the “File” section of <http://groups.google.com/group/political-theory-grads-2009>. Please note: because google limits our storage space I will upload files one syllabus section at a time. Please print out the files and save them as we go, since I will need to delete them after we read them, to make room for new files.
2. Readings marked [B] are books you will need to secure. They follow, listed in the order in which we will read them. Please note: these books are on sale at the campus bookstore “in theory.” However, by this point in your student career, you have realized that campus bookstores never have enough copies of anything students need, so of course you won’t assume they will be there the week before you need them. Instead, you will look for them well in advance and, if you can’t find them, go to another book store or order them online.

Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge University Press, 1981).

J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978).

Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (New York: Russell Sage, 1992).

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000).

## Course Syllabus and Schedule of Class Meetings

[B] = Book, on sale at campus bookstore “in theory”

[L] = Article or book excerpt, are available for download and printing in the “File” section of <http://groups.google.com/group/political-theory-grads-2009>.

Wednesday, January 14: Overview and Introduction (no readings).

### **1. Methods of Political Theory**

Wednesday, January 21: Political Theory as Interpretation

Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy?” pp. 9-55 in *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies* (University of Chicago Press 1988) [L]

Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” pp. 57-90 in *Visions of Politics*, (Cambridge University Press 2002) [L]

Charles Taylor, “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” pp. 15-57 in *Philosophical Papers, Volume II: Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge University Press 1985) [L]

Wednesday, January 28: Political Theory as Political Science

John Gunnell, “American Political Science, Liberalism, and the Invention of Political Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 82, 1 (March, 1988):71-87 [L]

Robert Dahl, “The Behavioral Approach in Political Science,” *American Political Science Review* 55 (1961): 763-72 [L]

Ian Shapiro, “Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What’s Wrong with Political Science and What to do About It,” *Political Theory* 30, 4 (August, 2002): 596-619 [L]

Rogers Smith, “Reconnecting Political Theory to Empirical Inquiry, or, A Return to the Cave?” pp. 60-88 in Edward Mansfield and Richard Sisson eds., *The Evolution of Political Knowledge: Theory and Inquiry in American Politics* (Ohio State University Press, 2003) [L]

Wednesday, February 4: Political Theory as Political Criticism

Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation" *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969):763-72 [L]

Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge University Press 1981) [B]

Joseph Heath, "Ideology, Irrationality, and Collectively Self-defeating Behavior" *Constellations* 7,3 (2000): 363-71 [L]

James Tully, "Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity," *Political Theory* 30, 4 (August, 2002): 533-55 [L]

## **2. Approaches to Political Theory**

Wednesday, February 11: Utilitarianism

J.S. Mill, "Utilitarianism" pp. 272-338 in John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, *Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, ed. Alan Ryan (London: Penguin, 1987 [1871]) [L]

Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism," pp. 77-150 in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973) [B]

Ronald Dworkin, "What Is Equality? Part 1: Equality of Welfare," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10, 3 (Summer, 1981): 185-246 [L]

Wednesday, February 18: Kantian Liberalism

T.M. Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism," pp. 103-28 in Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, eds., *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 1982) [L]

Jürgen Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's *Political Liberalism*," *Journal of Philosophy* 92,3 (March, 1995) 109-31 [L]

John Rawls, "Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas," *Journal of Philosophy* 92,3 (March, 1995) 132-80 [L]

Wednesday, February 25: Marxism

Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, pp. 302-43; 361-384, 417-19 in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978) [B]

Marx and Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” pp. 469-500 in Tucker, ed. *Marx-Engels Reader* [B]

Allen Wood, “The Marxian Critique of Justice” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1,3 (1972): 244-82 [L]

G.A. Cohen, “Capitalism, Freedom, and the Proletariat,” pp. 163-82 in David Miller, ed., *Liberty: The Reader* (Oxford University Press, 1991) [L]

Wednesday, March 4: Feminism

J.S. Mill, “The Subjection of Women,” chs. 1-2 from the Norton Critical Edition, ed. Alan Ryan (New York: Norton 1997 [1869]). [L]

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Transl. H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1989 [1949]), introductions, translator’s note, chs. XVI and XXV, conclusion [L]

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1999) preface to the 1999 edition, preface to the 1990 edition, chapter 1 [L]

Nancy Fraser, “Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy: A Genealogy of the Current Impasse in Feminist Theory,” pp. 173-88 in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the “Postsocialist” Condition* (Routledge, 1997) [L]

Wednesday, March 11: NO MEETING (SPRING BREAK)

Wednesday, March 18: Poststructuralism

Paul Rabinow, “Introduction,” pp. 3-29 in Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984) [L]

Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” pp. 51-75 in Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984) [L]

Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” pp. 76-100 in Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984) [L]

Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), introduction and chapters 5 and 6 [L]

### 3. Concepts in Political Theory

Wednesday, March 25: Power

Robert Dahl, "Power as the Control of Behavior," pp. 37-58 in Steven Lukes, ed. *Power* (New York: New York University Press, 1986 [1969]) [L]

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ch. 1 [L]

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1979), Part I, ch. 1 and Part III, ch. 3 [L]

Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," pp. 208-26 (Afterword) in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) [L]

Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," pp. 17-34 in Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity) [L]

Wednesday, April 1: Freedom

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," pp. 118-72 in Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) [L]

Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?" pp. 175-93 in Alan Ryan, ed. *The Idea of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) [L]

Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chs. 1-3 [L]

Nancy Hirschmann, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom," pp. 200-22 in David Miller, ed., *The Liberty Reader* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2006) [L]

Wednesday, April 8: Justice

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005 [1971]), pp. 3-22 / sections 1-4; pp. 54-65 / sections 10-11; pp. 75-108 / sections 13 -17; pp. 118-122 / section 20; pp. 136-161 / sections 24-26 [B]

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 3-35, 54-59, 88-119, 149-164, and 167-174 [B]

Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), ch. 1 [L]

Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), chs. 1-2 [L]

Wednesday, April 15:            Equality

Ronald Dworkin, "What Is Equality? Part II: Equality of Resources" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10, 4 (Autumn, 1981): 283-345 [L]

Richard Arneson, "Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare" *Philosophical Studies* 56, 1 (May, 1989): 77-93 [L]

Amartya Sen, *Inequality Re-examined* (New York: Russell Sage, 1992), chs. 1-5 [B]

Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109, 2 (January, 1999): 287-337 [L]

Wednesday, April 22:            Democracy

Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), chs 6-9 [L]

Jon Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory," pp. 3- in James Bohman and William Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997) [L]

Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," pp. 239-52 in Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff, eds., *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) [L]

Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), chapters 1, 4, 5, and Conclusion [B]