Modern Political Philosophy 4332
John Glassford, Professor of Philosophy

Class: Thursday 2:00-4:50 Rassman Rm 112

Office: Rassman Rm 217
Office Hours: M W Th 12-2pm or by appointment
email: john.glassford@angelo.edu

Required Texts


PDF documents: [http://blackboard.angelo.edu](http://blackboard.angelo.edu)

Course Description

Modern political thought in the European tradition from Machiavelli on has been characterized by an unsentimental *secular* account of political power, by a concern with political legitimacy, and by the idea of the social contract. Students will read some of the key principle texts and the theorists of this tradition, including Hobbes (1588-1679), Locke (1632-1704), Rousseau (1712-1778), Mill (1806-1873), Marx (1818-1883) and finally, Nietzsche (1844-1900). Students will discover what lay behind some of the classic sound bites of the Western political tradition, from Hobbes’ famous claim that “life is nasty, brutish and short,” and Locke’s idea that “every man has a property in his own person: this nobody has a right to but himself,” through Rousseau’s ringing declaration that “man is born free but is everywhere in chains,” to Marx’s astonishing “a spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism,” and of course, not forgetting Nietzsche’s infamous suggestion that “God is dead.” Furthermore, as Machiavelli marked a turning point from medieval to modern thought (one of the themes of my course on Classical Political Philosophy), so Nietzsche inaugurated the turn towards post-modernity. So the concluding two weeks of the course will summarize some of these new so-called post-modern ideas.

ASU Mission Statement

*Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University System, delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines in a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co-curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.*
**Honor Code**
ASU expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the academic honor code, which is available at: http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf

Every effort will be made to accommodate students with disabilities in compliance with ASU OP 10.15. Students with disabilities and who may have special needs should let me know in good time so that arrangements can be made.

Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

**Aims and Objectives of the Course**

To promote an understanding of the salient features of the arguments advanced by some of the leading political thinkers of the past.

To develop the students' own ability to make their own assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments.

To encourage students to arrive at an informed view about the continuing relevance of these theories.

To develop students’ skills in disseminating and defending their ideas on these questions in both written and oral forms.

**Assessment of learning objectives**

Students will be assessed during the course of the semester by oral and written examination, and by multiple choice testing specifically designed to establish the extent to which students have learned these particular objectives in the course of their studies.

**Course requirements**

All course requirements must be met in full for the successful completion of the course. All assigned work must be completed, both reading and written assignments. Reading assignments (see syllabus below) are not "optional," these are the heart of the course and all reading assignments must be completed in full.

**Assessment**

There will be two short multiple choice tests worth (25% each). There will be a class
performance grade also worth 25% of overall grade. Each test will be based on elements of the course content, on the lectures, or on the course textbook, or both. And there will be a concluding short essay assignment due at the end of the semester and that will also be worth 25% of the overall grade.

**Grading Scale**

A-90% and over. Outstanding.
B-80% very good.
C-70% satisfactory.
D-60% minimum required.
F-less than 60%.

**Class Attendance**

Class attendance is compulsory and an attendance register will be distributed during each class. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have signed this. If you arrive late to class or leave early and do not sign the attendance register your attendance will not be counted. A medical certificate or doctor’s note should be provided if one or more classes is missed due to ill health or a family emergency. Failure to attend class without good reason may result in a zero score for the course overall. All students must come to class appropriately prepared for that class, e.g. you must read the assigned readings for that week, you must come to class equipped with your textbooks and be prepared to take notes. Finally, please note that each class is in effect two standard classes back to back thus each absence for a full day is actually missing two classes and will be counted as such. There will be a ten minute break roughly in the middle of the back to back class but students who do not return to class for the second session will be counted absent from that class.

**Class Participation**

Class discussions will add to, rather than simply review, the material in your texts. From time to time you will be expected to contribute to the class, and you will be asked to speak, and answer questions occasionally in class. The discipline of political philosophy requires that one understand lines of argument, rather than simply memorizing facts thus a vibrant and engaging discussion is particularly important in this course. Your active participation in class is a vital component of the learning experience, students should, therefore, be prepared to listen to, and comment on, even respectfully disagree with, the views and reflections of their fellow students as well as those of the teacher.

**The Course Reading Assignments**
(the calendar is approximate and each class will differ according to different abilities in reading and comprehension)

**Introductory**

Class topics: organizational meeting.

Introduction to issues of modern political theory.

**Thomas Hobbes** (weeks 1-4)

**Reading assignments:**


Accompanying radio broadcast

**John Locke** (weeks 4-6)

**Reading assignments:**


Accompanying radio broadcast

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (weeks 6-9)

**Reading assignments:**

*The Social Contract* (1762): Bks 1&2, and Bks 3&4

Accompanying radio broadcast

**John Stuart Mill** (weeks 9-12)

**Reading assignments:**
On Liberty (1859): Chaps 1-3, and Chaps 4-5.
Accompanying radio broadcast

Karl Marx (weeks 12-14)

Reading assignments:

Alienated Labour (1844): pps. 791-797.

Theses on Feuerbach, pps. 798-799.

German Ideology, pps. 800-811.

The Communist Manifesto (1848).
Accompanying radio broadcast

Friedrich Nietzsche (weeks 14-16)

Reading assignment:

Genealogy of Morality (1887): pps. 902-924, and pps. 924-946.

PDFs

Final Paper due: Tuesday, Dec 10, 1:00-3:00pm