

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF POLITICS

Political Science 1001
Section 1

C. L. Eubanks
Fall -- 2016

Part I: The Origins of Political Consciousness

Topics: The Principle of Subjectivity & the Homeless Spirit
Political Consciousness: The Transition from Tribal to Individuated Politics
Two Species of Political Being
Authority: Traditional/Customary and Rational/Legal
Private and Public Lives

Readings: Sophocles, *Antigone* from *Sophocles: The Oedipus Cycle*
**“Jihad vs. McWorld,” by Benjamin Barber
(<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/199203/barber>)

Part II: The Metaphysical Foundations of Politics

Topics: Politics and Knowing: Epistemology
Politics and Being: Ontology
Politics and Justice: Ethics
Democritus – Materialism – Marx
Plato – Idealism – Kant
Aristotle – Potentiality & Happiness
Nietzsche – Chaos and Postmodernism

Readings: **Democritus: “Introduction”
(http://www.humanistictexts.org/democritus.htm#_Toc509721154)
**Marx, Preface to A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm>
**Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, “The Allegory of the Cave”
(<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html>)
*Immanuel Kant on Servility
**Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I
(<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>)
*Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Book III, §125

Part III: The Normative and Empirical Dimensions of Politics

Topics: Politics as the Master Science
Politics as Search for Justice
Politics & Ethics
Political Economics
The Best Constitutions
Normative & Scientific Study of Politics

Readings: **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II, III, & V
(<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>)
**Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III
(<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>)

****EXAMINATION #1 – TENTATIVE DATE: SEPTEMBER 30****

Part IV: Disorder & Deliverance: The *Nomos* & the Foundations of Political Order

Topics: Power & Authority
Political Culture, Socialization, & Ideology
The American Political Culture
Protecting the *Nomos*
Homo Economicus

Readings: Euripides, *Hecuba*
*“The Behavior of Genes,” by Gene Robinson,
New York Times, December 13, 2004
*“What Exactly is Neoliberalism?” Interview of Wendy Brown
(<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/booked-3-what-exactly-is-neoliberalism-wendy-brown-undoing-the-demos>)
Michael Gerson, “The Kind of Village it Takes”

Part V: Structures of Governance: Absolutism vs. The Rule of Law

Topics: Power: Its Use and Abuse
The Covenant & the Contract
The Constitutional Republic
The Laws of the State & the Laws of the Gods

Readings: Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (Chapters XIII, XIV, XV, & XVIII)
(<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/hobbes/Leviathan.pdf>)
*David Brooks, “The Bursting Point”
Declaration of Independence (Esp. second paragraph)
(<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm>)
Sophocles, *Antigone* (Revisited)
**Henry David Thoreau, *Essay on Civil Disobedience*
(<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/WALDEN/Essays/civil.html>)
**Martin Luther King, Jr.
(http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)

Part VI: The International System: Conflict and Cooperation Among Nation-States

Topics: International Structures of Decision-Making
Conflict in the Anarchy of Sovereigns
The Middle East as History & Example
War, Terrorism, & Democracy

Readings: “Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart,”
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/08/11/magazine/isis-middle-east-arab-spring-fractured-lands.html>
*Chris Hedges, *War: Realities and Myths*
*Wendell Berry, “Making It Home”

****EXAMINATION TWO – TENTATIVE DATE: NOVEMBER 4****

Part VII: Democratic Republics

Topics: Characteristics of Democratic Regimes
Majority Rule and Minority Rights
Conflict Resolution in a Democracy
The Discourse of Democratic Politics

Readings: Euripides, *Hecuba* (Revisited)
**"Defining Democracy"
<http://www.ait.org.tw/infousa/zhtw/docs/whatsdem/whatdm2.htm>
**"Politics and the English Language," by George Orwell
(<http://www.resort.com/~prime8/Orwell/patee.html>)
**"Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," by Robert D. Putnam

Part VIII: Freedom, Identity, and the Needs of Strangers

Topics: Identity and Politics
Freedom and Ambiguity
The Needs of Strangers
Pathos and Community

Readings: Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*
**J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* (Chapters I, II, & III) (<http://www.bartleby.com/130/>)
**Sojourner Truth, *Ain't I a Woman*
(<http://www.kyphilom.com/www/truth.html>)
*Adrienne Rich, *What Does A Woman Need to Know?*
Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*

Part IX: The Philosopher, the Citizen, & the City

Topics: Pericles' Model of Citizenship
Socratic Model of Citizenship
Civic Virtue, Judgment, Skepticism & Ambiguity

Readings: **"Pericles' Funeral Oration," Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*
(<https://online.hillsdale.edu/document.doc?id=355>)
**Plato, *Apology* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>)

**FINAL EXAMINATION: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, FROM 7:30 TO 9:30 AM
DODSON AUDITORIUM**

COURSE OBJECTIVES: As the title of the course indicates, we are going to examine the **FUNDAMENTAL** issues of politics. We will begin with the origins of political consciousness. Thereafter, we will inquire into questions of power, authority, order and disorder, political cultures and ideologies, justice, liberation, identity, and the needs of the community. Moreover, we shall examine these and other concepts by learning how to construct normative arguments about politics and how to engage in the empirical study of politics. By its very nature, then, this course is an exploration of ideas; essentially it emphasizes a critical understanding of theoretical perspectives on politics.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: This course is a general education elective. Thus, it is designed to contribute to your understanding of self and of culture. In this light, the course is intended to acquaint you with some of the classic narratives and philosophies of western civilization, so as to give you an understanding of other cultures and other times; to acquaint you with some of the moral and ethical issues of politics; and to encourage critical and analytical thinking, as well as a precise and graceful use of language. Toward the latter end you should purchase and use a good dictionary, or at the very least consistently access the Merriam Webster Dictionary internet site at no cost. See: <http://www.m-w.com/>. As a social science general education elective this course is designed to acquaint you with various views of human nature, as well as how human beings organize themselves into political societies, real and imagined. You will be expected to achieve an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference. All general education courses are designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that facilitate the improvement of the civic life of communities.

READINGS: The reading materials required for the course consist of two books and a series of readings that are available on the Internet or Moodle. The books may be purchased at any of the area bookstores or on-line. They are: **Euripides, *Hecuba*; and Sophocles, *Sophocles: The Oedipus Cycle***. The Internet readings are identified with their Web Site addresses, given in the syllabus and on Moodle. They are indicated by a double asterisk. **If at any time these addresses do not work as hot links, please let me know.** You are also required to read essays from a variety of newspapers and magazines. I will assign these throughout the semester. Some are listed on the syllabus, designated with one asterisk; others may be added throughout the semester. These will be posted on Moodle. Finally, you should get in the habit of reading a good newspaper on a regular basis. Many are available on the internet at no cost: the *Christian Science Monitor* (<http://www.csmonitor.com/>). A hard copy of the *New York Times* is also available, free, at various campus locations.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMINATIONS: There will be **three major examinations** in this course. The **first two of these examinations will be given during the semester**, as designated on the syllabus, and will count 35 points each. Tentative dates have been given for these exams. The **final examination, which is scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, from 7:30 to 9:30 AM**, will count 70 points and will be cumulative in nature, although it will emphasize the last three sections of the course quite heavily. Rescheduling the Final Examination for a different time is possible only under certain special circumstance and must be approved by the Deans of your respective Colleges. (See Special Instructions for Final Exams on the LSU Web Site – Office of the Registrar – Final Exams. <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/registraroffice/academics/final-exams/>)

All regular examinations are objective in nature and will cover both lecture and reading materials. Absences from examinations are excused only for valid medical reasons or for legitimate extracurricular activities. **Make-up examinations are essay and will be given only for excused absences.** In addition, you will be asked to prepare a short normative justice project. This written assignment will count for 20 points. Instructions will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class. This assignment will be **due October 14**.

During the course of the semester eight reading quizzes will be given. They will be administered on Moodle and will be open for at least one week. Reading quizzes are intended to facilitate your ability to read and understand difficult texts. Each of these reading quizzes will be worth 5 points. Finally, at least eight one point bonus quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. You must attend class to acquire the password for a bonus quiz; no makeups are given for them. The maximum you can earn with bonus quizzes is 5 points. **No make-ups will be given for bonus quizzes.**

Course Examinations and Graded Assignments Summary

Examination #1	=	35 points
Examination #2	=	35 points
Normative Justice Project	=	20 points
Final Exam	=	70 points
Eight Reading Quizzes	=	40 points
Total	=	200 points

GRADES: Examinations may be curved, but in no instance will an examination curve or the course curve be higher than the following distribution:

Plus & Minus Grade Distribution

90% & Above = A	97 - 100% = A+	77 - 79 = C+
80-89 = B	93 - 96 = A	73 - 76 = C
70-79 = C	90 - 92 = A-	70 - 72 = C-
60-69 = D	87 - 89 = B+	67 - 69 = D+
Below 60 = F	83 - 86 = B	63 - 66 = D
	80 - 82 = B-	60 - 62 = D-

ADDITIONAL NOTES: LSU Policy on class attendance is clear: **“Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making up examinations, obtaining lectures notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed.”** Indeed, it is virtually impossible to do well in this course, or any course, without attending class on a regular basis. I do not permit any note-taking service to publish my lectures; nor do I post lecture notes on the internet. However, I do post lecture outlines. **Laptop computers and tablet computers are not allowed in class.** Recording devices are allowed, so long as it is understood that the recordings and notes are for your own personal use and **not for public dispensation or sale. Indeed, the latter is a violation of copyright protection of intellectual property.**

Finally, classroom etiquette requires that students be attentive and respectful to one another (that means listening when others are making comments or asking questions). If you must arrive late, please do so unobtrusively. Turn your cell phones off when attending class. **Leaving class early, except for emergencies, is unacceptable.** Similarly, talking during lectures and discussions, reading newspapers, taking catnaps, reading email and/or browsing the web are not acceptable classroom behavior. Excessive absenteeism and/or discourteous behavior will result in dismissal from class.

MOODLE: You may access Moodle through your MyLSU Account. **Indeed, you should check to see if you are properly registered in the course by accessing your Account.** In addition, Moodle will contain the course syllabus, with reading hot links, copies of assigned readings, lecture outlines, examination reviews, and, of course, your examination and assignment grades. It will also be used to administer the reading quizzes and the bonus quizzes.

OFFICE HOURS: My office hours this semester are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 to 10:30 AM and 11:30 to 12:30PM. If you find these hours inconvenient, please let me know and I will arrange another time for us to meet. Please do not hesitate to come to my office to discuss the course, your progress in it, or, for that matter, anything you like! My office is located in **Stubbs Hall, Room 237.** I encourage you to communicate by e-mail as well, particularly with questions about course material. My e-mail address is **poeubk@lsu.edu.** Office Phone: **578-1944.**