

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

This course is specifically designed to introduce students to the work and works of contemporary political theorists as they address the last century's dramatically changing political environment. In the first half of our course, contemporary political theory emerges as a series of restatements, illuminations, and critical perspectives on the classical liberalism that has characterized political philosophy for the last five centuries. Classical liberalism emphasized the rational, rights-bearing individual as the norm to be aspired to and realized and the political structures devised by human reason for the protection and realization of that rational, rights-bearing individual. Assuming a relationship between property and freedom, this approach gives voice to a preference for rule by the governed (now, "democracy") and suggests a liberation of human possibilities that, as we will see in the second half of the course, it has had difficulty accommodating in an era of permanent war. Two world wars, countless wars of decolonization, and, now, a "war on terror" resulted in the dislocation of masses of people from all over the world and has strained the credibility of this liberal approach. The shifting political environment has forced contemporary theorists to reconsider basic ideas like power, responsibility, and the character of both politics and human being. As is always the case with any form of theory or philosophy, the questions here are more enduring and interesting than the answers that derive from asking them.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Students will learn how to read philosophical works critically. Through reading assignments, discussion and written assignments the student will become familiar with various approaches to problems in contemporary political theory and how those attitudes shape our discussions of politics. The format of the class is lecture and discussion. All discussion and written work in the class is intended to develop students' critical thinking, reading and writing skills. As you do the classwork, as you read, write essays, study, and prepare for examinations, you should keep in mind that the assigned work in this class is intended to help you develop your skills in the following ways:

1) Recognizing IDEAS/FACTS, that is, develop the ability to recognize key ideas and facts.

--key *terms* and their *meanings* (including how those meanings differ across periods and thinkers)

--*who* wrote *what*

--what it *says*

2) Making CONNECTIONS, that is, develop the ability to see connections between and among ideas and the ability to see *how* an author says what s/he says:

--recognition of the *structure* of the author's discussion (what steps are involved in the way s/he tries to explain his or her position or persuade the reader?)

--recognition of the *assumptions* that inform the development of ideas

--recognition of the relative *weight* of ideas (e.g., what is the main *idea*? what are the supporting *ideas*?)

3) Using EXTENSIONS, that is, develop the ability to extend the ideas beyond their context, that is, to make use of them in your own thought without distorting them or violating their meaning.

--what are the implications of the author's position and the way s/he makes the argument?

--what did the author leave out?

--what value may we derive from the author's discussion?

The development of a critical voice means attending to each of these—IN ORDER. You cannot critique an argument unless and until you can make and defend it on its own terms. A concerted effort at understanding is the minimum requirement of a student of political theory and the mere baseline of what you will be asked to do in this course.

TEXTBOOK: The edition of the text was carefully chosen and is **REQUIRED** for the course. Students choosing to use a different or earlier edition are solely responsible for any reconciliation of differences.

--Bailey, et.al., editors, *The Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought, Volume Two: The Twentieth Century and Beyond* (Broadview Press, 2008)

--Thomas Spragens, "Politics and Political Theory" (available on Canvas)

CANVAS: Please note that this syllabus, supplementary handouts, study questions, writing assignments, and advance essay questions for the exams **WILL** be posted on Canvas on, before, or after the class period in which they are distributed. Exams, quizzes, class notes, and grades **WILL NOT** be posted.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Grading is done on a 10-point scale: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79, etc. The formal requirements of the course and their relative impact on your final grade are as follows:

1) Class Attendance

5%

As exposure to and participation in our class discussions is critical to your success in this course, attendance will be taken daily and constitute a percentage of your final grade. That grade will be calculated as follows: days present/25 class days = grade. Excuses (except for official university-approved events or religious observances) will not be accepted. See the university statement on religious observations in the student rights and responsibilities document at the end of this syllabus.

2) Weekly Reading Quizzes

10 x 2% = 20%

Each week, at the beginning of class, students will be given *in-class timed quizzes* to check comprehension of reading materials for that week's class. Designed to assure that the student is ready for class, these quizzes will consist of matching questions. *As these quizzes are designed also to further check attendance and participation, they cannot be made up.*

3) Text Identification Discussion Exercises

3 x 5% = 15%

At scheduled times during the semester, students will be given take-home quizzes to check comprehension of reading materials and in-class discussions. These will consist of text identification exercises (see sample on the next pages). *These quizzes cannot be made up.*

4) Writing Assignment

1 x 15% = 15%

In the first half of the semester, students will be given a take-home essay assignment covering some substantive aspect of the reading material. The assignment requires an essay in response--2 full pages in length, double-spaced, using only Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins all around--to be returned via email to rleblanc@uttyler.edu by 9am of the due date. Writing assignments are designed to help the student organize the material during the semester and prepare the student for the written portion of the examinations. *This assignment cannot be made up and late papers will NOT be accepted.*

5) Midterm Exam (20%) and Final Examination (25%)

45 %

The examinations in this class are cumulative and comprehensive. The midterm and final exams will consist of matching (10%), textual identification discussion questions (30%) and essay (60%) questions. The textual identification questions will challenge students to recognize and discuss the significance of important passages from the texts. The student's ability to recognize authors and their critical concepts will be emphasized. The essays will test the student's ability to link concepts across authors and situations. About a week before each examination, a number of possible essay topics will be distributed to the student. One will appear on the exam. *Make-up exams will be allowed ONLY in the event of a verifiable emergency and must be arranged for within a week of the examination date.*

NOTE: Students must complete all assigned work to receive credit and there will be NO EXTRA CREDIT available in this course. Items left unanswered are counted as incorrect.

ASSESSMENT: You will encounter the following types of assignments in this class. Your work will be evaluated according to the requirements of each. The assignments and evaluative criteria fit the learning objectives in the following way:

1) Matching Questions--quizzes and exams--are the most basic of FACT/IDEA questions. As you complete the reading assignments in this class, make sure to pay attention to:

A) The AUTHOR and TITLE of the work. The title can be especially helpful in discerning what the author thinks is important about an essay or piece of literature.

B) DEFINITIONS of key terms may appear here also. We will encounter important terms in class AND in our reading. Note them as you go and be prepared to identify them.

C) You may be asked to match KEY IDEAS to their authors or works.

2) Text Identification Discussion Exercises—take-home exercises and exams--test your reading of the material, your understanding of FACTS, IDEAS, and the CONNECTIONS among them.

A) Which AUTHOR wrote the text and which particular IDEA/PROBLEM did he or she intend to raise? Authors will raise particular questions owing to their particular concerns. One of your tasks is to keep up with the particular ideas and concerns in each author.

B) What does the text say? An initial and literal reading of the text should bear in mind that authors frequently RANK their concerns (most important, less important, least important, etc.). How they rank their concerns is often critical to an author's conclusion. Be prepared to identify what an author thinks in most important, etc.

C) How does the idea presented by the author fit within the author's larger argument? What are the ASSUMPTIONS underlying a particular author's work? We will discuss some of these in class, but you must learn to recognize them as you read and think about the work.

4) Essay Questions--on writing assignments and exams--will test your ability to bring a coherent understanding of the material to bear on a theme or problem posed by the question itself. *These are not exercises in regurgitating your notes.* The essays are designed to test your ability to make CONNECTIONS and EXTENSIONS in clear, precise language and reasoning. **YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR PROPER GRAMMAR, SPELLING, PARAGRAPH USAGE, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, etc.** In addition, you must be able to:

A) Demonstrate an UNDERSTANDING of the issues raised by the QUESTION in a THESIS paragraph. This is neither a mere restating of the question nor, worse, a "Once upon a time" opening sentence like "Throughout history human beings have been concerned with justice." Instead, a thesis involves you demonstrating to the reader that you understand the issues raised by the question and saying how you will approach them using the material required by the question.

B) Demonstrate a mastery of the facts/ideas articulated by the authors the question asks you to use. You will NOT be asked to summarize an author, but you WILL be asked to USE his or her work to answer the question. YOU decide which aspects of the author's work are most appropriate in solving the problem raised by the question.

C) Demonstrate an ability to make CONNECTIONS across authors and issues. How does one author's approach complement, supplement, or call into question another's approach? Think of the works you read this semester as part of an ongoing conversation about the full range of issues that make up the course material. As with conversations, the work of this class will illuminate issues but very rarely resolve them once and for all.

D) Conclude your discussion in an illuminating way, that is, to demonstrate an extended understanding of the ideas in question. Why was it important for your reader to have read your essay? What does the reader now know or is s/he called upon to think about that s/he wasn't before? DO NOT use phrases like "In conclusion." The content of your concluding paragraph should be sufficient to let the reader know that your essay has come to a happy ending.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

Matching:

A. John Rawls B. Michael Sandel C. Martha Minow

___1. Complex equality

___2. *Theory of Justice*

Text Identification Discussion Question

Identify the author, work, and significance of the following passage in a coherent paragraph of not more than 100 words:

"What is denied to the unencumbered self is the possibility of membership in any community bound by moral ties antecedent to choice; he cannot belong to any community where the self itself could be at stake."

Essay Question:

Liberalism is the dominant philosophical perspective in contemporary political theory and much ink has been spilled trying to save it from both its proponents and its adherents. Use the work of (a) Rawls; (b) Sandel; and (c) Okin; to write an analytical account of this discussion. You should deal with what liberalism is, how it works, and what its strengths and shortcomings are and why (i.e., are there new political conditions it can or cannot handle?).

SYLLABUS

NOTE: Students are expected to come to class having read the reading assigned for that day's class. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MATERIAL IN THE READINGS—WHETHER THERE IS EXPRESS DISCUSSION OF IT IN CLASS OR NOT—AND THE LECTURES/DISCUSSIONS. Questions about all material are always welcome and should form the lion's share of our experience in this course.

13 Jan M **Quiz** *General Introduction and Contemporary Political Philosophy*
 Read: Syllabus
 Read: Thomas Spragens, "Politics and Political Theory" (available on Canvas)
 Read: Introduction to "John Rawls (1921-2008)" (pp. 265-68)

20 Jan M **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY—NO CLASS**

I. Liberalism and Its Discontents

27 Jan M **Quiz 1** *John Rawls and Contemporary Political Philosophy*
 Read: Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice* (pp. 265-273; 278-81; 287-96)

03 Feb M **Quiz 2** *Rawls and Sandel*
 Read: Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice* (pp. 265-273; 278-81; 287-96)
 Read: Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self" (pp. 384-391)
TEXT ID EXERCISE #1 DUE to rleblanc@uttyler.edu by 9am

10 Feb M **Quiz 3** *Sandel and Rawls*
 Read: Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self" (pp. 384-391)
 Read: Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus" (pp. 296-311)

17 Feb M **Quiz 4** *Rawls and Okin*
 Read: Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus" (pp. 296-311)
 Read: Okin, "Justice as Fairness for Whom?" (pp. 489-501)
WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE to rleblanc@uttyler.edu by 9am

24 Feb M **Quiz 5** *Susan Moller Okin and Iris Marion Young*
 Read: Okin, "Justice as Fairness for Whom?" (pp. 489-501)
 Read: Young, "Impartiality and the Civic Public" (pp. 202-216)

02 Mar M **MIDTERM EXAMINATION (6pm-8pm)**

9-13 Mar **SPRING BREAK—no class meetings**

II. Rethinking Political Power

16 Mar M **Quiz 6** *Hannah Arendt*
 Read: Arendt, from *The Human Condition*, Ch. 28, Power and the Space of Appearance. (pp. 86-90)
 Read: Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding" (pp. 90-106)

23 Mar M **Quiz 7** *Hannah Arendt*
 Read: Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding" (pp. 90-106)

30 Mar M **Quiz 8** *Frantz Fanon*
 Read: from *Wretched of the Earth* (pp. 190-201)
TEXT ID EXERCISE #2 DUE to rleblanc@uttyler.edu by 9am

- 06 Apr M *Michel Foucault*
Quiz 9 Read: Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (pp. 108-125)
- 13 Apr M *Michel Foucault*
Quiz 10 Read: Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (pp. 108-125)
 Read: Foucault, Lecture Two (pp. 125-142)
- 20 Apr M *Michel Foucault*
Quiz 11 Read: Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (pp. 108-125)
 Read: Foucault, Lecture Two (pp. 125-142)
TEXT ID EXERCISE #3 DUE to rleblanc@uttyler.edu by 9am
- 27 Apr M **FINAL EXAMINATION (6pm-8pm)**

Notes on Classroom Etiquette or THE RULES

--**Class starts promptly. Be here on time.** After the first week or so of the semester, you WILL be denied entry if you arrive more than 5 minutes late. Late arrival is disruptive to the classroom experience of your classmates and, perhaps even your professor. In any case, it works against the mission of the classroom. To this end, I suggest you not drive from class to class—gas is too expensive and we could all use the exercise.

--**The format of the class is lecture and conversation. Come prepared.** The classroom is a safe place to ask questions. But they should be questions that derive from work with and in the material and NOT because you did not do the assignment.

--**You will not read newspapers, textbooks, or study for other classes while in this class.** If you do so, you will be asked to leave—and in no uncertain terms.

--**Turn all cellphones and other electronic devices off (or set to vibrate) for the duration of class.** You are not to accept calls or engage in text messaging during class. If you do so, I will confiscate your device. If you are awaiting a call or message of extreme importance, I suggest you skip class and accept the consequences.

--**You may use a laptop, but only for the purpose of taking notes.** If I catch you surfing the web, playing games, or engaged in some other activity not related to the work of the class, you will lose your laptop privileges.

--**You are responsible for material missed due to absence.** I suggest you exchange notes with other responsible students in any case, but particularly if you have to miss. I am happy to answer questions about this material, but will not rehearse my lectures or our class discussions.

--**Some semesters, life gets in the way.** Should you have one of these semesters, I am more than happy to talk to you about what to do. But if the trauma is too great, I strongly suggest you drop one or all of your courses. Your education is vitally important, but there are things that outrank even education sometimes—and *you have to make that call when it is necessary*. **I cannot grade you on how well or poorly you deal with your life at given moments.** Your grades reflect your performance in class—not how well you are dealing with other things. I wish all of us a semester in which these things aren't issues.

IMPORTANT: This syllabus reflects the minimum requirements of our professional relationship over the course of this semester. By staying in this class, you signify that you understand the contents of this syllabus and you agree to the terms and conditions stated herein.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

UT Tyler Honor Code Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 12.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date (January 27) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid State-Mandated Course

Drop Policy Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester. (Revised 05/17)

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.

iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

VIOLATION OF THESE STANDARDS will be reported to the University Disciplinary Committee and you will fail the assignment and/or the course.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

QUIZ ANSWER SHEET

NAME _____

QUIZ (Practice):

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 1:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 2:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 3:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 4:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 5:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 6:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 7:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 8:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 9:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 10:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 11:

I.
Are you here? ____

- II.**
- 1. ____
- 2. ____
- 3. ____
- 4. ____
- 5. ____

QUIZ 12:

I. Are you here? ____ **II.** 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____