Graduate Study in Political Theory

What is politics and how does it differ from the political? What are the conditions of modern political existence? What place has the human in these modern political conditions? What does it mean to live among others and have to make decisions for the entire community?

Political theory is an approach to political phenomena that asks after the assumptions and causes behind appearances that make up our political life. With an eye toward re-visioning and, where necessary, reforming our collective political lives, political theory clarifies concepts, identifies and studies the relationships among ideas, and how those ideas and relationships shape the way we think about and do politics. In this course, we will explore this methodological approach and its uses through the detailed examination of three major thinkers in the subdiscipline. The outline of the course is as follows:

(1) The Problem of the Political. Here we engage the work of German political philosopher Carl Schmitt as he clarifies the difference between politics and the political. Schmitt contends that the political is a distinct sphere of human activity that needs to be kept separate from others like the ethical and the aesthetic.

(2) Politics and Personhood. Through a critical survey of the work of Hannah Arendt, we confront one of the oft overlooked by-products of modern politics: the stateless individual or outsider. Seeing politics and the political from the perspective of one outside the political community, especially the modern state, reveals the hidden assumptions of modern politics, especially its willingness to deem some as human (and worthy of a political life) and others as not.

(3) The Implicating Other. In her work Precarious Life, Judith Butler engages the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States to ask after the political consequences of the many ways we are implicated in the lives of others and they in ours. Butler explores phenomena like mourning, self- and other-identity, and the potential others have for undoing us, as she examines the way our political leaders, the media, and members of the academy responded to the trauma of 9/11.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to

(1) Identify the key elements of the political theorist’s approach through direct engagement with primary texts in political theory.

(2) Recognize and apply the methods of political theory to key questions of modern political life through reading and reflection, written and oral communication, and both formal and informal modes of interpersonal interaction.

(3) Identify and be able to practice select norms of the political science profession, including peer evaluation, presentation of work, and the development of a collaborative and scholarly intellectual community.

The format of the seminar is hybrid, a blend of face-to-face seminar and computer-based learning on Blackboard. Much of the course learning activity has been moved online, making it possible for our class time to be spent in discussion of our work in issues related to our subject matter. Our face-to-face time will be student-driven presentation and discussion. All discussion and written work in the seminar is intended to develop your critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Discussions and presentations are intended to develop your public voice to go with the voice trained and given expression in written work. In the course, you will be introduced to the practices of political science. You are the show and your grade will reflect your performance.

Blackboard

All online work for this hybrid course will be done on Blackboard. All relevant information may be found on this course’s page there. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with assignments, due dates, etc.
Textbooks

*handout (available on Blackboard) from Leslie Paul Thiele; online readings from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy on Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt; and videos where assigned

Course Requirements

All grading is done on a 10-point scale: A = 90-100; b = 80-89; C = 70-79... Remember that in graduate courses, a grade of “C” or below is considered a failing grade.

The formal requirements of the course and their relative impact on your grade are as follows:

(1) **Attendance and Class Participation Formal and Informal** 10%
You are expected to attend class weekly and to participate in our class discussions. This is not a lecture class; it is a seminar. Bring your readings, your questions, your answers, and your insights to class and be ready to articulate and discuss them.

(2) **Reading Summaries (due assigned Mondays by 12noon)** 10%
Each subunit (every other week) when you are not writing a formal essay, you will post one paragraph (250 word) analytical summaries of each reading (one paragraph for each chapter or essay unless otherwise noted). Your analytical summary paragraph should (1) identify the main argument(s) of the work, (2) the major points the author is trying to make, and (3) how he or she used those points and examples to make the argument. Your paragraph should not be a list of answers to the above questions or a set of statements from your notes or a list of any sort. Rather, it should be a well-conceived and readable description of the work that would communicate its meaning and significance to someone who has not read the work.

(3) **Peer Response to Summaries (due assigned Wednesdays by 6pm)** 5%
Each subunit, when you are not writing a formal essay, you will post a one paragraph response (300 words) to the summaries (as a whole) of one of your group-mates. Your response should be written in the mode of being helpful and supportive, but it must also be more substantial than “nice job.” Specifically, your response should address the following: (1) Can you identify the general argument and major points of the work in the summaries? (2) Are the summaries clear and well-written (one paragraph, concise but complete sentences, etc.)? (3) Note if and where the summaries brought out important points that you may have overlooked. Again you are writing a paragraph, not a list of answers to these questions. Be thoughtful, clear, and helpful.

(4) **Issue Identification Exercises (due assigned Fridays by 6pm)** 5%
Each subunit, when you are not writing a formal essay, identify (2) key issues or questions you find in this week’s readings that need to be developed and discussed in our face-to-face meeting. For each issue, post a brief paragraph (150-200 words) in which you (1) clearly identify the issue; (2) explain where and how you encountered it in our reading; and (3) explain why the issue is urgent. Come to class ready to explain and discuss your work with your classmates.

(5) **Drafts of your Essays (2 x 5% each)** 10%
By Monday at 6pm of online weeks when we are writing essays (i.e., after Unit 1 and Unit 2), you will post a full draft of your essay for evaluation by your peer respondent. These will be fully prepared essays, not notes or lists or other half-measures. In addition, your final essay will be evaluated in light of how your final draft responded to (or not) the comments made regarding this first draft.

(6) **Peer Response to Draft Essay (due Thursday 6pm of online essay weeks)** 10%
In online weeks when essays are being prepared, you will write and post a one paragraph response (300 words) to the draft of your group partner’s essay. Your response should be written in the mode of being helpful and supportive, but it must also be more substantial than “nice job.” Specifically, your response should address the following: (1) Can you identify the general argument and major points of the essay? (2) Are the essay’s points drawn together in a way that is readily
understood by the reader? (3) Is the essay clear and well-written (uses paragraphs, concise but complete sentences, etc.)? (4) Does the essay bring out important points that you may have overlooked. Again you are writing a paragraph, not a list of answers to these questions. Be thoughtful, clear, and helpful.

(7) Essays (2 x 15% each) and Final Essay (20%) 50%
At the end of Unit 1 (Schmitt) and Unit 2 (Arendt), each student will be required to write an analytical essay in response to a prompt grounded in that unit’s readings and our discussions. These essays should be not less than 5 or more than 7 pages in length (typed, 12 point font, 1 double-spaced, 1-inch margins all round). Prompts will be posted two weeks before the essay is due. You may find specific guidelines about the paper on Blackboard under the appropriate week’s assignments.

IMPORTANT: Preparation of your essays will proceed online according to the following schedule:
1) Friday of the first face-to-face week by 2pm: Post a one-paragraph (250 words) paper topic proposal for approval by your professor. Your paragraph should be well-written, clear and address itself to the following: What are the issues raised by the topic and how will you use the authors you have chosen to address them? What do you expect to find?
2) Monday 6pm of online week: Post a full draft of your essay (5-7 pages following all rules of grammar, etc.) to be evaluated by your peer respondent.
3) Thursday 6 pm of online week: Post your peer evaluation of your partner’s draft essay.
4) Monday of the face-to-face meeting: Post a final copy of your essay on Blackboard by 12 noon and bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to discuss it with your colleagues.

Your Final Essay, due Tuesday, May 1st at 9am and will be 5-7 pages and will cover the material of the entire course. You may find specific guidelines about the paper on Blackboard under the appropriate week’s assignments.

Notes on Etiquette or THE RULES

--Online: please interact with one another in a helpful, professional manner. We are here to form a collegial, collaborative community of scholars and to begin practicing the civil norms that go along with such a community. In other words, be nice—or else! ;).
--Face-to-face 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 face-to-face class is some lecture, student presentation, and conversation. 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.
--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.
Readings should be completed by the date assigned. All assignments should be completed and posted on Blackboard by the due date and times listed.

22 Jan M  **Face-to-Face: Introduction to Political Theory**  
--Leslie Paul Thiele, “Theory and Vision” from *Thinking Politics* (handout on Blackboard)  
--Video: Steven B. Smith, “Introduction: What is Political Philosophy?”  
--Video: Nicole Pepperell, “Classical Liberalism”

**UNIT ONE: Carl Schmitt—The Problem of the Political**  
*Carl Schmitt’s conception of politics is receiving a lot of attention some eighty years after he wrote because of his apparent prescience regarding the nature of politics and the exercise of political power. What is the relationship of the political to other spheres like the moral or the religious? What is the role of “the enemy” in his political thought? How would these two notions (the distinction between the political and other activities and the presence of “the enemy”) translate into our concern with political otherness?*

29 Jan M  **FACE-TO-FACE: Schmitt: The Political and the Question of Sovereignty**  
--Schmitt, *Concept of the Political* (pp 3-80)  
--VIDEO: Pepperell, “Carl Schmitt: On the Contradiction between Parliamentarism and Democracy” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqgLlYO4JS0  
**Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Mon. 1/29 @ 12pm)**

5 Feb M  **FACE-TO-FACE: Schmitt: The Political and the Question of Sovereignty**  
--Schmitt, “The Age of Neutralizations and Politicizations” from *Concept of the Political* (pp 80-96)  
--Schmitt, *Political Theology* (pp vii-66)  
**Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Mon. 2/5 @ 12pm)**

12 Feb M  **ONLINE: Schmitt: The Political as Theological**  
--Schmitt, *Concept of the Political* (pp 3-80)  
--Schmitt, “The Age of Neutralizations and Politicizations” from *Concept of the Political* (pp 80-96)  
--Schmitt, *Political Theology* (pp vii-66)  
**Online Assignments: Paper Topic (Fri. 2/9 @ 2pm); Draft essay (Mon. 6pm); Peer evaluation (Thu. 6pm)**

19 Feb M  **FACE-TO-FACE: Schmitt—The Problem of the Political**  
**ESSAY DUE: Post a final draft on Blackboard by 12noon and** bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to give a 15-minute presentation of your essay and discuss it with your classmates.
UNIT TWO: Hannah Arendt—Politics and Personhood

Hannah Arendt takes us from the situation of the stateless person, through a careful examination of the mechanisms that confront the stateless person (especially the experience of Jews), a subtle working through of the psychology of both the subject and the object in the encounter, to questions of response—and what those responses mean to our understandings of political order.

26 Feb M ONLINE: Arendt I: Stateless Persons and the Character of Modern Politics
Arendt from The Portable Hannah Arendt:
--“Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility” (146-156)
--Video: Hannah Arendt Interview on Zur Person, online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ds0ImQfV5s4

Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Mon. 2/26 @ 12noon); Peer Response to Summaries (Thu. 6pm); Issue Identification exercise (Fri. 6pm)

5 Mar M FACE-TO-FACE: Stateless Persons and the Character of Modern Politics
Arendt from The Portable Hannah Arendt:
--“Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility” (146-156)
--Video: Hannah Arendt Interview on Zur Person, online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ds0ImQfV5s4

12 Mar M Spring Break

19 Mar M ONLINE: Arendt II: Politics Conscious and Unconscious
--“Labor, Work, Action”; “The Public and the Private Realm” (pp. 167-230)
--Video: Nicole Pepperell, “Hannah Arendt: Ideology and Terror” online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fDTshkJpys

Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Mon. 3/19 @ 12noon); Peer Response to Summaries (Thu. 6pm); Issue Identification exercise (Fri. 6pm)
UNIT THREE: Judith Butler—Implications of the Other

In her engagement with the aftermath of September 11th, 2001, Butler asks after the ways the presence of others unsettle our senses of ourselves. She explores violations of intimacy and privilege, questions about who can be mourned, and the role and abuse of labels—like anti-Semitism—in stifling our exploration of the concrete issues they emerged to combat.
IMPORTANT: The instructor reserves the right to make appropriate adjustments in this syllabus and in course requirements as conditions warrant. He pledges NOT to make changes disadvantageous to the pedagogical mission of the course or prejudicial to the student’s opportunity to learn the course material. By staying in this class, you agree to this and all the other terms and conditions of this syllabus.

UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM POLICIES

Policy Regarding Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is against university as well as community standards. Academic dishonesty is defined as: cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses. Plagiarism is defined as submitting the language, ideas, or thoughts or work of another as one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

--use of direct quotations without quotation marks and without credit to the source;
--paraphrasing or using direct quotations within quotation marks without credit to the source;
--failure to provide adequate citations for material obtained through electronic research;
--downloading and submitting work from electronic databases without citation;
--submitting material created/written by someone else as one’s own, including purchased term/research papers;
--allowing someone to copy or submit one’s work as his/her own;
--participation in a group project which presents plagiarized materials;
--submitting the same paper in more than one course without the knowledge and approval of the instructors involved;
--assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one’s work to be used in this fashion;
--aiding and abetting another student’s dishonesty.

Cheating is defined generally as copying from someone else’s exam, homework, or laboratory work. Types of cheating include but are not limited to:

--using notes or other materials during a test or exam without authorization;
--obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual, or unauthorized use of books, notes, texts, or other materials;
--obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination;
--taking an examination for another student or arranging for another person to take an exam in one’s place;
--altering or changing test answers after submitting it for grading, or after grades have been awarded;
--releasing information about an examination to anyone who has yet to take the examination.

Disciplinary procedures for incidents of academic dishonesty may result in any of the following:
(1) permanent dismissal from the university; (2) suspension from the university for not less than one semester; (3) outright failure of the course (an automatic final grade of ‘F’); (4) canceling the student’s enrollment in the class without a grade (‘W’); (5) awarding a failing grade on the exam, test, or assignment in question; (6) requiring the student to take another examination or test on the same material or to resubmit the paper or assignment based on a specific topic.

In all cases of substantiated academic dishonesty, a permanent record of academic discipline will be established in the Office of the Dean of Students. These records are searched regularly by government agencies, licensing authorities, certification authorities, and others. The existence of such a record can bar entry to many occupations.

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.utttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness
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. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.utttyler.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.

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 Services
In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services office in UC 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.

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.

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.