

**PLSC 115: Introduction to Political Theory**  
**Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:30 – 11:20**  
**Spring Semester 2017**

**Professor:** Gary V. Wood  
**Office:** Buller Hall 128  
**Hours:** M/T/W/Th: 2:00-4:00 PM or by appointment  
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**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course provides a general overview of the history of political philosophy from antiquity to modern times. It will examine such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Rawls. The course explores such issues as human nature, the good life, freedom, justice, and authority as understood by pre-modern and modern theorists. Students will gain an understanding of the differences between ancient and modern political thought and, it is hoped, will come away with at least some appreciation of the fundamental and recurring questions we shall ponder.

**Required Texts:**

Larry Arnhart, *Political Questions: Political Philosophy from Plato to Rawls*, Fourth Edition, (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2016).

**Course Requirements:**

1. Exams: There will be three exams as indicated in the class schedule. Students will bring a blue book and a pen to the exams. All three exams will be essay. The two midterm exams will be worth 50 points each and the final exam will be worth 75 points. The exams are not cumulative.
2. Term Paper due **Wednesday, April 26, 2017** (100 points): There will be a handout on the 8-10 page paper the second week of the term.
3. Quizzes. There will be ten quizzes worth 10 points each. Since your lowest two quizzes will not be counted, no make-up quizzes will be given.

4. Class Participation. Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis, to be current in the readings, and to contribute to classroom discussion. The instructor will assume that you have completed reading assignments before class, and will feel free to ask questions of individual students about them. More than four (4) absences will result in the forfeiture of the 5% participation component, as will excessive tardiness, early departure, un-preparedness, disruption, and inattention. A portion of some class periods will be devoted to Socratic questioning regarding reading assignments. Students will be questioned randomly and will receive five points for substantive responses; 5 points will be deducted if the student is not present or is unable to give a substantive response. Each student will receive a grade based on the percentage of substantive responses they gave in relation to the total number of questions they were asked during the semester.

**Grading:**

Mid-Term Exams:	100 points	30%
Term Paper	100 points	25%
Final Exam	75 points	20%
Quizzes	80 points	20%
Participation		5 %

**Grading Scale:**

A 93-100%, A- 90-92%, B+ 87-89%, B 83-86%, B- 80-82%, C+ 76-79%, C 70-75%, C- 65-69%, D 55-64%

**Missed Exams and Late Assignments:**

In fairness to other students, late exams will be given only in the event of documented medical disability or a death in the student's immediate family. Present such documentation the first time you broach the subject with the teacher. Conflicts with work schedules, school schedules, vacations, or non-emergency family matters are not valid reasons for missed exams. Late papers will be accepted, but penalized one letter grade per day late.

**Extra Credit Work:**

The student's time and energy should be devoted to meeting the requirements of this course. For this reason, extra credit assignment will not be offered.

**Disability Accommodation:**

If you qualify for special assistance under the American Disabilities Act, please see the instructor as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made.

### Assignment Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule. Reading assignments and dates may be adjusted, but assigned material should be read prior to class.

- Jan. 09: Introduction  
11: Plato: Arnhart, 11-40  
13: Plato: *Republic*, Bk. I (handout)
- 16: Martin Luther King Day**  
18: Plato: Bk. II, (handout)  
20: Plato: Bk. VII (handout)
- 23: Aristotle: Arnhart, 41-67  
25: Aristotle: *Politics*, Bks. I, III (handout)  
27: Continued
- 30: Continued
- Feb. 01: Augustine: Arnhart, 69-88  
03: Aquinas: Arnhart, 89-119
- 06: Continued  
08: Review  
10: **Exam #1**
- 13: Machiavelli: Arnhart, 121-151  
15: Machiavelli: Chps. VI- VIII (handout)  
17: Machiavelli: Chps. XV-XIX,XXV (handout)
- 20: Presidents' Day**  
22: Descartes: Arnhart, 153-176  
24: Hobbes: Arnhart, 177-217
- 27: Hobbes: *Leviathan*, Chp XIII (handout)
- Mar. 01: Locke: Arnhart, 1-9, 219-280  
03: Locke: *The Second Treatise*, Chps I-IV (handout)
- 06: Locke: Chp. 5  
08: Review  
10: **Exam # 2**
- 13: Rousseau: Arnhart, 281-304  
15: Continued  
**17: Spring Break**

- 27: Smith: 305-375  
29: Continued  
31: Hegel: Arnhart, 377-396
- Apr. 03: Continued  
05: Marx: Arnhart, 397-434  
07: Continued
- 10: Nietzsche: Arnhart, 435-463  
12: Continued  
14: Strauss: 465-506
- 17: Continued  
19: Rawls: Arnhart, 507-541  
21: Pinker: 543-574
- 24: Continued  
26: **Term Papers Due.** Course Summary and Review for Final Exam

**(Final Exam: Wednesday, May 3, 10:30-12:30)**