PROPOSAL TO LIST A COURSE, OR TO RENEW THE LISTING OF A COURSE, 
IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION SOCIAL SCIENCES AREA 
AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Renewal

Course designation, number, and title: (e.g.: PHIL/1000/ Introduction to Philosophy)
Poli: 2060 Introduction to Political Theory

Course designation  Course number  Course title

Semester credits: 3  Contact hours per week: Lecture: 3  Laboratory: 

Department (or other unit) offering the course and proposing its inclusion: Poli:

College or School: Humanities and Social Sciences

Please attach the requested information. Submit a single electronic copy (pdf file) bearing unit and college/school signatures to gened@lsu.edu.

Chair of the proposing unit, affirming approval by its faculty or appropriate faculty committee:

Signature: Date: April 25, 2012
Typed or printed name: James A. Stewart Jr.

Dean of College or School, affirming support of the proposal:

Signature: 
Typed or printed name:

Chair, Faculty Senate Committee on General Education, affirming approval by the Committee:

Signature: 
Typed or printed name:

Office of Academic Affairs:

Signature: 
Typed or printed name:
Proposal to Renew the Listing of Political Science 2060
In General Education at Louisiana State University

1. See attached syllabus.

2. Political Science 2060 introduces students to some of the most influential political thinkers in all of history. These thinkers write in different time periods and come from a wide-variety of cultures. Most of the thinkers are directly concerned with issues that have a bearing on global interdependence and all of them are concerned with economic forces and political dynamics.

3. Assessment of Objective.

a). The midterm and final for POLI 2060 directly assess whether or not the students understand how political and economic forces relate to global interdependence. To name just a few examples of the concepts that are tested by exam questions: Malcolm X argues that African Americans should not think in terms of civil rights, but instead should think in terms of human rights. He suggests that African Americans take their grievances to the United Nations and understand themselves as part of a larger, global system of exploitation by Europeans. More broadly, the basic claim that there is such a thing as human rights can be traced back to Locke and Hobbes before him. The midterm and final tests whether students understand the critical ideas forwarded by these two thinkers regarding our natural predisposition for war and peace, our natural rights and obligations and the political implications of these rights. Locke is also keenly interested in economic forces, offering a theory of the origin of private property, which he claims is universally recognized. Three other thinkers covered in the course, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Mahatma Gandhi, also offer theories with global implications, suggesting that, respectively, economics, violence and nonviolence drive politics. The two exams for the course test whether students have acquired knowledge of all of these ideas and more. More generally, in comparing these various thinkers, students gain a sense of the diversity of ideas about political dynamics and economic forces that spring from various times, places and cultures.

b). Instructors for the sections will agree upon some common set of questions that demonstrate an “an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.” These questions will include multiple choice questions and/or essay-style questions.

Examples of multiple-choice questions are:

According to Aristotle, “[W]e may say that while [an association] grows for the sake of ______, it exists for the sake of ________.

a) friendship, subsistence.
b) a good life, mere life
c) mere life, a good life
d) none of the above
According to Machiavelli, new rulers who have not Inherited their state and wish to effectively control a new possession:
   a) need the favor of the inhabitants
   b) should garrison an army there
   c) should live in the state and colonize it
   d) a) and b)
   e) a) and c)

According to Gandhi, non-violence:
   a) should be restricted to saints
   b) can only be practiced by great political leaders
   c) can only work on good people
   d) is for everyone and excludes no one

According to Luther, true Christians:
   a) do not need civil government in their relations with one another
   b) need civil government in their relations with non-Christians
   c) will soon fill the world
   d) a) and b)
   e) b) and c)

According to Goldman, morality:
   a) is a stabilizing force that helps society function
   b) destroys creativity, critical thinking and humor
   c) is a lie and a superstition
   d) a) and b)
   e) b) and c)

Assessment criteria:
   • 90% correct = Exceeds Expectations
   • 70-80% correct = Meets Expectations
   • Under 70% = Did not Meet Expectations

It is expected that if 70% of the students meet or exceed expectations, the objective will have been met.

Examples of essay-style question:

Aristotle says that “man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all”. Why does Aristotle think that justice and law makes us better than other animals? Is it true that people who separate themselves from community are necessarily bad?
Hobbes seems to be arguing that an all-powerful king is the best way to ensure peace and stability. However, does not experience show that all-powerful kings often abuse their power and create unstable situations?

Faculty will assess each student’s answer to the essay based upon the following criteria:

- Answer demonstrates a thorough, precise and critical understanding of the question asked = 90% & Above = Exceeds Expectations
- Answer demonstrates a thorough understanding of the questions asked but without significant critical perspective = 80-89% = Meets Expectations
- Answer demonstrates a reasonably accurate and general sense of the questions asked = 70-79% = Meets Expectations
- Answer demonstrates little understanding of the questions asked = 60-69% = Did Not Meet Expectations
- Answer demonstrates little understanding and little effort to answer the questions. Below 60% = Did Not Meet Expectations

It is expected that if 70% of the students meet or exceed expectations, the objective will have been met.
This course is an introduction to basic concepts of analysis of normative and empirical political thought and fulfills the general education requirement for the social sciences at LSU, which reads as follows: LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference. Most of the thinkers we read come from the Western tradition of political thought, but the cultural and linguistic differences within that tradition will be highlighted. Moreover, all of the ideas presented here have had global reach, affecting economic and political dynamics around the world.

Course Description

We begin by jumping directly into controversial arguments about politics. The first section of the course explores the work of thinkers who are particularly concerned with encouraging stability and order in human affairs. In Thomas Hobbes, Edmund Burke and Martin Luther we find deference to established order and authority, convincing arguments for the value of custom and habit, and a preference for unrestrained government power. Plato’s Republic also recommends deference to authority – in this case, the philosopher-rulers of his city in words. However, Plato is relatively less concerned with stability and more concerned with describing what a just city might look like.

In this way, Plato provides a nice bridge to the second section of the course. Here, we examine thinkers who are profoundly dissatisfied with the status quo. In Karl Marx, Simone de Beauvoir, Malcolm X and Emma Goldman we find the order of the day diagnosed as corrupt, unjust or oppressive. Instead of fretting about the difficulties or dangers of change, each attempts to describe how we can revolutionize the way we live and interact with one another in order to improve our condition.

Halfway through the course, we will begin the course again by stepping back and asking a fundamental question: What have we been talking about? That is, what exactly is politics? We read Aristotle’s founding conceptualization of politics, Hannah Arendt’s attempt to build on it and then turn to John Locke and the Federalist papers to get a sense of what the meaning of politics has traditionally meant in the American context.

This will lead us to the final and most practically relevant stage in our exploration of key concepts in politics. In this section we will examine some texts that are examples of, or suggest methods for the conduct of politics. Max Weber, Socrates, Niccolo Machiavelli, Mahatma Gandhi and Pericles each give
us a distinctive understanding of what the conduct of effective and ethical politics looks like and their prescriptions are profoundly at odds with one another. The class will discuss what the methods of politics look like today in the United States and around the globe and what methods you would like pursue.

**Required Texts**

*Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, edited by Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon.

On Moodle:
- Mahatma Gandhi, *For Pacifists*
- Hannah Arendt, “Labor, Work, Action” in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*
- Aristotle, *The Ethics*, Book 6

**Course Assignments and Policies**

**4 Reading Summaries (%20)**

On four separate occasions, you will bring to class and turn in a typed, one-page, single-spaced summary of the reading for that day. Each summary will be worth %5 of your grade.

Each reading summary should contain the following three components:

1) a summary of the important ideas and themes in each of the major divisions/components of the reading (i.e. a summary of each section, chapter, etc.). That is, for each section of the reading you should ask yourself and then answer the question: “What is the main point the thinker is trying to make here?”

2) You must include page numbers at the end of every three sentences or so in your summary. These will indicate where I can find the textual evidence supporting your claims as to the meaning of this part of the text. You might also want to include brief quotations of particularly important or outstanding passages.

3) The summaries should read clearly and consist of complete sentences and carefully constructed short paragraphs. The point here is for you to give a concise and plausible interpretation of the main point of the reading.

**4 Reading Questions (%20)**

On four separate occasions (and not on the days you do reading summaries), you will come up with 10 questions about the reading for that day. All of the questions must be directly and specifically related to the readings. Most will consist of at least one explanatory sentence that sets up the question and includes citations (i.e. a reference to a page number in the text or a brief quote from the text). The questions should also relate to different parts of the reading to demonstrate that you have read the entire passage assigned for that day.

Here are two examples:

1. Aristotle says that “man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all” [citation]. Why does Aristotle think that justice and law makes us better than other animals? Is it true that people who separate themselves from community are necessarily bad?
2. Hobbes seems to be arguing that an all-powerful king is the best way to ensure peace and stability [citation]. However, does not experience show that all-powerful kings often abuse their power and create instability?

You might also encounter words, concepts or passages that are difficult to understand. If you have trouble deciphering the meaning of a part of the reading, think about it, cite it and then ask a question about it. The idea is for you to come up with questions that will help you clarify the main issues of the reading and facilitate class discussion.

The reading questions and summaries will be graded as follows:

- **full credit (5%)**
  Follows all of the above instructions for summaries or questions and meets criteria of accuracy, comprehensiveness and balance, clear sentence structure and grammar. It is clear that you understand the text and can explain its main points well to a reader who has not read it (or in the case of the reading questions can raise important issues on the basis of the text).

- **credit (4%)**
  Follows all of the above instructions for summaries or questions and meets some of the criteria of accuracy, comprehensiveness and balance, clear sentence structure and grammar. It reveals a generally accurate understanding of the reading with a clear sense of the main points but is either noticeably weaker on one criterion or somewhat weaker on two criteria.

- **sub-standard (2%)**
  Does not fully abide by the above instructions and does not contain two or more of the criteria of accuracy, comprehensiveness and balance, clear sentence structure and grammar. For instance, if a summary does not offer a clear analysis of the main arguments and/or has problems with sentence structure or if readings questions are unclear, non-specific or unrelated to the main themes of the text.

- **unsatisfactory (0%)**
  Substandard reading summaries or questions do not serve to explain the text to an unfamiliar reader, are inaccurate, or severely disorganized.

All reading questions and summaries are due at the beginning of class. Late questions and summaries will be marked down a grade.

**Two Exams**

The exams are designed to hone your thinking about and ensure that you have a solid grasp of the course texts and class discussions. You will be allowed to bring two single-sided sheets of paper with notes to each exam.

**Grading Summary**

- 4 Summaries %20
- 4 Reading Questions %20
- Midterm %25
- Final %35

**Other Notes**

Do not cheat. The summaries and reading questions should be based on your own interpretation and questions about the readings. That is, they must be in your own words, not in the words of others.
There is no participation grade, but you will not succeed if you do not attend class. On eight occasions you will need to come to class in order to turn in your reading summaries and questionnaires. Moreover, the exams will test not only your knowledge of the texts (which is challenging enough), but also what was discussed in class.

The use of laptops and cell phones is prohibited during class.

Course Schedule

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<th>Week One</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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<td>January 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Hobbes: Leviathan Part I, 205-219</td>
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1. Politics from the top down: Advocates of order and stability.

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<th>Week Two</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Hobbes: Leviathan Part II, 219-242</td>
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<td>January 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France, 349-355</td>
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<th>Week Three</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Martin Luther: The Christian in Society, 194-199</td>
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<td>February 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Plato: The Republic Part I, 50-65</td>
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2. Politics from the bottom up: Advocates of revolution and change.

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<th>Week Four</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Plato: The Republic Part II, 94-106</td>
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<td>February 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Karl Marx: A Contribution to the Critique …, Estranged Labour, 435-447</td>
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<td>February 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Karl Marx: The Communist Manifesto, 448-463</td>
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<td>February 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Simone de Beauvoir: The Second Sex 601-614</td>
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<th>Week Six</th>
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<td>February 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Malcolm X: The Ballot or the Bullet, 636-642</td>
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<td>February 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Emma Goldman: Victims of Morality, 566-570</td>
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<th>Week Seven</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Midterm Exam review</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
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3. The study of politics: What have we been talking about?

**Week Eight**  
March 8th  
March 10th  

**Week Nine**  
March 15th  
Aristotle: The Politics Part II, 117-123 and  
Aristotle: The Ethics, Book 6 (on Moodle)  
March 17th  
Locke: Second Treatise of Government Part I, 243-268

**Week Ten**  
March 22nd  
Locke: Second Treatise of Government Part II, 268-279  
March 24th  
Publius: The Federalist Papers, 335-346

**Week Eleven**  
March 29th  
Hannah Arendt: Labor, Work, Action, (on Moodle)  
March 31st  
*Eyes on the Prize* screening

4. The methods of politics: How can we change things or keep them the same?

**Week Twelve**  
April 5th  
Weber: Politics as a Vocation, 499-511  
April 7th  

**Week Thirteen**  
April 12th  
Niccolo Machiavelli: The Prince, Part II, 179-188  
April 14th  
Plato: The Apology, 19-39

**Week Fourteen**  

**Spring Break**

**Week Fifteen**  
April 26th  
Mahatma Gandhi: For Pacifists, (on Moodle) 1-33  
April 24th  
Gandhi cont. (no additional reading)

**Week Sixteen**  
May 3rd  
Thucydides: Pericles’ Funeral Oration, 13-18  
May 5th  
Exam Review

**Final Exam Time:** xx