Course Description

This course examines some of the most influential texts in democratic theory, with a slight emphasis on the relationship between freedom and violence and texts not covered by other graduate level political theory courses at LSU.

The purpose of the course is to acquaint you with primary texts, which provide a jumping off point for your own ideas and research. While the complexity of some of the texts requires us to spend significant time grappling with the meaning and importance of the course materials, a high premium will be placed on creativity and the application of theory to practical problems.

Course Requirements

2 Presentations/Précis
Each week, one or two students will share their thoughts about the readings and the recommended readings for 10 to 20 minutes. Discuss things that provoked you, examine arguments that troubled you and raise questions that occurred to you.

Along with the presentation, each presenter will write a one-page précis (no more than two pages), which encapsulates the most important themes in the book and distribute copies of it to all of the students in the class. If there is more than one book or reading, you may write a précis for each. One way to think of the précis is as a slightly longer version of what one might write on the back cover of the book if you were a translator or editor of the text. You should describe the significance and main arguments of the text. However, also be sure to note in parenthesis after each sentence the sections or chapters of the book to which your claims about the text refer.

Do not read your précis during the oral presentation. You must speak extemporaneously to the class.

Your presentation and précis will be graded as excellent (✓ +), adequate (✓ ) or inadequate (✓ –).

2 Papers
You will also write two papers for the course. Each paper must examine at least one thinker and text from the first half (first paper) and second half (second paper) of the syllabus. You are
welcome to examine more than one text and if you choose to write about only one thinker or text you must also engage with the recommended reading or other secondary sources examining that text.

I will distribute prompts a week before each paper is due. You can also write on topics of your own choosing but both papers must relate to core issues for democracy. The final paper can serve as a trial run for a journal length article. Papers should be **single-spaced, in Times 12-point font**. Papers should be e-mailed to the instructor by the time and date on the syllabus. **Late papers are deducted a full letter grade.**

**Participation**

Your participation grade will be based on my sense of your overall engagement with the course materials and the quality of your effort in the class. This includes participation in class discussion but can also include coming to office hours or questions and thoughts shared over email.

**Grading Summary**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentations and Précis</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper One (1,500-3,000 words)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Two (5,000-10,000 words)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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**Texts**

*The Dialogues of Plato, Volume 1: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Gorgias, Menexenu.* Yale University Press.


*Two Treatises of Government.* John Locke. Cambridge University Press.


*Basic Political Writings.* Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hackett.


*Hind Swaraj and Other Writings.* Mohandas Gandhi. Cambridge University Press.


*Between Facts and Norms.* Jurgen Habermas. MIT Press.

**Course Schedule**

**Week One**

August 22nd

Class Introduction
Screening of *Secret Ballot* (105 min.)

**Week Two**

August 29th

**Plato, Apology, Crito**

Recommended:
*Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* by Arlene Saxonhouse.
Jacques Derrida, “Force of Law,” tr., Mary Quaintance, in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, eds., Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson

**Week Three**  
September 5th

**Plato, Hippias Minor, Laches, Menexenus**

Recommended:
Dana Villa, *Socratic Citizenship*  
J. Peter Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory*  
Susan Bickford, “‘This Way of Life, This Contest’: Rethinking Socratic Citizenship” in Cambridge Companion to Greek Political Thought.

**Week Four**  
September 12th

**Aristotle, The Politics**, Books 1, 3-7

Recommended:

**Week Five**  
September 19th

**Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy**  
The Table of Contents
I: 1-10, 16-18, 24, 27, 41, 42, 45-47, 53-55, 57-58  
II: 1-3, 9-10, 13, 19, 23, 28, 32  
III: 1, 3, 4, 6-9, 13, 19-24, 26, 28-29, 40-42, 49

Recommended:
J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*  
Hannah Pitkin, *Fortune is A Woman*  
John P. McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy*  

**Week Six**  
September 26th

**John Locke, Second Treatise of Government**  
**John Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration**

Recommended:
Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*  
Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*  
Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in an Age of Identity and Empire*  
Isaiah Berlin, *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*
**Week Seven**  
October 3rd

**Rousseau, The Social Contract**

Recommended:  

**PAPER ONE DUE: October 5th at 5pm**

**Week Eight**  
October 10th

**Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws**

Preface, Author’s Notes, Books 1-3, 5, 6, 7 (chapters 8-17), 11, 12, 14 (1-6), 15 (1-8), 20-1 (first 3 chapters of each).

Recommended:  
Benjamin Constant, ‘On the liberty of the ancients compared with that of the moderns’  
Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*

**Week Nine**  
October 17th

**Publius, Federalist Papers**, nos. 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 14, 35, 49, 51, 72, 85  
**Brutus, The Letters of Brutus**, nos. 1-4 (available online)

Recommended:  
John McGowan, *American Liberalism*

**Week Ten**  
October 24th

**Thoreau, Civil Disobedience**  
**Gandhi, Hind Swaraj**

Recommended:  
Emerson, *Self-Reliance*  
Vaclav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless*  
Anthony Parel, *Gandhi’s Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony*  
Ronald Terchek, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy*  
Karuna Mantena, “Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence” *APSR*

**Week Eleven**  
October 31st

**Carl Schmitt, The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy**  
**Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political**

Recommended:  
J. Habermas, ‘On the Relation Between the Nation, the Rule of Law, and Democracy’, in *The Inclusion of the Other*
Week Twelve
November 7th

Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*
Parts I, II, III (skim) and V.

Recommended:

Week Thirteen
November 14th

Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Lecture 8

Recommended:
John Seery, *Political Theory for Mortals*, Chapters One and Five
Paul Weithman, *Why Political Liberalism? On John Rawls’s Political Turn*

Week Fourteen
November 28th

Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, Chapters 4, 7, 8 and 9.

Recommended:
Vol. 2: 318-331, 343-403
Iris Marion Young, “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy,” in Benhabib (ed) *Democracy and Difference*
Seyla Benhabib, “Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy,” in *Democracy and Difference*.

Week Fifteen
Final Paper Due at 5pm on December 4th.