

Political Science 341  
Spring 2008  
Dr. Charles Hersch  
MWF 11-12:05/MC 301  
Office Hours: MW 12:15-1:15 and by app't (1740 RT)  
687-4580/c.hersch@csuohio.edu

## MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

The following books are required:

Niccolo Machiavelli, *THE PORTABLE MACHIAVELLI* (Penguin)  
John Locke, *SECOND TREATISE OF GOVERNMENT* (Hackett)  
G. W. F. Hegel, *INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY* (Hackett)  
Karl Marx, *SELECTED WRITINGS* (Hackett)  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *ON THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS AND ECCE HOMO* (Vintage)  
Michel Foucault, *POWER* (Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, vol. 3) (New Press)  
Sandra Lee Bartky, *FEMININITY AND DOMINATION* (Routledge)  
Frantz Fanon, *THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH* (Grove)

The attempt to create a new political system in Iraq and the war on terror have raised profound questions about political life. How do political systems come into being? How are they best governed? How do they change? What rules and values are appropriate to politics? Most importantly, what makes a government legitimate? That is, why and under what circumstances are we obligated to obey? Who should be included as citizens? To what extent should citizens have equal rights? Is violence ever a legitimate political tool? When can government act against the law? These are the questions that our theorists, spanning a five hundred year period from the 15th to the 20th Century, address. Their answers range from monarchy to liberalism to communism. They all accept the fact that neither natural human goodness nor God are enough to guarantee political harmony. Human beings, therefore, have to find other ways to bring it about. To the extent that we share this belief, these theorists are still our contemporaries.

The course is divided into four parts. (I) A citizen of Renaissance Italy, Machiavelli initiates modern political thought by breaking with religious and classical humanist views of politics. (As we shall see, however, the extent of Machiavelli's break with this tradition is a subject of debate.) (II) In the Seventeenth Century, English theorist John Locke develops social contract theory, out of which grows liberalism, a theory of government that stresses limits on government and individual natural rights. With the triumph of capitalism and the bourgeoisie, liberalism goes on to become the dominant European political theory. This philosophy, not to be confused with the ideas of contemporary "liberals," constitutes the foundation of American political thought. For the next three hundred years or so, theorists refine liberalism or criticize it. (III) The German theorist Hegel initiates another tradition emphasizing rationality and the idea that history represents the unfolding of a rational plan. Marx draws on Hegel to make a fundamental

break with liberalism. He to exposes what he sees as the inherent oppression in liberal society. Nietzsche goes one step further and questions the idea of rationality itself, arguing that all systems of knowledge and morality are ultimately based on power. Foucault draws on Nietzsche, exposing what he sees as a new kind of power in contemporary society he calls “discipline.” (IV) Finally, we consider the question of the Other: the tendency of those in power to marginalize other groups or societies. Bartky looks at the marginalization of women in Western society, while Fanon extends the issue to an international scale, focusing on the process of colonialism. He also raises contemporary questions about the political uses of violence.

Our purpose is to look at the provocative answers given to important political questions by these theorists and discuss their applicability to the present.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The most important requirement is that you attend class prepared to discuss the reading. Although I have often assigned short excerpts from the readings, some of it is extremely difficult. Despite a sometimes small number of pages, you will need to spend a lot of time on the reading. Do not attempt to do the reading for each class period in one sitting; this material is best absorbed in a few doses. *Always* bring your book to class.

I will post assignments and study questions on the course blog at [psc341.blogspot.com](http://psc341.blogspot.com). You are not required to answer the study questions but they will help you understand the material better and be prepared for class, since those are the questions we will discuss in class.

Formal assignments consist of a three papers and a weekly blog post (for a total of 15 posts; if you don't set up your blog until the second week, do two one week.) *No more than one post per week*. You will be given topics for the papers. All papers must be submitted electronically to [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) to prevent plagiarism. A blog post will consist of a one paragraph response to the reading. In your paragraph, summarize a point in the reading (the reading for that class) that you found interesting. Then respond to that point in some way. You may explain why you found it interesting, apply it to a contemporary situation, raise a question about it, give an argument against it, or respond in some other reasoned fashion. This is a “thought piece” that should not take a large amount of time but shows me you have done the reading and given it some thought. Papers will be given letter grades, and blog posts will be given grades of 0 (not done or inadequate), 1 (satisfactory) or 2 (good) or (occasionally) 3 (outstanding). To set up a blog, go to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) and follow the instructions to “create a blog.” Email me the name of your blog when you set it up so I can find it. I post comments and a grade in response to your posts.

Your grade will be decided as follows:

First Paper (5-7 pages)	25%
Second Paper (5-7 pages)	25%
Third Paper (6-8 pages)	30%
Blog posts (15)	20%

Improvement is rewarded, so if there is an upward trend, later papers will be counted more

heavily.

*No papers will be accepted more than one week after they are due.* Papers less than a week late will be penalized up to one letter grade. All papers should use a 12 point font and standard one inch margins.

Attendance is required. You can have five unexcused absences without penalty. After that, your final grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a grade. It will be lowered an additional 1/3 of a grade for every 3 subsequent unexcused absences. (E.g., missing 9-11 classes lowers your final grade by 2/3 of a grade; 12-14 classes, 1 grade, and so on.) Coming to class late counts as one-half of an absence. If you miss class because of illness or emergency, let me know after you have returned to class and your absences will be erased. *Please do not call me before class to tell me you will not be present.* On the other hand, excellent participation (thoughtful contributions to class discussion) can raise your final grade.

This is a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) course. According to university requirements, "in order to receive a C or better in this course, the student must write at a satisfactory skill level (C or better). If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course."

## SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

### Week 1 (January 14)

M Introduction

### **I. MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT INAUGURATED: MACHIAVELLI'S BREAK WITH THE PAST**

#### **1. Machiavelli's *Prince*: Authority, deception, and violence**

W Machiavelli, 77-88, 91-115

F Machiavelli, 124-66

#### **2. Machiavelli's *Discourses*: "The masses are wiser and more constant than a prince"**

### Week 2 (January 21)

M HOLIDAY

W Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Book I: Introduction, Chapters 1-7 (169-96)

F Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Bk I: Ch 9-12, 16-18, 25-27 (200-13, 218-28, 231-34)

Week 3 (January 28)

- M Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Bk I: Ch 39, 46-47, 49, 55, 58; Bk II: Intro, Ch 2, 19 (252-53, 264-73, 274-79, 281-86, 287-90, 294-301, 319-23)
- W Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Bk II: Ch 29; Bk III: Ch 1, 6 (342-45, 351-56, 357-80)
- F Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Bk III: Ch 8-9, 16, 19-20, 22, 25, 28-9, 34, 41-43, 47, 49 (381-83, 386-88, 389-91, 394-99, 400-2, 403-5, 407, 411-15, 416-18)

**II. THE RISE OF LIBERALISM**

**1. Locke: Liberalism and limited government**

Week 4 (February 4)

- M Locke, Ch 1-5 (7-30)
- W Locke, Ch 6-7 (30-51)(First paper topics handed out: Machiavelli and Locke)
- F Locke, Ch 8-11 (52-75)

Week 5 (February 11)

- M Locke, Ch 12-17 (75-101)
- W Locke, Ch 18-19 (101-24)

**III. THE UNMASKING OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY; (POST)MODERNIST ALTERNATIVES**

**1. Hegel: “The cunning of Reason”**

- F Hegel, 12-40

Week 6 (February 18)

- M HOLIDAY
- W Hegel, 40-71  
**FIRST PAPER DUE**
- F Hegel, 72-106
- 2. Marx: Alienation, capitalism, and communism**

Week 7 (February 25)

- M Marx, "Toward a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction" (excerpt) and "Excerpt Notes" (28, 36-9, 41-53)
- W Marx, "Alienated Labor" (58-68)
- F Marx, "Private Property and Communism," and "Theses on Feuerbach" (68-79, 98-101)

Week 8 (March 4)

- M Marx, "The German Ideology" (excerpts) and "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*" (excerpts) (103-4, 105-112, 115-25, 129-31, 140-42, 150-53, 211-12)
- W Marx, *Communist Manifesto* (157-76, 185-86)
- F Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program" and "Marginal Notes on Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*" (315-38)

**SPRING BREAK, MARCH 10-15**

**3. Nietzsche: "the will to power" behind Judeo-Christian morality**

Week 9 (March 17)

- M Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, First Essay (Second paper topics handed out: Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche)
- W Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay
- F Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, sections 1-16

Week 10 (March 24)

- M Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, sections 17-28
- W Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, selections to be announced

**4. Foucault: Liberalism's dark underside – new kinds of power**

- F Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," Parts I and II (excerpts), "Preface to *Anti-Oedipus*" (1-16, 52-9, 106-110)

Week 11 (March 31)

- M Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," Part V (70-87)  
**SECOND PAPER DUE**
- W Foucault, "Truth and Power," "The Birth of Social Medicine" (118-27, 131-33, 142-56)
- F Foucault, "Lives of Infamous Men" (157-75)

Week 12 (April 7)

- M Foucault, "Governmentality," "Questions of Method," "Omnes et Singulatim" (201-26, 324-5)
- W Foucault, "The Subject and Power," "Interview with *Actes*" (326-48, 398-400)
- F Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," "For an Ethic of Discomfort," "Useless to Revolt?," "So Is It Important to Think?," "The Moral and Social Experience of the Poles," "Confronting Governments: Human Rights" (403-17, 448, 449-53, 456-58, 467-68, 471-73, 474-75)

**IV. THE QUESTION OF "THE OTHER"**

**1. Feminism, femininity, and domination: Bartky**

Week 13 (April 14)

- M Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness," "On Psychological Oppression," and "Narcissism, Femininity, and Alienation" (11-44)
- W Bartky, "Feminine Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformation" and "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (45-82)
- F Bartky, "Shame and Gender," and "Feeding Egos and Tending Wounds: Deference and Disaffection in Women's Emotional Labor" (83-119)

**2. Fanon: Colonialism and Violence**

Week 14 (April 21)

- M Fanon, 1-36, 44-62

(Final paper topics handed out: Foucault, Bartky, and Fanon)

W Fanon, 63-96

F Fanon, 97-144

Week 15 (April 28)

M Fanon, 145-80

W Fanon, 181-233

F Fanon, 235-39

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY, MAY 9 BY 12 PM IN MY OFFICE (RT 1740) (If I am not there, give it to the secretary in RT 1744 or slip it under my door.)