

GVPT 241  
Winterterm, 2014  
Dr. Glass

## Course Objective

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to major themes in the history of political theory. We will look at selected issues in major theorists in the modern political tradition. Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Marx will be the theorists covered in the course. Because of the special, Winterterm format of the course, we will devote two or three sessions to each political theorist. Also we will not be looking at the theory as a whole, but at selected concepts and perspectives in each theorist. Week I (beginning on Thursday) looks at Machiavelli and Hobbes; Week II Hobbes and Locke, and Week III, Rousseau and Marx. For Week I, the themes under discussion will be political strategy and power; for Week II disintegration and property, and for Week III, community, equality (Rousseau) and alienation, money and revolution (Marx).

We will also use film as symbolic introduction to the theorists under examination. Each film describes in imagery, concepts that will occupy our attention in discussing the theorists. After the films, we will look at what the film conveys in the context of the theorists ideas. We break up into small discussion sections to facilitate analysis.

## Course Structure and Requirements

Students are required to attend each class session. At the beginning there will be a short lecture on the reading material. We will spend the next two hours viewing the film. We will then devote the remaining class time to discussion and analysis. Reading assignments will be tailored to two or three day segments covering each theorist. Students will be graded on the following: two short essays (from 5-7 pages) The essay assignments will be handed out after every fourth film and are not cumulative. You will e-mail your essays to [jglass1@umd.edu](mailto:jglass1@umd.edu) The final exam will be the third essay. Students will be expected to keep a journal of the films, no more than a page or two for each film. These journals are meant to reference your own reactions to the films and will not be graded.

## Course Readings

Machiavelli, the Prince (entire)  
Hobbes, Leviathan (selections)  
Locke, The Second Treatise on Government (selections)

Rousseau, the Discourse on the Origins of Inequality (entire)  
Rousseau, The Social Contract (selections)  
Marx, Early Writings (selections)

## **Schedule of Films and Readings**

### **Week 1: Machiavelli and Hobbes**

Meeting 1: Reading: The Prince

Film: Dangerous Liaisons  
Concept Under Analysis: Manipulation

Meeting 2: Reading: The Prince

Film: Wild Things  
Concept Under Analysis: Action and Power

Meeting 3: Reading: Leviathan (Selections)

Film: Lord of the Flies  
Concept Under Analysis: Fear

Meeting 4: Reading: Leviathan (selections)

Film: The Crucible  
Concept Under Analysis: Sovereignty

### **Week II: Hobbes and Locke**

Meeting 1: Reading: Leviathan (selections)

Film: Rosewood  
Concept Under Analysis: Disintegration

Meeting 2: Reading: Second Treatise (selections)

Film: Wall Street  
Concept Under Analysis: Property and Greed

Meeting 3: Reading: Second Treatise (selections)

Film: American Me

Concept Under Analysis: Civil Society and Its Limits

Meeting 4: Reading: Discourse on the Origin of Inequality

Film: Do the Right Thing  
Concept Under Analysis: Inequality

## **Week III: Rousseau and Marx**

Meeting 1: Reading: The Social Contract (selections)

Film: The Spitfire Grill  
Concept Under Analysis: Community

Meeting 2: Reading: Marx, “alienated labor”

Film: American Beauty  
Concept Under Analysis: Exploitation, Self-Degradation

Meeting 3: Reading: Marx, “money”

Film: Francis  
Concept Under Analysis: Self, Money and Society

Meeting 4: Reading: Marx, “private property and communism”

Film: The Killing Fields  
Concept Under Analysis: Marxian Revolution and Consequences

Inclement Weather Policy:

In case of inclement weather, we will make up classes the week following Winterterm.

Grading: The weekly essays and the final examination will determine your course grade. The two weekly essays will count 60%, the Final Exam/Essay 40% of your grade, although some consideration will be given for improvement. Discussion is encouraged; it can only help your grade (for example if you are between two grades, it can help move the grade up); it will not hurt your grade. Attendance is expected at all classes; you are allowed two absences. Any more, you need an explanation.

