

GVPT 241  
Summerterm Session 1, 2020  
Dr. Glass  
Online  
[Jglass1@umd.edu](mailto:Jglass1@umd.edu); 301-405-4119

## 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, Summerterm 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 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. It is critical that you see each film and complete the reading assignments.

## Course Structure and Requirements

Students are required to view each film at home. There will be a discussions board in ELMS where you can exchange ideas about the films. Reading assignments will be tailored to two or three day segments covering each theorist. Students will be graded on three short essays (5 pages). All films are available through Netflix or Amazon; some may even be on YouTube. There will be one essay due every two weeks; all essay prompts will be in ELMS.

I have organized the course in three segments, corresponding to what it would be if it were a face to face class of six weeks of films and readings. So, the first four films should be completed by the end of the second week; the second four films by the end of the fourth week; the third four films by the end of the sixth week. You may however submit your papers as soon as you have completed the readings and the films. But all films must be seen and all reading assignments completed. What you don't want to do is leave everything until the last week. So be sure to pace yourself; be diligent in completing the four films in each section within two weeks and sending in the essay for that two week section when they are due. **EACH ESSAY WILL BE DUE ON MONDAYS.** So you have the weekends to complete them.

## 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

### SEGMENT 1: Machiavelli and Hobbes [FIRST TWO WEEKS OF COURSE]

Assignment 1

: Film: Dangerous Liaisons  
Concept Under Analysis: Manipulation

Reading: The Prince

Assignment 2:

Film: Wild Things  
Concept Under Analysis: Action and Power

Reading: The Prince

Assignment 3:

Film: Lord of the Flies  
Concept Under Analysis: Fear

Reading: Leviathan, Part I (selections)

Assignment 4:

Film: The Crucible  
Concept Under Analysis: Sovereignty

Reading: Leviathan, Part II (selections)

FIRST ESSAY ASSIGNMENT IS DUE ON MONDAY BY 5:PM

## **SEGMENT II: Hobbes and Locke [WEEKS THREE AND FOUR OF THE COURSE]**

Assignment 1: Reading: Leviathan (selections)

Film: Rosewood  
Concept Under Analysis: Disintegration

Assignment 2: Reading: Second Treatise (selections)

Film: Wall Street  
Concept Under Analysis: Property and Greed

Assignment 3: Reading: Second Treatise (selections)

Film: American Me  
Concept Under Analysis: Civil Society and Its Limits

Assignment 4: Reading: Discourse on the Origin of Inequality

Film: Do the Right Thing  
Concept Under Analysis: Inequality

SECOND ESSAY IS DUE ON MONDAY BY 5:PM

## **SEGMENT III: Rousseau and Marx [WEEKS FIVE AND SIX OF THE COURSE]**

Assignment 1: Reading: The Social Contract (selections)

Film: The Spitfire Grill  
Concept Under Analysis: Community

Assignment 2: Reading: Marx, “alienated labor”

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

Assignment 3: Reading: Marx, “money”

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

Assignment 4: Reading: Marx, “private property and communism”;  
Film: The Killing Fields  
Concept Under Analysis: Marxian Revolution and Consequences

**FINAL ESSAY IS DUE ON MONDAY BY 5:PM**

### Grading

The weekly essays will determine your course grade. Each will be weighted equally, although some consideration will be given for improvement. Online participation is encouraged; it can only help your grade (for example if you are between two grades, it can help move the grade up).