

POLI 110B: Sovereigns, Subjects, and the Modern State

Winter 2014

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1 Course Description and Goals

Should we establish a state? Why? Who should rule? How should the state's power be limited? These are questions about the justification of centralized political rule within societies. These questions continue to resonate with us, expressed in recent challenges to the status quo: from the Tea Party movement here in the US to the Arab Spring, Iranian Green Movement, and Saffron Revolution abroad. Questions about the justification of centralized political authority took center stage during the early modern period (ca. 1500-1750). This course offers an introduction to these questions by exploring early attempts to formulate and answer them. But this is not intellectual history for its own sake. The theorists we will discuss formulated questions and presented answers that continue to shape the ways in which we address fundamental issues of political authority. So one aim of this course is to acquaint you with classic arguments regarding enduring political issues.

But this is not the most important aim. What makes these classic arguments so powerful is that their progenitors were masters of *critical analysis*. The main pedagogical objective of this course is to help you develop a set of skills that will enable you to present cogent critical analyses of your own on a wide variety of issues. These skills include: (1) The ability to summarize and synthesize what you read; (2) The ability to critically evaluate arguments; (3) The ability to communicate clearly and to construct compelling arguments. (4) The ability to collaborate with others to pursue mutual understanding. To this end, class discussion and assignments will focus primarily on analyzing arguments rather than on recounting the historical context in which these arguments were written. (We will concern ourselves with historical context only insofar as doing so will help us analyze the arguments we encounter.)

2 Course Texts

- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Edwin Curley (Hackett)
- Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, edited by C.B. Macpherson (Hackett)
- Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings*, edited and translated by David Wootton (Hackett)
- Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, translated by Donald A. Cress (Hackett)

Other readings will be made available electronically through the course website. You are expected to read the assigned readings carefully before each class (roughly 20–35 pages/ 1.5–3 hours for each class session). **Please bring a copy of the assigned readings to class!**

3 Assignments

1. **The levels.** — A series of short (*short!*) papers. The first level is *argument reconstruction* (150–300 words); the second level is *reconstruction and synthesis* (300-500 words); the third level is *reconstruction, synthesis, and critique* (500–900 words).

Each level is graded as follows:

Level not attempted	0 points
Missed the point	5 points
Basic competence	10 points
Intermediate competence	15 points
Advanced competence	20 points

Everyone must start at level one. Advanced competence must be achieved before advancing to the next level. Your levels score is the sum of your high score on each level:

$$\text{Levels score} = [\text{L1 high score}] + [\text{L2 high score}] + [\text{L3 high score}].$$

The highest possible score is 60. You have five chances to advance as far as you can through the levels (Fri Jan 17, Fri Jan 31, Fri Feb 14, Fri Feb 28, Thurs Mar 13). Submit each levels attempt by email — sent to poli110bwinter2014@hushmail.com — by 17:00 on the due date. Please submit levels attempts in any of the following formats: .doc, .docx, .odt, .rtf, .txt.

For more details, see <http://www.dwiens.com/2013/11/23/the-levels/>.

2. **Elective component.** — You can choose between two general options: a conventional term paper or a group project. This highest possible score for the elective component is 60 points.

The *conventional term paper* is a longer version of the third level (1200-1750 words). I will distribute topic suggestions, but you are free to write on a topic of your choice. This assignment has a collaboration option — *you are allowed to write the paper together with one other student in the class*. The final paper is due March 18 at 18:00. A grading rubric and further details are available at <http://www.dwiens.com/2013/11/23/elective-component/>.

The *group project* can be whatever you want it to be. You will work together with 3–5 students to create a project that engages with a theme, theory, or theorist discussed in the course in interesting and compelling ways. Some options include: an interactive website, a short film, a series of political cartoons — but you're limited only by your imagination. The group project is due March 18 at 18:00. A grading rubric and further details are available at <http://www.dwiens.com/2013/11/23/elective-component/>.

4 Grades

Your final grade is a function of three variables: your levels score; your elective score; and x (to be explained in a minute). Here are the mathematical details:

$$\text{Total score} = \left(\frac{30+x}{100}\right) \times \text{levels score} + \left(\frac{30+y}{100}\right) \times \text{elective score},$$

where $y = 40 - x$. Now, what is x ? Basically, both the levels score and the elective score will be worth at least 30% of your final grade. But that's only 60%. You get to select where to place the remaining 40% by choosing some number x that is between 0 and 40. For example, if you select $x = 35$, then your levels score will be worth $30 + 35 = 65\%$ of your final grade and the elective component will be worth 35%.

Your final grade is a score out of 60 points. Letter grades have a tangible interpretation in terms of the level of competence achieved during the course. Your letter grade is determined as follows. (Let T be your total score.)

$T > 59$	A+	Advanced competence achieved in all phases of the course.
$59 \geq T > 54$	A	Advanced competence achieved in most phases of the course, intermediate competence achieved in the remaining phases.
$54 \geq T > 51$	A-	Advanced competence achieved in a few phases, intermediate competence achieved in all or most of the remaining phases.
$51 \geq T > 48$	B+	Advanced competence achieved in one phase and a mix of intermediate and basic competence achieved in the remaining phases; OR intermediate competence achieved in most phases with basic competence achieved in the remaining phases.
$48 \geq T > 42$	B	Intermediate competence achieved in several phases, basic competence achieved in the remaining phases.
$42 \geq T > 38$	B-	Intermediate competence achieved in one or two phases, basic competence achieved in most phases.
$38 \geq T > 34$	C+	Basic competence achieved in most phases, perhaps missed the point in one phase.
$34 \geq T > 28$	C	Basic competence achieved in many phases, missed the point in one or two phases.
$28 \geq T > 24$	C-	A mix of basic competence and missing the point, but basic competence more often than not.
$24 \geq T > 16$	D	Even mix of basic competence and missing the point.
$16 \geq T > 12$	D-	Missed the point in most phases, perhaps basic competence in one or two phases.
$12 \geq T$	F	Missed the point throughout all phases (or didn't attempt the assignments).

Late assignments. An assignment is late if it is submitted after the scheduled time. You lose 5 points at the start of every 24 hour period, starting with the due time, until you submit the assignment. **Assignments will no longer be accepted once those submitted on time have been graded and returned.**

5 Expectations

1. Personal Investment. Our investment in you as a student is a function of your investment in yourself. If it is clear to us that you are putting a lot of work into the course—that is, if you participate in class discussion or contribute to group assignments, if you come see me during office hours—then you will receive a lot of attention from us—e.g., we will help you work through assignments, we will help you through the readings, etc. However, if it is clear to us that you have little interest in this class, then you will receive little attention from us.

Your investment in this class could help to raise borderline grades at the end of the term. If you are a point shy of the next letter grade and you have demonstrated consistent investment throughout the term, your grade could be raised as a result of your participation.

The requirements are designed so that success in this course will require an average investment of 12–15 hours per week including class time (approx. 3–4 out-of-class hours for every in-class hour).

2. Respect for Others. Philosophy is a collaborative process and students learn philosophy best when they engage in that process. Such a participation-heavy environment requires that each of us gives others adequate space to participate, in addition to recognizing that we don't know everything. We must work to cultivate an environment in which people do not hesitate to ask “silly” questions, make mistakes, or disagree with others. We will disagree (sometimes vigorously) with each other and we will work through our disagreements in class. But our debate will always be conducted respectfully. Similar to Personal Investment, you will be shown respect to the extent that you respect others.

3. Out-of-Class Help. You are welcome to come to us for help with your assignments (but you aren't required to do so—this depends upon how much you are willing to invest in this class). However, there are some guidelines to prevent last-minute calls/emails and to insure that we are able to make time to help you.

- (1) Please try to see us during office hours (we've scheduled these to be at times when we're sure to be available). If these hours are not convenient, it is possible to set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time. To set up an appointment with me (I'll let Alan decide how to do this for himself), go to the appointments link on the class website. You will be taken to a page that shows the times I am available for appointments; **these are the only times for which I will be available for appointments during that week.** (The list of available times will include office hours; this is in case you would like to see me at a particular time during office hours and want to reserve that time.) Once you've selected your preferred time, you'll be sent a reminder email the morning of your appointment. (**Warning:** I'm generally not available to meet in the mornings.)
- (2) If you have a question or concern about the class, please search the syllabus or the course website for the answer. If there is no answer to be found, then feel free to email us about any questions or concerns and we will try to reply to you within 24 hours. If you need an answer

right away, email may not be the best option. (If this is the case, you may have waited too long.)

- (3) We will not look at drafts of submissions. We will discuss progress reports on final papers/group projects during the appointed times.

4. Grade Disputes. We are more than willing to re-examine assignment grades with you if you feel your work deserves a better grade. There are two steps to this process:

- (1) You must wait 24 hours after the assignment as been returned before you approach Alan.
- (2) You must approach Alan with a written justification for your complaint (a single paragraph is fine). In this, you must outline why you think your work deserves a better grade and where the discrepancy lies between your work and the assigned grade.
- (3) If you are unsatisfied with Alan's response to your request, you can approach me with a written justification for your complaint. **Warning:** If you challenge a grade, I reserve the right to reset the grade *as I see fit*. Opening a grade dispute means a re-examination of the assignment. Thus, your grade will not necessarily improve and may even go down.

5. Plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Accordingly, it will be treated seriously. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Any case of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Integrity Office.

Plagiarism will be defined as follows:

Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements or other works as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying word for word or lifting phrases or a special term from a source or reference — whether oral, printed, or on the Internet — without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing, that is, using another person's written words or ideas, albeit in one's own words, as if they were one's own thought.
- Borrowing facts, statistics, or other illustrative material without proper reference, unless the information is common knowledge, in common public use.

6. Accommodations. If you feel that you need an accommodation for any sort of disability or for religious reasons, please discuss this with me as early as possible (after class, in office hours, or by email).

6 Reading Schedule

*Available on the course website (under “Course Materials”).

Note: Readings subject to change (with enough advance warning, of course).

Date	Reading
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| 7 Jan | <i>Introduction</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. *Feinberg, <i>Doing Philosophy</i>2. *Introduction to Reading Philosophy Analytically |
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Inverting classical political wisdom

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| 9 Jan | <i>Political advice for a dynamic world</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>, chs. 6–9, 15–18, 20, 21, 25 |
| 14 Jan | <i>Realizing the common good</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Machiavelli, <i>The Discourses</i>, bk. 1 chs. 2–7, 11, 17, 18, 42, 50, 54, 55, 58; bk. 2 ch. 1; bk. 3 chs. 1, 3, 9 |

Do we need a state?

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| 16 Jan | <i>The problem of competition</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>, his Introduction, chs. 6, 10, 11 (to ¶16), 13 |
| 21 Jan | <i>The problem of enforcement</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Locke, <i>The Second Treatise on Government</i>, chs. 1–3 |
| 23 Jan | <i>The problem of progress</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rousseau, <i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> (pp. 45–92) |

Should we have a state?

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| 28 Jan | <i>Social contract theory I</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>, chs. 14–17 (skim ch. 15, ¶¶8–33) |
| 30 Jan | <i>Social contract theory II</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i>, chs. 7–9 |
| 4 Feb | <i>Social contract theory III</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>, bk. 1 |

- 6 Feb *Social convention*
1. *Hume, "Of the original contract"
 2. *Hume, "Of the origin of government"

Who should be in charge?

- 11 Feb *Authoritarianism*
1. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 18–20 (skim 20); 24, 29 (to ¶13)
- 13 Feb *Constitutional monarchy*
1. Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 13, 14, 19
- 18 Feb *Civic republicanism*
1. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, bk. 2
- 20 Feb *Civic republicanism cont'd*
1. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, bk. 3 (skim chs. 7–9)

What are the limits of legitimate state action?

- 25 Feb *Authoritarianism redux*
1. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 21, 26 (to ¶17), 30
- 27 Feb *Natural rights liberalism*
1. Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 9 & 11
- 4 Mar *Natural property rights*
1. Locke, *Second Treatise*, ch. 5
- 6 Mar *Conventional property rights*
1. *Hume, "Justice, Whether a Natural or Artificial Virtue"
 2. *Hume, "Of the Origin of Justice and Property"
 3. *Hume, "Of the rules, which determine property"
- 11 Mar *Civic republicanism redux*
1. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, bk. 3 ch. 1; bk. 4
- 13 Mar *Wrap up*