

Barnard College  
Department of Political Science

**POLS V1013 – POLITICAL THEORY**

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Fall 2014  
POLS V1013  
T, Th 10:10-11:25 am  
Barnard Hall 304

Teaching Assistants

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Office Hours

W, 9-10 am (Diana, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor café)  
Th, 11:40 am-12:40 pm (Diana, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor café)  
M, 1-2 pm (Diana, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor café)

**INTRODUCTION**

This introductory political theory course examines some of the most fundamental questions about politics: What are the distinctive features and challenges of democratic politics? How do we mitigate the negative impact of socioeconomic inequality on political equality? How do we reconcile individual liberties with popular sovereignty? Why do we see the persistence of gender inequalities despite all the important advances in women's rights?

The course is divided into four thematic sections, each addressing an enduring political question and centered on a key text in the history of political thought:

1. Challenges of Democratic Politics – Plato, *Republic*
2. Social and Political Equality – John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*
3. Paradoxes of Freedom – Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*
4. Gender as a Question of Equality and Freedom – John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*

Although these are our key texts, we will be working on them with a set of other required readings (e.g. Simone de Beauvoir, Benjamin Constant, Jürgen Habermas, Karl Marx, Alexis de Tocqueville).

Our goal is to read and assess these texts as political interventions: These are texts that changed the terms of the debate at the time of their writing, and they can help us rethink the terms of our contemporary debates. In other words, as we develop our own interpretations and critical assessments of these works, we will be aiming at seeking meaningful connections to the most challenging questions of our own time.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course aims to develop students' capacity to think, discuss, and write knowledgeably about some of the important political problems addressed by a range of political theorists. It also aims to help students become more reflective and conversant citizens by examining and contextualizing their own political views and values. We will achieve these objectives by close reading, intensive writing, and active learning.

**Close reading:**

We will be reading some of the most challenging texts of political theory. The workload of the class is structured to allow you enough time to read them carefully. You should do the reading assignment for each class session on time; and after each class session, please go over the assigned text again especially by focusing on the sections discussed in class.

**Intensive writing:**

This course is structured around writing assignments that support the close study of texts and enhance skills of critical thinking and clear, concise, and cogent writing. To strengthen your writing skills, I highly recommend that you sign up for an appointment at the Erica Mann Jong Writing Center (<http://writing.barnard.edu/>). Columbia students are welcome to use the Writing Center for papers assigned in this course.

**Active learning:**

The course attributes a crucial significance to students' active engagement in the learning process. To enable active learning in this large class, we will have in-class activities and discussion sections that will provide you with opportunities to clarify, question, and consolidate new knowledge on a regular basis.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Have acquired skills to read political theory texts closely.
- Have demonstrated a capacity to develop a clear and persuasive argument in response to a question in political theory.
- Have acquired a capacity to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of an author's argument.
- Have developed skills of using textual evidence to support an argument.
- Have acquired skills of interpreting political issues in the light of theoretical arguments.
- Have developed a capacity to discuss political concepts and arguments knowledgeably.

**READINGS**

The required readings include four books and some additional materials that will be available online at Courseworks.

**Books:**

📖 Plato, *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 1992)

📖 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Hackett, 1980)

📖 Jean Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Hackett, 1988)

📖 John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, ed. Susan Moller Okin (Hackett, 1988)

These books can be purchased at **Book Culture** (536 W. 112<sup>th</sup> St., 212-865-1588). They are also available on reserve at Barnard Library.

Since we will be engaging in close textual reading, you should bring the assigned reading to class and discussion sections. It is extremely important for you to have the listed editions of these works; this will

help you follow references to these texts during lectures and discussions. In addition, you are required to use only these editions for your citations in your writing assignments.

### **Online readings:**

Additional required readings, which are marked as “CW” in the Course Calendar below, will be available for download on Courseworks (<https://courseworks.columbia.edu/> -- please click “Files and Resources” tab on the menu and check the “Readings” folder).

### **OFFICE HOURS**

I strongly encourage you to make use of my office hours for purposes of discussing all matters pertaining to the course. If you cannot make my office hours, please do not hesitate to e-mail me to set up an appointment. **NOTE:** In your e-mail, please give me three options for meeting times to make sure that we can schedule our meeting as efficiently as possible.

We have three teaching assistants who look forward to working with you, and I strongly encourage you to make use of their office hours as well. Please e-mail them if you cannot make their office hours to set up an appointment. In your e-mail, please give them three options for meeting times to make sure that they can schedule a meeting as efficiently as possible.

### **DISCUSSION SECTIONS**

Students must register for a discussion section. There are six discussion sections allocated for this course; please select one that works for your schedule. These sections give you a chance to discuss the assigned readings and prepare for writing assignments. You are expected to attend your discussion section regularly and participate in the discussion actively; attendance and participation will be taken into account in the calculation of your grade.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

Students who may need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. They should also contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in 008 Milbank Hall. For further information, please check <http://barnard.edu/ods>.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

1. Submit 3 essays on time; you need to submit all the essays to qualify for a passing grade in this class.
2. Regular attendance is imperative. Your participation in class and discussion sections should be respectful of your classmates, TAs, and me.
3. Register for a discussion section and attend it regularly. You are also expected to actively participate in the discussion.
4. Read assigned texts in time for their discussion in class; lectures will complement, not substitute for, the assigned readings. You are expected to bring the assigned reading(s) to class and discussion sections; frequent references will be made to the reading(s) during the lectures and discussion.
5. Come to class on time and remain for the entire session; if for some reason you have to be late one day or must leave early, please tell me in advance, and then arrive/depart as unobtrusively as possible.
6. Please turn off all electronic devices before the class starts. Laptops are not allowed because of their negative impact on the learning experience.

\*This policy is based on scientific research that demonstrates the negative impact of laptop use on academic performance, especially on conceptual understanding. For further information, see <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>.

7. To maintain a professional atmosphere that is free of distraction, please do not bring food to class.

8. Read the syllabus thoroughly; you are responsible for all of its contents.

## **ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS**

There is no final exam. You will have three essay assignments that aim at developing your skills of close reading, argumentation, critical thinking, and analytical writing. For each essay, you are expected to take a position on an assigned question, articulate a clear and cogent argument, and defend your position by engaging with the relevant theoretical works and using textual evidence. Detailed guidelines for each essay assignment will be posted on Courseworks ten days before the deadline; please check for regular updates.

## **GRADING**

Grades will be based on Barnard College's grade definitions, which establish the qualities of performance expected at different grade levels. Please see the section on grading system in Academic Policies and Procedures, available online at <http://barnard.edu/catalogue/policies/grades>.

1<sup>st</sup> essay: 4 double-spaced pages, 20% of final grade

2<sup>nd</sup> essay: 5-6 double-spaced pages, 30% of final grade

3<sup>rd</sup> essay: 5-6 double-spaced pages, 30% of final grade

Attendance and participation: 20% of final grade (10% class; 10% discussion section)

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Extensions and Absences:**

Completion of all assignments is a necessary condition for passing this course. In addition, I urge you to check the due dates on the weekly schedule and submit all assignments on time to avoid late penalties. Please note that all the assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class session that they are due.

Late turn-ins will be significantly penalized (one-third of a letter grade per day after the deadline). For example, an "A" paper due Tuesday but submitted on Thursday will receive a "B+". Papers submitted more than four days after the due date will not be accepted. Extensions will be given only in the case of documented illness, family emergency, or other crisis situation; please bring any form of documentation available. Should you run into problems regarding your ability to complete any of the course requirements during the semester, you should contact your TAs or me as soon as possible.

### **Religious Holidays:**

If you cannot attend class due to religious observance, please let me know in advance; absence due to religious observance is excused. If you cannot complete an assignment by the deadline due to a religious holiday that forbids work, please inform me in advance to make necessary arrangements.

### **Incompletes:**

I do not grant incompletes except under the most extraordinary of circumstances.

### Grade Review:

I will be supervising all the grading in this class, and your TAs will be using a set of standardized grading guidelines as they grade your essays. There will be written comments on your assignment as well as an attached grading rubric to give you a clear idea about the grading criteria and to clarify the reasons why you were given a particular grade.

If you have any problems with the grade that you are assigned, please write a brief statement explaining the problems as soon as possible (no later than 48 hours after you receive your graded assignment), send a copy of this statement to the TA who graded your assignment, and schedule a meeting. Please do not forget to bring to the meeting your graded paper, attached grading rubric, and a copy of your statement. If you remain unsatisfied, you are welcome to discuss the matter with me; please schedule a meeting and bring these materials to me.

### Academic Honesty and Barnard College Honor Code:

All students taking this course must adhere to the Barnard College honor code, regardless of their academic affiliation. The honor code considers it “dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor.” For further information, see <http://barnard.edu/dos/honorcode>. If you have any questions about academic honesty, please seek help from your TAs and me.

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## COURSE CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

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9/2 T Introduction to POLS V1013 (No reading)

### I. Challenges of Democratic Politics

9/4 Th Plato, *Republic*, Book I (pp. 1-31)

Sheldon Wolin, “Democracy: Electoral and Athenian.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 1993): 475-477. \*CW

Josiah Ober, “Public Speech and the Power of the People in Democratic Athens.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 1993): 481-486. \*CW

9/9 T Plato, *Republic*, Book II (pp. 32-59), Book III (pp. 88-93), Book IV (pp. 94-121).

9/11 Th Plato, *Republic*, Book V (pp. 122-56), Book VI (pp. 157-85).

9/16 T Plato, *Republic*, Book VII (pp. 186-212), Book VIII (pp. 213-240).

9/18 Th Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer and tr. George Lawrence (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 9-20 (“Author’s Introduction”) and pp. 667-705 (Vol II, Part IV). \*CW

9/23 T Tocqueville (cont.)

Carole Pateman, "Participatory Democracy Revisited" (APSA Presidential Address), *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1 (March 2012): 7-19. \*CW

## II. Social and Political Equality

9/25 Th John Locke, *Second Treatise*, Preface and Chapters 1-5 (pp. 2-30)

9/30 T Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 6-12 (pp. 30-77)

10/2 Th Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 13-19 (pp. 77-124)

**\*\*\* First essay due at the beginning of class on October 2, 2014 \*\*\***

10/7 T Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Penguin, 1975), pp. 322-334 and pp. 358-379 \*CW

10/9 Th Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 31-66. \*CW

[recommended] Michael Walzer, "Complex Equality," in *Equality*, ed. David Johnston (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2000), pp. 208-233.

10/14 T Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 1-28 (Ch. 1) and pp. 283-303 (Ch. 10) \*CW

[Recommended] Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*, pp. 252-282 (Ch. 9). \*CW

## III. Paradoxes of Freedom

10/16 Th Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book I (pp. 17-29)

10/21 T Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book II and III (pp. 29-79)

10/23 Th Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book IV (pp. 79-103)

10/28 T Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns." In *Political Writings*, ed. and tr. Biancamaria Fontana (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 307-328 \*CW

10/30 Th Constant (cont.)

Jürgen Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, ed. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greif (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 239-252 (Ch. 9). \*CW

**\*\*\* Second essay due at the beginning of class on October 30, 2014 \*\*\***

- 11/4 T           **No class (Election Day Holiday)**
- 11/6 Th           Jürgen Habermas, “Civil Disobedience: Litmus Test for the Democratic Constitutional State,” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 30 (1985): 95-116. \*CW

**IV. Gender as a Question of Equality and Freedom**

- 11/11 T           John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-30)
- 11/13 Th           Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 31-84)
- 11/18 T           Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Chapter 4 (pp. 85-109)
- 11/20 Th           Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), pp. 3-17, 159-163, 194-213. \*CW
- 11/25 T           Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, pp. 439-443, 521-523, 566-570, 638-664. \*CW
- 11/27 Th           **No class (Thanksgiving)**
- 12/2 T            Simone de Beauvoir (cont.)
- Sheryl Sandberg, Barnard College Commencement Speech (May 17, 2011). Transcript and video are available at <http://barnard.edu/headlines/transcript-and-video-speech-sheryl-sandberg-chief-operating-officer-facebook>
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All.” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2012. \*CW
- 12/4 Th            Concluding Remarks – last day of class

**\*\*\* Third essay due at the beginning of class on December 4, 2014 \*\*\***