

History of Political Thought

Convenor

All seminars will be provided by Prof Gianfranco Pellegrino.

Students can contact him via email.

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Office Hours: By appointment.

Course description

The main aim of this class is to provide students with a broad view of the historical underpinnings and evolution of classical and modern political thought. This overview will also aim at improving some methodological skills, such as the ability to read historical texts, the ability to pick out conceptual connections, similarities and differences in the arguments dealt with, the awareness of the contextual resonances of political texts. Moreover, the course will also provide basic skills in the management of secondary scholarship and in the discussion, presentation and assessment of the theoretical premises of the main political theories of the modern age.

The basic skills to be assessed are the following ones:

1. ability to read historical texts in their context, and in contrast with other texts;
2. ability to grasp the connections between premises and arguments, and to find them in the texts;
3. ability to put forward and defend one's own interpretations of a given text during guided discussions;
4. ability to emphasize similarities and differences between historical approaches and contemporary views and issues.

Required Readings

1. Primary Sources

- 1.1. Plato, *The Republic*
- 1.2. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- 1.3. Aristotle, *Politics*
- 1.4. N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*

- 1.5. T. Hobbes, *The Leviathan*
- 1.6. J. Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*
- 1.7. D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*
- 1.8. J. Bentham, *A Fragment on Government*
- 1.9. J.-J. Rousseau, *On Social Contract*

2. Secondary scholarship

- 2.1. A. Ryan, *On Politics. A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*, Penguin, 2013, chaps. 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19
- 2.2. J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, OUP, 1981, chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
- 2.3. R. Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy*, OUP, 2002
- 2.4. G. Newey, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hobbes and Leviathan*, Routledge, 2008, chaps. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
- 2.5. P.J. Kelly, *Locke's Second Treatise of Government. A Reader's Guide*, Continuum, 2007, chaps. 1, 2, 3
- 2.6. R. Hardin, *David Hume. Moral and Political Theorist*, OUP, 2007.
- 2.7. G. Pellegrino, "Bentham, Jeremy (1748-1832)", in *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, ed. Michael T. Gibbons, Wiley, 2015

The books can be bought on good international bookshops or on www.amazon.com or borrowed from libraries. The encyclopedia entry on Bentham will be uploaded on the e-learning Luiss website (<https://learn.luiss.it/course/view.php?id=10790>) and on Professor Pellegrino's personal website (<http://docenti.luiss.it/pellegrino/history-of-political-thought/>). Classical sources can be read from free texts on Project Gutenberg (<https://www.gutenberg.org/>) or Liberty Fund (<https://www.libertyfund.org/>). Any printed edition is accepted. A selection of texts is in Steven M. Cahn, *Political Philosophy. The Essential Texts*, OUP, different editions.

Course Assignments

The breakdown of grades will be as follows:

— Intermediate Exam – 50% (Optional)

Students can take a written exam on the texts discussed during classes (scheduled on March 23rd 2020). A text will be presented to students, and on

this basis of this, they should answer questions and write a short comment addressing the main issues discussed by the author. More information will be provided in class. A sample of this exam is here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/dv5qralkkmfge4l/IEsample.pptx?dl=0>

Notice that the intermediate exam is optional: if the outcome is unsuccessful or below the expectations, the grade will be not considered. Notice also that the grade of the intermediate exam, if successful and accepted, is valid for each final exam date.

— Final Exam – 50% (Mandatory)

To pass the final exam, students have two possibilities.

a) students who took and passed the intermediate exam on March 23rd 2020 must submit a paper 8 days before each exam date to Prof Pellegrino via email. Late submissions will not be considered.

Papers must not exceed the maximum length of 4,000 words. They should be formed in Times New Romans 12pt, double-spaced, 3cm margins each side, page numbers on the bottom of each page. Footnotes and references should follow the “Chicago Manual of Style” (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>).

The paper must contain a detailed and careful analysis of an excerpt of one of the texts presented and discussed in class, or of any other passage contained in the works listed above as 1.1., 1.3., 1.4., 1.5., 1.6., 1.7., 1.8., 1.9.

The paper must:

1. place the excerpt within the work of the author in question (i.e. indicate the overall argument and topic in which the excerpt appears);
2. provide an analytic and detailed summary of the argument stated in the excerpt and of its main steps;
3. provide a critical analysis of the arguments supporting the claim or claims stated in the excerpt (implicit assumptions, fallacies, obscure argumentative moves, transition from presumptions to conclusion);

b) students who didn't take or didn't pass the intermediate exam on March 23rd 2020 must take a multiple choice quiz, based on Ryan's book, 2.1. above

In-class participation

Attendance is compulsory, as established by LUISS general regulation. The only reasons for not attending classes are serious health or personal problems, certified by medical statements.

Special Needs

If you are a student with special needs and you need accommodations to achieve equal access, please contact Prof. Pellegrino via email as soon as possible, preferably within the first week.