Course Description
What does it mean for politics to have a “nature”? Can we identify phenomena characteristic of or relevant to politics throughout human history and within a variety of political contexts? This course offers an introduction to political theory by surveying the major political thinkers of the Western Tradition. Readings will be diverse and will span almost 2500 years of political thought, focusing on themes like the proper ends of government, the origin of political authority, and the significance of power, justice, and political obedience. Selections will be taken primarily from canonical works of political theory.

The course fulfills the following Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes:

II. h. Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.
II. m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
II. n. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

Course Texts
The core text for the class will be the collection *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*, edited by Steven M. Cahn. Although a bit expensive, the wide range of material included will prevent you from having to buy a large stack of books. In some cases, the core text will be supplemented by materials which will be made available through the course website on Sakai. The Cahn book can be purchased in person at either the Rutgers University Bookstore at Ferren Mall or NJ Books on Easton Ave. It can be easily ordered online as well—Amazon.com and Abebooks.com are reliable options.

Required texts:
Steven Cahn (ed.), *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press 2011)
ISBN: 9780199791155

Course Expectations
Midterm (35%)
Final (35%)
Attendance and Participation (30%)

The midterm and final will test your grasp of the course material in four key areas:

* Please note that this is a draft syllabus and is subject to change.
1. **Context**: The historical, political, and personal background relevant to each of the thinkers we discuss.

2. **Key ideas and arguments**: The main ideas discussed and arguments made by each thinker in the course readings and emphasized in lecture.

3. **Connections**: The ways in which the different thinkers we encounter engage with one another's work and address shared questions and concerns.

4. **Application**: The use of the ideas and arguments encountered in the readings and lecture to illuminate aspects of contemporary personal and political life.

The midterm will be held on Wednesday, March 12 during our regularly scheduled class session. The date and time of the final exam will be announced in class at the end of the semester. Failure to complete either the midterm or the final exam will result in automatic failure of the course.

Attendance is mandatory. It is expected that you will attend every class session except in the case of an emergency, illness, or prearranged absence. Attendance and participation will be evaluated on qualitative as well as quantitative grounds. Disruptive behavior like engaging in audible side conversations, consistently entering late or exiting early, cellphone use, and the use of laptops for purposes other than note-taking will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade.

**Important Dates**

Wed., Sept. 3: First day of class  
Wed., Oct. 15: Midterm Exam  
Wed., Nov. 26: NO CLASS  
Wed., Dec. 10: Last day of class  
TBD: Final Exam

**Course Plan**

Wed., September 3:  
Introduction

**The Ancient Ideal**

Mon., September 8:  
Plato, *Defence of Socrates* (CPMP1 5-22)

Wed., September 10:  
Plato, *Defence of Socrates*, cont’d

Mon., September 15:  
Plato, *Republic* (CPMP 59-66 [368c5-377b13])

Wed., September 17:  
Plato, *Republic* (CPMP 66-85 [412b-445e4]; 128-133 [514a-521b14])

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1 Cahn, ed., *Classics of Moral and Political Philosophy*. 
Mon., September 22:  
Aristotle, *Politics* (CPMP 213-226)

Wed., September 24:  
Aristotle, *Politics* (CPMP 234-236, 239-244)

Early Modern Political Thought

Mon., September 29:  
Machiavelli, *The Prince* (CPMP 328-349)

Wed., October 1:  
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, cont’d

Mon., October 6:  
Hobbes, *Leviathan* (CPMP 391-399)

Wed., October 8:  
Hobbes, *Leviathan* (CPMP 405-411, 420-430)

Mon., October 13:  
Review

Wed., October 15:  
**Midterm Exam**

Mon., October 20:  

Wed., October 22:  
Jefferson, “The Declaration of Independence” (CPMP 1179-1181)  
Madison and Hamilton, *Federalist Papers* (CPMP 685-694, 701-710 [#s 1, 10, 47, 48, 51])  
The Constitution of the United States (CPMP 1170-1177)

Mon., October 27:  
Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (selections TBD)

Wed., October 29:  
Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (selections TBD)

Modern Political Ideologies

Mon., November 3:  

Wed., November 5:  
Mon., November 10:  
Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (CPMP 862-869)

Wed., November 12:  
Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (CPMP 878-896)

Mon., November 17:  
Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (excerpts available through Sakai)  

Obligation and Civil Disobedience

Wed., November 19:  
Plato, *Crito* (CPMP 22-30)

Mon., November 24:  
King, “Letter from a Birmingham City Jail” (CPMP 1212-1221)

Wed., November 26:  
NO CLASS

Justice

Mon., December 1:  
Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (CPMP 1038-1060)

Wed., December 3:  
Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, cont’d

Mon., December 8:  
Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (CPMP 1064-1076)

Wed., December 10:  
Conclusion