Sarah Morgan Smith

Hello, and welcome! I have been teaching online for a number of years now, and I really enjoy it. Online learning allows us to extend a conversation across multiple days (not all great ideas occur in the 90 minutes of a "regularly scheduled" class). Moreover, we can easily integrate media of various kinds into our shared learning experiences. Whether this is your first online class or your ninety-ninth, I hope that by the end of it, you will walk away with a new appreciation for the power and potential of learning "beyond" the classroom.

I look forward to getting to know you as we learn together. If you have any questions about the syllabus or at any other time during the semester, please contact me right away.

Communication Policy & Online Office Hours

Email: smsmith@polisci.rutgers.edu

I will respond to email within 24 hours, Monday-Friday; in general, I do not check my email very often over the weekend, so please plan accordingly if you need to get in touch with me.

If you do not receive a response within 24 hours during the business week, please resend your email as technology does, sometimes, fail. ;-) 

Office Hours: I will log into Sakai at pre-announced times during the semester to answer your questions via chat. I will also be available via Skype on an appointment-only basis.

About the Course

Nature of Politics is intended to serve as an introduction to the history of political ideas: think of it as a “sampler plate” from the menu of the great political writing of the Western tradition.

Our course will be organized around three major themes. We will begin by discussing the nature, origin, and ends of politics. From there, we will examine the relationship between politics and economics, particularly on the subject of private property. Finally, we will end the course by considering the meaning of self-government, both in an institutional sense and as a quality of character (the ability to “govern oneself”) necessary for genuine citizenship.

Cutting across all three themes will be considerations of such crucial and enduring issues in politics as: the connection between the individual and community; questions of political obligation and civil disobedience; stability, revolution, and change; legitimacy and justice; as well as freedom, equality and power.

By the end of the course, you will be able to discuss ways in which Western political thought reflects the inherent tensions within the idea that men are created both free and equal. You will also be asked to think deeply about what it means to be a citizen, and to evaluate your own
also be asked to think deeply about what it means to be a citizen, and to evaluate your own interest and participation in politics.

Please expect to dedicate no less than two 90 minute periods of time to working through the course material each week (not including your reading or writing assignments), and plan accordingly.

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.

Required Texts

Note that although I'm asking you to purchase four books, they are relatively inexpensive editions.

All other materials for each week will be posted to the course site as indicated in the reading schedule.

How To Earn Points (Grading)

A Word About Plagiarism:

Please note that all your written work will be submitted via Turnitin.com, which processes all student papers through an anti-plagiarism database. Be wise. I will be happy to answer any questions about plagiarism and citing sources you may have. In addition, I encourage you to take a look at this resource from the Rutgers University Library on taking and using notes for academic writing.

Note: You MUST complete all required assignments in order to receive a passing grade.

Interpretative Essays (45% of your total grade)
- Aristotle Essay, 15% | Due: September 26, 2015
- Keywords Essay, 15% | Due: October 31, 2015
- Hayek Essay, 15% | Due: November 25, 2015

Details about each of these assignments can be found on Sakai. All essays will be run through Turnitin plagiarism detection.

Comprehensive Final Exam (30% of your total grade)
Due: December 17, 2015

The test will be a collection of take home essays of varying lengths, totally between 10-12 pages. The exam must be completed and submitted between by the time and date listed and will be run through Turnitin plagiarism detection.

Make-up tests are offered only in cases of legitimate emergencies and when I am notified immediately. By agreeing to the conditions of this class, you indicate that you are aware
Participation and Discussion (25% of your total grade)
We are all learners in this course and some of the deepest learning comes as a result of
discussion and collaboration with others. Therefore, throughout the semester, as part of our
learning units, I will post a variety of assignments which are designed to be low-risk opportunities
for you to demonstrate your engagement with the material of the course on a regular basis as
well as interact with your fellow classmates. The individual assignments will be graded pass/fail,
in order to keep the pressure low -- but you must complete all of them in order to earn an A in the
course and late work will not be accepted (see below).

In addition, you must keep a blog (or journal) in which you reflect on the reading, refine your
understanding, and engage in dialogue with other students. You will need to get into the regular
habit of composing and sharing your blog post, as well as reading and commenting on the posts
of your fellow students; you can also use the blog to share images and web links related to the
course content. Your blog will be graded at mid-term and at the end of term for timeliness,
quality, and relevancy.

Note: I will continually be spot-checking the blogs, and when I identify a student blog that is not up to
date, I will leave a comment with a note. Each note will result in a five point deduction when I grade
the pages at the mid-term and end of term.

Extra Effort = Extra Credit Opportunity!!
I encourage you to make extra posts and contribute extra multimedia content if you identify
something in your daily life that relates to class. For example, post a link to a political news story,
share your perspective about how a current political issue relates to the reading, reflect on a
connection between the course readings and a movie you have seen or a book you are reading,
etc. If I think one of your “extra” posts is worthy of extra credit, I will leave a note indicating the
number of points earned in the comments.

Policy on Late Work

**Essays**
In general, late work is not accepted. Expectations and due dates are made very clear, and the
condensed nature of the winter session makes it very difficult to play catch up.

In cases of legitimate—and documented—emergency, students may receive an extension at the
discretion of the instructor. To apply for an extension, you must notify me via email of your
situation at least 24 hours prior to a due date; I will respond to you with the terms of any
potential extension as quickly as possible.

**Final Exam**
The exams a take-home. While you are allowed and even encouraged to use your notes in order
to make strong connections to the assigned texts in your written responses, you are expected to
have learned the material prior to taking the exam. As such, if the exam is turned in late, one
point will be deducted from your test score for each minute beyond the deadline.

**Participation and Discussion Assignments**
For these community-oriented assignments, timely participation is essential. If you do not
participate, the class discussion and learning will continue without you; therefore, if you “miss
class” in the sense that you fail to complete a participation and discussion assignment within the
specified time frame, you will not be able to make up the work.

Course Overview

**Week 1 | Introduction**
September 3
September 2-5
No Assigned Reading

Participation and Discussion Activities:
- Leave a post in the Check-In Forum (due by 11PM on 9/3).
- Complete NOP Online Student Info Survey (due by 11PM on 9/3).
- Create a blog on our Sakai Site (details of the assignment are on Sakai).

Week 2 | Aristotle
September 6-12
Nichomachean Ethics 10.9 (on Sakai)
Politics
- Book 1, Chaps. 1-3, 5, 7, 12
- Book 3, Chaps. 1, 4, 6-9, 12
- Book 4, Chapt. 11
- Book 6, Chapt. 2-3
- Book 7, Chaps. 1-3, 7

Participation and Discussion Activities:
Voice Thread Comments (due by 11PM on 9/12)
Blog Post (due by 11PM on 9/12)

Week 3 | Machiavelli
September 13-19
The Prince, Dedicatory Letter, Chaps. 1-3, 5-6, 9

Participation and Discussion Activities:
Annotation Studio Activity (due by 11PM on 9/19)

Week 4 | Machiavelli
September 20-26
The Prince, Chaps. 15-19, 21, 25

Participation and Discussion Activities:
Voice Thread Comments (due by 11PM on 9/26)

September 26 | Aristotle Essay Due

Week 5 | Locke
September 27-October 3
Second Treatise:
- Chaps. 1-5: all
- Chapt. 6: §52, §54-57, §59, §61, §65, §73
- Chapt. 7: §87-91

Participation and Discussion Activities:
Annotation Studio Activity (due by 11PM on 10/3)

Week 6 | Locke
Week 9 | Marx

October 25-October 31

“On the Jewish Question,” selections (on Sakai)
“Wage Labour and Capital,” selections (on Sakai)

No Participation Assignments - work on your keywords essay

October 31 | Keywords Essay Due & Mid-Term Blog Check

Week 10 | Marx

November 1-November 7

“Communist Manifesto” (on Sakai)

Participation and Discussion Activities:
Homework (due by 11PM on 11/7)
Blog Post based on my prompt (due by 11PM on 11/7)

Week 11 | Hayek

November 8-November 14

*The Road to Serfdom*, Chaps. 1-5
Week 12 | Hayek

November 15-November 21

*The Road to Serfdom*, Chaps. 6-8; 10

**Participation and Discussion Activities:**
Voice Thread Comments (due by 11PM on **11/21**)
Blog Post based on my prompt (due by 11PM on **11/21**)

November 25 | Hayek Essay Due

There will be no new unit posted this week (Week 13 | November 22-November 25) because it is Thanksgiving break. Enjoy your holiday!

Week 14 | Thoreau & MLK, Jr.

November 29-December 5
HDT, “Civil Disobedience,” (on Sakai)
MLK, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” (on Sakai)

**Participation and Discussion Activities:**
Annotation Studio Activity (due by 11PM on **12/5**)

Week 15 | Thoreau & MLK, Jr.

December 6-December 10
MLK, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” (on Sakai)

**Participation and Discussion Activities:**
Blog Post (due by 11PM on 12/10)

December 17 | Final Exam DUE & End of Term Blog Check

The Nitty Gritty

**Technical Requirements**

- **A reliable high-speed internet connection:** If your internet connection is not reliable, you may miss a significant amount of class content. Have a back-up plan: identify a nearby public location with Wi-Fi where you can work “just in case.”
- **Digital Toolkit (see the course site for details):** Make sure that whatever computer you plan on using for the course has all of these (free!) programs installed before the first day of class. (Download links are available on the course site, under “Resources.”)
- **Speakers or Headphones:** This course includes audio lectures and audio activities called “VoiceThreads.”
- **Microphone (built in to your computer or cell phone is fine):** Your participation in “Voice Thread” discussions will require you to be able to leave an audio or video comment.
Sakai Help and Documentation

We will be using a Sakai site to manage all of the content and assignments for this course. You should thoroughly familiarize yourself with Sakai before the start of the course.

If you have problems with Sakai, please contact the Help Desk directly as soon as possible so that you can resume your participation in class. For immediate Sakai assistance, call 848.445.8721, Monday through Friday, 8:00AM-6:00PM. You can also email sakai@rutgers.edu.

Only email me after you have made an attempt to resolve the issue through the Help Desk.

Conditions of Participation

Please ensure you are ready to fully accept the responsibilities of this class. By enrolling in this class, you agree:

1. To abide by the university’s standards of academic integrity:
2. To use proper Netiquette in all course interactions. For a detailed explanation of proper Netiquette, go to: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html
3. That you have approximately 2-3 hours each day to spend on the course (not including reading and other assignments).
4. To log-in and review your new “Learning Unit” and all related assignments on the first day of each unit (as listed on the syllabus).
5. To be available for the exam dates listed on the syllabus (Test 1: January 6, 6am to 11pm and Test 2: January 17, 6 am to 11pm) Unavoidable conflicts must be brought to my attention immediately. There are NO makeup exams unless a legitimate emergency occurs and I am notified immediately.
6. To contact me at any point if you have a question.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students in this course who have a documented disability will be accommodated per MSU’s policy on academic accommodations.