**POLS 502: Modern Political Theory**

**MONDAY 15:40 - 18:30**

**Online Zoom[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Instructor: Ahmet O. Evin** aevin@sabanciuniv.edu

### Office Hours: M 14:30 – 15:30 and by appointment

**Course description and content**

This course will introduce graduate students of political science to some of the essential texts of political thought from antiquity to modern times. It will begin with a brief discussion of the classical medieval antecedents of modern political thought and then focus on major thinkers and salient texts from the early modern period through the nineteenth century. It will also consider, throughout the semester, the nature of political theory and its emergence as an academic discipline in the twentieth century.

**Modality of the learning process**

Under the prevailing circumstances, the course will be offered online throughout the semester. The Zoom platform will allow debate and discussion among the group, which will be conducted in a structured fashion. To ensure maximum participation, at each session there will be short presentations (maximum 10 minutes) by students on an assigned topic. These short presentations, made with shared screen, will include questions to launch discussion. Depending on the topic, the instructor will provide background presentations (short lectures) sometimes at the beginning and at appropriate times during the class. Students are encouraged to bring up any outstanding questions that need further discussion or clarification; these will be addressed, as needed, at additional meetings scheduled at a common free hour.

**Course requirements:**

The course requirements are: (i) attendance of all sessions; (ii) active participation in class discussions; (iii) presentations and leading discussions in class; (iv) written summary of the presentations and the questions raised will count as response papers; (v) a final paper (ca. 6,000 words); and (vi) a final take-home examination (final Assignment).

**Grading**

In determining the final grades, Participation, Presentation, and the written submission of the Response Paper will count 30 percent (10 points each, assuming that each student will make three presentations in the course of the semester); Final Paper 35 percent; and Final Assignment 35 percent.

**Readings**

The course uses secondary as well as primary texts. Primary texts are to be found in

* Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Classics of Modern Political Theory* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997),
* Mitchell Cohen, ed., *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, 2nd ed., Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Two of the secondary sources are

* George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 3rd ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961),
* Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978).

These readings can be downloaded. Other assigned reading material will be found under Resources at the SU Course+ site, including the following:

* Gabriel Almond, “Political Theory and Political Science” *The American Political Science Review*, v.60 n.4, 1966, 869-879
* Isaiah Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist?” *Political, Philosophy and Society*, ed. P. Lasslett & W.G. Runciman, Basic Blackwell, 1962
* Michael Freeden, “What should the ‘Political’ in Political Theory Explore?” *Journal of Political Philosophy*, v.13, n.2, 2005, 113-134
* Sheldon Wolin, “Political Theory as a Vocation” *The American Political Science Review*, v.63, n.4, 1969, 1062-1082
* Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in Isaiah Berlin*, Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).

**Assignments**

**Week 1**

**5 October: Introduction & Classical Antecedents**

* Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000): Plato, *Republic,* 84-114 (especially pp. 84-95 & pp. 104-114).
* Aristotle and Cicero: Cohen, 96-109.
* Gabriel Almond, “Political Theory and Political Science” *The American Political Science Review*, v.60 n.4, 1966, 869-879.

**Week 2**

**12 October: The Medieval Order**

* St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas: Cohen, 115-130.
* Poggi, 16-85
* Sabine, 198-222.

**Week 3**

**19 October: Medieval Outlook: Law, Custom, Legitimacy, and Universalism**

* Sabine, 224-304.

**Week 4**

**26 October: Machiavelli, the Renaissance, Reformation**

* Cahn, 4-77.
* Cohen, 167-175.

**Week 5[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**2 November: Hobbes**

* Cahn, 80-196.

**Week 6**

**9 November: Spinoza and Locke**

* Cahn, 197 - 291.

**Week 7[[3]](#footnote-3)**

**16 November: Montesquieu and the American Revolution**

* Cohen, 250-259; 388-410.
* Cahn, 601 – 664.

**Week 8**

**23 November: Rousseau**

* Cahn, 420 – 485.
* Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in Isaiah Berlin*, Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).

**Week 9[[4]](#footnote-4)**

**30 November: Hume, Adam Smith and Kant**

* Cahn, 486 – 552; 571 – 600.
* Cohen, 355 – 359.

**Week 10**

**7 December: Burke, Bentham, and Mill**

* Cohen, 336 – 341; 365 – 368.
* Cahn, 665 – 732.

**Week 11**

**14 December: John Stuart Mill**

* Cahn, 930 – 1006.

**Week 12[[5]](#footnote-5)**

**21 December: Hegel**

* Cahn, 736 – 835.
* Sabine, 620-647.

**Week 13**

**28 December: Hegel (con’t), Marx, and Perspectives on Political Theory**

* Cohen 428 – 454.
* Isaiah Berlin, “Does Political Theory Still Exist?” *Political, Philosophy and Society*, ed. P. Lasslett & W.G. Runciman, Basic Blackwell, 1962.
* Michael Freeden, “What should the ‘Political’ in Political Theory Explore?” *Journal of Political Philosophy*, v.13, n.2, 2005, 113-134.
* Sheldon Wolin, “Political Theory as a Vocation” *The American Political Science Review*, v.63, n.4, 1969, 1062-1082.

**Week 14**

**4 January, 2021: Evolution of Contemporary Political Thought: Mosca, Michels, Max**

**Weber, Leo Strauss, Habermas. Foucaılt, John Rawls, Jan-Werner Müller**

* Cohen, 493 – 518; 592 – 602; 665 – 676; 685 – 708; 758 – 761.

1. Ahmet Evin's Personal Meeting Room

   Join Zoom Meeting

   https://sabanciuniv.zoom.us/j/5648896888

   Meeting ID: 564 889 6888 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Deadline for proposing a paper topic for approval [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sources for your term paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Draft outline due. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Outline with topic sentences due. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)