

History of Political Thought

History of Political Thought (POLI 205): Spring 2009

This course is a basic introduction to the ideas and principles that have animated political life, from ancient Athens to the contemporary world. This is obviously a vast subject, and to help us make our way through this rich trove of literature we will be concentrating on the idea of democracy: what it means, why is it desirable, what it entails. We will examine how the meaning of the word has changed over time, how that ideas has been translated into political action and institutions. We will also look at those thinkers and movements who have criticized the idea and explore what alternatives have been offered.

My contact information

Prof. Moran

Office: K-636

Office Hours: M; 10 am - 12 noon, 6-7 pm ; T 10 am -12 noon, W 9 - 10 am or by appointment

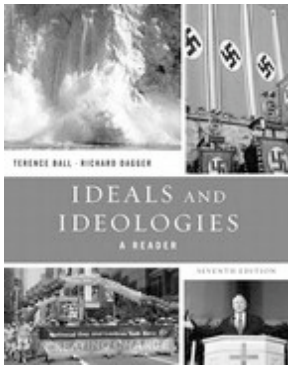
Email: fmoran@njcu.edu

Webpage: <http://faculty.njcu.edu/fmoran/pol205.htm>

Class Meeting Hours/Location: M, 7-9:50; K-114

Final Exam: Monday, 11 May, 7 pm; K-114

Required Resources



Our exploration of political thought is going to be based on close reading of primary source documents. Unfortunately, given the costs of books and the financial realities for most of us, it is prohibitively expensive to purchase full texts, and time constraints make it difficult to read as much as we should. So, given those realities, we have one (moderately overpriced as opposed to horribly overpriced) textbook. Ball and Dagers "Ideals and Ideologies," 7th Edition (ISBN: 0-205-60735-7). The text is available in the campus bookstore, or you can get it online. It is comprised of edited selections of longer works.

View the selections included like the snippets of songs you can get on iTunes for free; you get a sample of the good bits in the hope that you'll plunge for the complete work. But unlike iTunes which gives the taste hoping you'll plunk down the \$0.99 for the full tune, most of the selections we will be reading are "public domain" and thus free. So I've tried to find as many of the full-length treatments that I could online and you'll find links on our course webpage.

Objectives

This course fits within the University's General Studies Curriculum (GSC). All courses in the GSC are required to address reading and writing skills and at least two of skills from a subset that includes: information literacy, critical thinking/creative expression, oral communication, and quantitative literacy/computer literacy. Accordingly, in addition to developing a deeper understanding of the ideas that animate our political life, the objectives of this course include enhanced reading, writing, critical thinking and oral communication skills.

Assessment

The guidelines for GSC courses stipulate that the reading and writing components must involve significant work beyond the classroom. We will assess each of the objectives described above in three main areas: writing assignments, exams, class discussion. Grading rubrics for each are available on the course website: <http://faculty.njcu.edu/fmoran/poli205/rubrics09.pdf>

Requirements

The basic requirements for the grade in this course fall into two broad areas: written work, and class participation. To do well in each of these aspects you are asked and expected to complete a fair amount of reading and to attend class on a regular basis. We only meet once a week, so missing a class is a significant liability.

Reaction Papers (60%)

As you browse through the text and syllabus, you'll notice that the former is composed of extracts from selected primary source texts and documents organized around a specific theme; and the latter is organized such that we cover one of those sections roughly every other week. For this portion of the grade you are going to write and submit a total of five (5) reaction papers addressing the collection of writings assigned for a particular week. We have 14 weeks in the semester, and, aside from this opening week, you'll have an opportunity to submit a paper each subsequent week for a total of 13 chances to submit written work. Here are the guidelines for the papers:

- ❖ Each paper should be between 2 and 3 pages long, using reasonable font size and margins.
- ❖ Each paper will be given equal weight and graded on a 20-point scale.
- ❖ You can submit one and one one paper per week. In other words, no "bundling." In other words, you cannot bang out 5 papers next week, call it a semester, and then disappear until May. Likewise, you can't go AWOL until April and then hand in a stack of papers on the last day of class.
- ❖ You can submit more than five papers total during the course of the semester. If you choose to submit more than the required 5, I will count only the 5 best scores among those submitted.

Class Participation (15%)

Class participation will be based on both the quality and the quantity of your participation in class discussions. Obviously, coming up with a brilliant *bon mot* in September and then sitting mute for the rest of the semester is as unrewarding as speaking constantly but off topic. Participation comes in various forms and the grading will reflect the fact that not everybody is comfortable speaking in a large class. To that end, we will have numerous small group exercises that should allow each of you to speak and express your views.

Generally I use the following as a rough guide for determining this part of the grade:

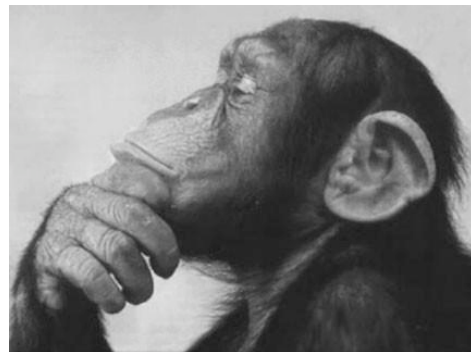
Participation in the form of regular *attentive* attendance to class is generally good for a “B” for this portion of the grade. I don’t have a hard mathematical formula for determining “regular attendance” i.e., I don’t take attendance and you don’t have a set number of classes that you can miss before a penalty kicks in. You’re all adults and you should want to come to class rather than being coerced into doing so. Please note the “attentive” part of the criteria. Stopping by regularly but then spending the class time dozing, dining, and engaging in other disruptive behaviors will adversely affect the grade.

The same general rules apply in the discussions (both full class and small group). As a rule, it’s better to speak more rather than less, but the discussion has to be on topic. Screaming in order to browbeat your peers into submission, for instance, will adversely affect the grade.

Occasional pop quizzes (see “Caveats” below) will be factored into this portion of the grade as well.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will be held in class and given at the date designated by the University (11 May at 7 pm in K-114). That is the last day of finals and the last time available for finals, so if you think you may have difficulty attending that class it is imperative that you contact me well in advance (at least a week) so that we can schedule an alternative time. If you do not take the exam, you will receive a grade of “F” for the exam, and that grade will be factored into the course grade.



Meeting Schedule

Introduction	26 Jan	BD chp 1
Democratic Ideal	2 Feb	BD chps. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
Liberalism	9 Feb	BD chps. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,
	16 Feb	BD chps. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Conservatism	23 Feb	BD chps. 24, 25, 27, 29
	2 Mar	BD chps. 30, 31, 32
No Class	9 Mar	Spring Break
Socialism	16 Mar	BD chps. 33, 34, 35, 36
	23 Mar	BD chps. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44
Fascism	30 Mar	BD chps. 45, 46, 47, 48
Liberation and Identity Politics	6 Apr	BD, chp. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54
	13 Apr	BD, chps. 56, 57, 58, 59
Green Theory	20 Apr	BD, chps. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64
Radical Islam	27 Apr	BD, chps. 65, 66, 67
Globalization	4 May	BD, chps. 68, 69
Final	11 May	Final Exam



Caveats

1. This syllabus is meant as a guide for the course. While I will do my best to maintain the pace outlined above, I am not guaranteeing that that will in fact occur. *Any substantive changes related to due dates, course content, or course requirements will be distributed in class.*
2. Please do your best to **get to class on time**. I am well aware of the joys of traveling in this little corner of the Garden State. That being said, you all know traffic is a nightmare and parking can be a pain, so plan accordingly. Tardiness adversely affects the “Participation” part of the grade.
3. **Keep the food consumption to a minimum.** Coffee, tea, or something to drink is fine; a five-course meal from the truck is not. If you’re going to chow down, bring enough to share with everybody or keep it out of the classroom (and I strongly prefer the latter – eat on your own time).
4. *Turn off the cell phones, Ipods, or whatever latest bit of technological wizardry you possess.* If I hear or see any of these in use during class, class stops and it’s quiz time. The grades for the quizzes will be factored in to the “participation” part of the course.
5. **Respect your colleagues.** Politics is great fun to talk about and I want to encourage you all to express your thoughts freely, but be mindful of the impact your words can have on others in the room.
6. **Missed and Late Exam Policy:** All exams are due on the date assigned. Exams received after that time will be docked 1/3 of a grade for each class day late. In the event of missed in-class exam (that is, the final exam), you will receive a grade of “F” for the missed work unless you give me prior notification of the conflict and reason for missing the exam.
7. **Plagiarism:** All submitted work must be the product of your own thought. If you are found to have plagiarized all or part of an assignment, you will receive a grade of “F” for that assignment. Furthermore, notification of, and supporting documentation for, the violation will be forwarded to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Students. Consult your student handbook for the gory details.