

## FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Political Science (POLS) 220, Section 1  
Spring 2012, 3 Units

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*Class Meetings:*

T/R, 1:35p-2:50p

University Hall 3328

*Course Website:*

<https://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu/>

### COURSE INFORMATION

**DESCRIPTION:** “Foundations” is a reading, writing, and discussion intensive course that will introduce students to the history of political thought. Through an engagement with “classic” texts spanning the ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary periods in the “west,” we will ask hard questions about justice, truth, value, happiness and the good life, individual and common good, the foundations of political societies, the origins and work of inequality, the value of freedom, subjection, subjectivity and citizenship, violence and morality, and many others. Perhaps above all, we will ask what it means to make something “foundational” at all, and what we have “built” upon that foundation.

**INSTITUTIONAL MISSION:** Loyola Marymount University’s mission is to encourage student learning, to educate the whole person, and to serve faith and promote justice. The Department of Political Science pursues this mission by encouraging and challenging students to be perceptive observers of political life in all its variety and richness; to seek a systematic understanding of the causes and consequences of political institutions, policies, and behavior; to develop a moral and ethical perspective that allows them to critically evaluate actions, institutions, and policies; and to prepare themselves for a life of active citizenship and involvement in creating a more just and humane world. “Foundations of Political Thought” serves these university and departmental missions by introducing students to the discipline of political theory, which draws a variety of moral values and political realities into a relationship of dialogue, challenge, compromise, and conflict. The course will serve to equip students with sharper analytical tools, and hopefully also greater moral sensitivity in perceiving and confronting the political dimensions of the world around them.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Students will develop a grounding in the major concepts, arguments, and key thinkers in political theory.
2. Students will develop an appreciation for how theory informs the discipline of political science.
3. Students will improve their skills of deliberation and logical argumentation.
4. Students will improve their critical, argumentative, and interpretive writing skills.
5. Most importantly, students will develop their critical thinking skills and apply them to their political and social lives, allowing them to grow as persons and as critical citizens.

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:** This is a course for beginners with an interest in politics and philosophy; there are no prerequisites other than college-level reading, writing, and

study skills.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- (1) **This is a writing intensive class:** You will submit **five writing assignments** during the semester. Each assignment must be formatted and submitted properly in order to receive full credit, as documented in the course paper requirements, available on MYLMU Connect. Specific requirements for each assignment will be given during the semester. The five assignments are as follows:
  - (1) Critical Reading and Critical Writing
  - (2) Argument Explication
  - (3) Writing “Interpretive” Arguments
  - (4) Essay One
  - (5) Final Essay
- (2) You will take part in two **peer-reviews** (tied to writing assignments three and four), editing and commenting on two of your colleagues’ papers.
- (3) Twenty-four hours before each class meeting, you will post a **reading question** on the course website. Be prepared to present your question at the beginning of class.
- (4) You must **attend class** and be an **active participant** in discussion having **completed each day’s assigned reading**. This is a text-driven course, and as such, you must bring your copy of the day’s reading to class. Failure to bring the text and your notes on the text will be treated as an absence.

#### **GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

First Writing Assignment:	5%
Second Writing Assignment:	10%
Third Writing Assignment	15%
Peer Review #1:	5%
Fourth Writing Assignment	20%
Peer Review #2:	5%
Fifth Writing Assignment:	20%
Reading questions:	10%
Class Participation:	5%
Attendance:	5%

#### **GRADING SCALE:**

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	73-77
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

*\*\*\*Any student who receives a failing grade for attendance and participation will receive a failing grade for the class. Any student who has not turned in all five writing assignments will receive a failing grade for the class.\*\*\**

**PAPER SUBMISSION:** Exact deadlines for papers and writing assignments will be announced in class and posted online. All papers will be submitted electronically for and prepared for blind review by the instructor. Submission requirements and formatting details will be posted with each assignment.

**READING QUESTIONS:** A good reading question is one that directly and explicitly engages with the text. Your question should cite a specific passage, term, or concept that you are puzzled about, and it should offer your interpretation of the passage at hand. It should be focused on something that genuinely puzzles you in the reading, and which you can probably assume that others find puzzling or confusing as well.

You will submit one question per class meeting. Questions must be submitted twenty-four (24) hours before class meets. Late questions will be accepted for partial credit. Questions posted after class meets will receive no credit. Questions will be graded on a three point scale: Excellent = 2, Satisfactory (or late) = 1, Unacceptable (or not submitted) = 0.

In the unlikely event that students are not keeping up with the reading, the instructor reserves the right to add short reading quizzes without notice.

### COURSE POLICIES

**ATTENDANCE:** Timely, prepared, and engaged attendance is required. Absences will only be excused in the case of illness or emergency. If there is a conflict between course participation and religious observance, please contact me in advance. It is not necessary to obtain prior approval from the instructor when missing a meeting is unavoidable, but note that students bear the *entire responsibility* for the decision to miss class and for whatever effect that may have on their course grade and their learning experience. Repeated absences and lateness will directly affect the participation and attendance portion of a student's grade, as detailed in the course requirements section.

**LATE PENALTIES:** I accept assignments when they are due. Assignments must be turned in at the designated time and place. Failure to turn in an assignment on time is unacceptable except with the prior agreement of the instructor (which will be given only in exceptional circumstances). Except in documented cases of illness or emergency, a penalty of up to a **full letter grade** may be assessed for each day (24hrs) the assignment is late. However, each student may, at his or her discretion, take a 24-hour extension for *one* of the writing assignments, no questions asked (if you are using your extension please indicate this on the first page of your paper).

**PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter. Proven plagiarism of any kind may result in automatic failure of the course, and will be referred to the University for further disciplinary action. I reserve the right to submit your electronic document to plagiarism detection websites if necessary. It is **never** permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including anything found on the Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the "LMU Honor Code and Process" which appears in the LMU Bulletin 2011-2012. You should also refer to my own writing requirements posted on the course website.

**GENDER NEUTRAL & GENDER SPECIFIC LANGUAGE, NAMES & ACCENTS:** Academics no longer use the pronoun "he" to apply universally to all persons, nor do we use the term "man," when we are referring to humanity or people in general. In our writing, when we are making generalizations we should use gender neutral pronouns, that is, sie and hir, s/he, him or her, they/their, etc. When referring to a specific person or group of people, we should use the language and pronouns *that they prefer* if we know them. Further, we should be attentive to the spelling and accents of author's names. Finally, all authors must be referred to by their entire names, or only their last names, *not by their first names*, orally and in writing.

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION:** At times I will communicate with the entire class using campus email systems, so it is essential that you regularly check your lion.lmu.edu email address or forward your lion account email to your preferred email address. You are welcome to contact me via email with questions about the course, but I will not respond to emails that ask for information that is available

in the course syllabus, assignment sheets, or any other documents distributed as an addendum to the course syllabus. In short, before asking a question, make sure you don't already have the answer.

**TECHNOLOGY USE DURING CLASS:** You are welcome to bring a computer to class provided that it enables you to engage more in the class discussion. You may also use a computer to help you take notes. Email, Twitter, Facebook, or anything at all that is not directly related to the *conversation* we are having will not be tolerated. Using a computer in this way during a seminar is quite simply RUDE and deeply disrespectful to your classmates. If you need to use a computer in class, you will be expected to post copies of your class notes on the class website immediately following the class session to share with others. If you are not willing to do this, do not bring a computer with you.

There is simply no reason whatsoever for you to be using your phone/PDA/Kindle/iPad/whatever during class time. E-Reserve texts should be \*printed\* and brought to class.

Your phone should be turned off and put away. If your phone rings during class, I will answer it for you, and it will be your responsibility to arrange for coffee service for every member of the class during our next meeting.

**OFFICE HOURS:** I look forward to meeting with you all during regularly scheduled office hours, or by appointment when meeting during office hours is not possible. Students who would like to discuss issues raised in the course further than class discussions will permit, or students who encounter difficulties with the course or the assigned material, are especially encouraged to attend office hours.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Loyola Marymount University is committed to equality in education. Students with special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.lmu.edu/dss> for additional information.

**TENTATIVE NATURE OF THE SYLLABUS:** If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications distributed in class or posted on MYLMU Connect.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

These texts will all be available for purchase from the bookstore. You are welcome to purchase them wherever you please or borrow them from the library, but *please use these editions of the texts* so that we are all literally on the same page during class. You will be expected to come to class with the text in hand. Some readings will be made available via electronic reserve in PDF format. You must **print** hard copies of these readings, i.e. do not bring your computer or e-reader in order to refer to the texts.

- *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, Cohen, Mitchell and Nicole Fermon, eds. (Princeton). [ISBN: 0691036896] (listed in the syllabus as PRPT)
- Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract* (Cornell). [ISBN: 0801484634]
- Harvey, Michael. *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* (Hackett). [ISBN: 0872205738]

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Week 1: Introduction**

T Jan 10: Course Introduction

### **Part I: Justice, Nature, and Rule**

R Jan 12: Plato, *Republic* (PRPT, pp. 39-65).

### **Week 2:**

T Jan 17: Plato, *Republic* (PRPT, pp. 65-84).

**\*\*Writing Assignment #1 (Critical Reading & Writing) Due in Class \*\***

R Jan 19: Plato, *Republic* (PRPT, pp. 94-100).

### **Week 3:**

T Jan 24: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, Selections (E-Reserve).

R Jan 26: Aristotle, *Politics* (PRPT, pp. 107-113)

### **Week 4:**

T Jan 31: Aristotle *Politics* (PRPT, pp. 113-123).

R Feb 2: Review and Writing Workshop.

**\*\* Writing Assignment #2 (Explication) Due Friday, Feb. 6 \*\***

### **Part II: Natural Freedom and Equality**

### **Week 5:**

T Feb 7: (1) Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (PRPT, pp. 205-219); (2) Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*, Chapter 1.

R Feb 9: (1) Hobbes, *Leviathan* (PRPT, pp. 219-242); (2) Harvey, Chapter 2.

### **Week 6:**

T Feb 14: (1) John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (PRPT, pp. 243-258); (2) Harvey, Chapter 3.

R Feb 16: (1) Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (PRPT, pp. 258-268); (2) Harvey, Chapter 5.

**\*\*Draft of Writing Assignment #3 (Interpretive Arguments) Due Friday, Feb 17\*\***

### **Week 7:**

**\*\*Peer Review of Writing Assignment #3 Due Monday, Feb 20\*\***

T Feb 21: Class attends *Dilemmas of Democracy* Conference.  
Harvey, Chapters 6, 7 & 8.

R Feb 23: Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (PRPT, pp. 268-279).

**\*\*Final Draft of Writing Assignment #3 (Interpretive Arguments) Due Friday, Feb 24\*\***

### **Week 8: SPRING BREAK**

### Part III: Moral Freedom and Critique

#### **Week 9:**

- T Mar 6: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (PRPT, pp. 293- 313)  
R Mar 8: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* (PRPT, pp. 280- 292).

#### **Week 10:**

- T Mar 13: Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” (E-Reserve).  
R Mar 15: Karl Marx, “Estranged Labor” (PRPT, pp. 438-448).

**\*\*Draft of Writing Assignment #4 Due Friday, Mar 16\*\***

#### **Week 11:**

**\*\*Peer Review of Writing Assignment #4 Due Monday, Mar 19\*\***

- T Mar 20: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, (PRPT, pp. 448-464).  
R Mar 22: Review and Writing Workshop.

**\*\*Final Draft of Writing Assignment #4 Due Friday, Mar 23\*\***

### Part IV: The “Problem” of Difference

#### **Week 12:**

- T Mar 27: (1) Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?” & “Keeping the Thing Going While Things Are Stirring”; (2) Sarah M. Grimke, “Letter VIII: On the Condition of Women in the United States”; (3) Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (E-Reserve).  
R Mar 29: (1) Marie-Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens” (PRPT, pp. 356-361); (2) Mary Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (PRPT, pp. 362-370).

#### **Week 13:**

- T April 3: Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to the *Second Sex* (PRPT, pp. 601-614).  
R April 5: *NO CLASS, Easter Break*

#### **Week 14:**

- T April 10: W.E.B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, Forethought and Chapter 1, pp. 34–44 (E-Reserve).  
R April 12: (1) Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from the Birmingham Jail”; (2) Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (PRPT, pp. 623-641).

#### **Week 15:**

- T April 17: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Introduction & Chapter 1 (Overview), pp. 1-40.  
R April 19: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Chapter 2 (Details) & Chapter 3 (“Naturalized Merits”), pp. 41-133.

#### **Week 16:**

- T April 24: Zadie Smith, *Speaking in Tongues* (E-Reserve).  
R April 26: Review and Writing Workshop.

**\*\* Writing Assignment #5 Due Thursday, May 3\*\***