

FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL THEORY

Political Science (POLS) 2000 / Section 01 (CRN: 468960)
Fall 2015 | 4 Units | Core Flags: Writing

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| <i>Instructor:</i> | Dr. Andrew Dilts | <i>Class Meetings:</i> | MW, 9:40a-11:10a |
| <i>Office:</i> | University Hall 4134 | | University Hall 4511 |
| <i>Office Hours:</i> | MW, 1:30p-3:00p <i>updates and sign-up online at</i> http://dilts.org/officehours | | (Bioethics Conf. Room) |
| <i>Email:</i> | andrew.dilts@lmu.edu | <i>Course Website:</i> | https://foundations2015.wordpress.com/ |
| <i>Phone:</i> | 310.338.5165 | | |

COURSE INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION: “Foundations” is a reading, writing, and discussion intensive course that will introduce students to the study of political theory, the history of political thought, and the meaning of “politics” itself. The course draws on “classic” and critical texts from ancient, modern, and contemporary periods in the “west,” in order to learn the vocabulary and method of political theory. The course requires students analyze and critique what William Connolly calls “essentially contested concepts” in politics (including, but not limited to: justice, truth, value, happiness, the good, the foundations of political societies, the origins and work of inequality, freedom, subjection, subjectivity, citizenship, violence, morality, and many others). We will ask what it means to make something “foundational” at all, and what we have “built” upon that foundation. In particular, the course traces four themes: 1) Justice & Politics, 2) Equality & Nature, 3) Freedom & Slavery, and 4) The “Problem” of “Difference.”

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, in particular, critically applying normative arguments to texts;
5. Most importantly, students will develop their critical thinking skills and apply them to their political and social lives, allowing them to grow as critical and self-reflective persons.

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 is restricted to POLS majors only, unless given consent of the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- (1) 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 the course website. Specific requirements for each assignment will be given during the semester. Tentative due dates are provided below, but are subject to change.
- (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, and you will submit a **written self-evaluation** of your

last paper.

- (3) **Twelve (12) hours before** each class meeting, you will post a **reading question** on your personal course blog. Be prepared to publicly present your question at the beginning of class.
- (4) You will **attend class** and be an **active participant** in discussion having **completed each day's assigned reading** (detailed below). 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:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Writing Assignment 1: | 5% |
| Writing Assignment 2: | 10% |
| Writing Assignment 3: | 15% |
| Writing Assignment 4: | 20% |
| Writing Assignment 5: | 20% |
| Peer Review #1: | 5% |
| Peer Review #2: | 5% |
| Reading Questions/Blog Posts: | 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.****

READING QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES: 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 post one question for each class meeting where reading is assigned (25 total). You will post these questions on your class blog. Questions must be **submitted twelve (12) 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

ACCESSIBILITY: Students with who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office (Daum Hall 2nd floor, 310-338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.lmu.edu/dss> for additional information. All students are invited and encouraged to discuss with me any questions and suggestions you might have about how to ensure that our class is supportive of difference and welcoming to all modes of learning, thinking, and interacting.

OFFICE HOURS: I look forward to meeting with you 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. Students should schedule office hour appointments in advance and keep those appointments promptly.

POLICIES CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY: While I will always work to ensure an atmosphere of trust and respect in which you feel you can come talk to me, there are university policies (pursuant to Title IX and the Clery Act) that may limit my ability to maintain confidentiality with regard to some topics. These include allegations of sexual harassment, sexual violence or assault, dating or domestic violence, stalking, and other misconduct involving students, faculty, or staff. These may trigger contact with a campus official who will want to speak with you about the incident you shared, and conduct an investigation. While I can assure some degree of confidentiality, counselors at Student Psychological Services and doctors and nurse practitioners at the Student Health Center can ensure more. For more information about this, please consult the Community Standards, the LMUCares website, or come and chat with me about it.

If at any time you need someone to talk with, you can always contact Sojourn Services (in Santa Monica) at 310-264-6644 or the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) 24-hour hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE or online at <https://rainn.org/>.

To file a report of sexual or interpersonal misconduct, contact the Department of Public Safety (DPS) in person, or by calling 222 from any campus phone or (310) 338-2893 from any phone. If you are unsure about who to talk to, please ask me or another faculty member that you trust. Just be aware that faculty members (and many LMU staff) are potentially obligated to report incidents on your behalf.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS: Given the sensitive nature of the topics explored, a spirit and active practice of mutual respect is crucial for classroom discourse. Students must respectfully listen to others' critiques and articulate responses in a thoughtful manner. As always, you will be held to the standards defined in the LMU's *Community Standards Student Conduct Code*: (<http://studentaffairs.lmu.edu/administration/judicialaffairs/studentcodespolicies/>)

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.

Where this is not possible (either because the claim you are making is gendered, or because you are relying on a text that uses gender-exclusive pronouns), you must explain why this is the case. Usually, this requires no more than a footnote (e.g. Locke uses "he" or "mankind" as universals. Add a footnote at your first usage of his language, directly quoted or not, and say that you are following Locke's usage here, and do not mean to endorse his usage). You aren't necessarily required to solve these problems, but you are required to make note these problems and signal your awareness of them.

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 discussion and attendance portion of a student's grade. Participation in class discussions will be evaluated on quality, quantity, and appropriateness of student questions and comments. Please note: it is just as possible to talk *too much* as it is to talk too little in class. Likewise, there is such a thing as active listening, and yes, your professors are capable of distinguishing this from passive listening. If you are worried about your the level and/or quality of your participation, the best thing to do is to come to office hours, where the professor can give you direct feedback throughout the semester, rather than at the end (when it is too late to change your behavior!).

WRITING ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION AND LATE PENALTIES: All writing assignments will be submitted electronically and prepared for **anonymous review**. Submission requirements and formatting details will be posted with each assignment. 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. When assignments are submitted electronically, this includes weekend days.

However, each student may, at their 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). Note that, due to the collaborative nature of peer review assignments, this policy is not applicable to first drafts or peer reviews.

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 without exception. 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 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 *Community Standards*. It is not permissible to turn in work for a class that has been previously submitted in part, or in whole, for credit in another course. Any doubts of questions related to this policy should be brought to your instructor as soon as they arise and before you turn in the work. You should also refer to the additional statement on academic honesty in the writing requirements posted on the course website.

COURSE 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. I encourage you to contact me via email with questions about the course, the material we cover in class, and assignments. I will also post announcements and updates to the course website. It is your responsibility to monitor this website as you will be held responsible for information posted there even if I don't email you about it.

You are expected to be professional in all communication with the instructor. All email communication should be in complete sentences with a proper salutation and conclusion. Treat the email more as a letter and less like a text message. Include a comprehensible subject heading (e.g. "POLS 2000 paper question"), address and sign the email, making sure to identify what class you are in (usually instructors are teaching more than one class) and explain clearly what it is that you are inquiring about. Failure to do these will guarantee that you will not get a response. Unless I've explicitly stated otherwise, I will generally check my faculty email only during normal business hours (weekdays, more or less until 5pm).

Finally, here is a short list of things to which **I will not respond**:

- Questions that can be answered by checking the course syllabus or looking online.
- A request to know **if** you missed anything. (The answer is yes.)
- A request to know **what** you missed. (Instead of asking this through email, take the appropriate next steps

to catch up: ask a classmate for notes, meet with me in my office hours, etc.)

TECHNOLOGY USE DURING CLASS: The purpose of *any* technological tool is to apply scientific or abstract knowledge to practical applications. *Digital* technologies may often seem like they will aid in this project, but this is not automatically the case. To that end, you may bring a laptop computer or tablet to class provided that it enables you to engage *more* in the class discussion than without it. You may also use a computer or tablet 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 rude and disrespectful to your classmates. **If you need to use a computer in class, you will be expected to post copies of your class notes *immediately* following the class session to share with others.** If you are not willing to do this, do not bring a computer with you. The same applies to e-readers/tablets/phones of any kind, etc. Use of any technology in class that does not directly contribute to our discussions will not be tolerated. In short: you should only have computer/tablet in class if you **need** it, and the entire burden of proof that you need it is on you.

But also, recent evidence indicates that note taking on a computer or tablet is actually not a good way to learn things, to remember things, or to enhance comprehension.¹

E-Reserve texts should be *printed* and brought to class. Electronic/digital editions of the texts are not acceptable for this course. E-Reserve readings will be made available as PDFs prior to the start of the course (and my suggestion is to head to a copy shop to print and bind those readings).

Your phone (of any kind) must be **turned off and put away** (unless you have received prior permission from the instructor, which will only be given in truly *exceptional* circumstances). If your phone rings during class, you will be marked absent for the session.

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 the course website.

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. Again: 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.

Once more for those of you in the cheap seats: electronic/digital editions of the texts are not acceptable for this course.

Required:

- Plato, *Five Dialogues* (Hackett, 2001), ISBN: 978-0872206335.
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett, 1994), ISBN: 978-0872201774.
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, 1980, ISBN: 978-0915144860.
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Hackett, 1992), ISBN: 978-0872201507.
- Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Cornell, 1997), ISBN: 9780801484636.

¹ Don't believe me? See <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581> (this study is written up here: <http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2015/08/18/taking-notes-is-the-pen-still-mightier-than-the-keyboard> and here: <http://www.vox.com/2014/6/4/5776804/note-taking-by-hand-versus-laptop>).

Strongly Recommended:

- Anthony Weston, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 4th ed. (Hackett, 2008), ISBN: 978-0872209541.
- Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* (Hackett, 2003), ISBN: 978-0872205738.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE²

Week 1:

M Aug 31: Course Introduction: *What is Political Theory, What is it for, and How should we Learn?*

I. Justice & Politics

W Sep 2: Plato, *Republic*, Book I, 328c-354a (E-Reserve).
*****Writing Assignment 1 (Critical Reading) Due*****

Week 2:

A Life Worth Living

M Sep 7: *No Class – Labor Day*

W Sep 9: Plato, *Apology*, 17a-42a in *Five Dialogues*, pp. 21-44.

Week 3:

Ancient and Modern Justice

M Sep 14: Plato, *Crito*, 43a-54e & *Phaedo* (death scene) 114d-118a in *Five Dialogues*, pp. 45-57, 150-154.
[18]

W Sep 16: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Selections (E-Reserve).

F Sep 18: *****Writing Assignment 2 (Argument Explication) Due****

II. Nature & Equality

Week 4:

Nature and Artifice

M Sep 21: Aristotle, *Politics* Book 1 (E-Reserve).

W Sep 23: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction, Chs. 10 [§§1-49], 11, 13-14, 15 [§§34-41].
(NB: it is recommended that you read Chs. 1-9 to help understand Hobbes' method and use of language.)

Week 5:

M Sep 28: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chs. 16-18.

W Sep 30: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chs. 21, 26 [§§ 1-14, 42-45], 29.

Week 6:

Writing Week

M Oct 5: *NO CLASS – Instructor Absence*

*****Draft of Writing Assignment 3 (Nature and Equality) Due*****

W Oct 7: Peer Review Session

*****Peer Reviews of Assignment 3 Due*****

F Oct 9: *****Writing Assignment 3 Due*****

Week 7:

M Oct 12: John Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chs. 1-5.

W Oct 14: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chs. 7-9, 11, 12-13.

Week 8:

M Oct 19: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chs. 14, 18-19.

² Almost everything we read in this course is only a *part* of a larger work, and you will always have a better sense of what is going on if you read *beyond* the “assigned” pages and chapters. These chapters and pages are the bare minimum that you are responsible for reading, but don’t let my selections determine in advance the limits of your knowledge.

III. Freedom & Slavery

W Oct 21: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Dedication, Preface, and Part 1, pp. 1-44.

Week 9:

M Oct 26: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Part 2, pp. 44-71.

W Oct 28: Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" (E-Reserve).

Week 10:

M Nov 2: Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 70-93

W Nov 4: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (E-Reserve).

F Nov 6: *****Draft of Writing Assignment 4 (Freedom and Slavery) Due*****

Week 11:

M Nov 9: Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?" (E-Reserve)

*****Peer Reviews of Writing Assignment 4 (Freedom and Slavery) Due*****

W Nov 11: Angela Y. Davis, "The Meaning of Freedom" (E-Reserve)

*****Writing Assignment 4 (Freedom and Slavery) Due*****

V. The "Problem" of "Difference"

Week 12:

M Nov 16: W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks*, Forethought, Ch. 1 (E-Reserve).

W Nov 18: Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to the *Second Sex* (E-Reserve).

Week 13: The Sexual Contract

M Nov 23: Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Chapters 1 and 3. (E-Reserve).

W Nov 25: *No Class – Thanksgiving*

Week 14: The Racial Contract

M Nov 30: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Introduction and Overview, pp. 1-40.

W Dec 2: Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Chapter 2 (Details) & Chapter 3 (Naturalized Merits), pp. 41-133
[93] ***focus, in particular on pp. 62-81 & 120-131.*

Week 15: Critical Theory, Difference, and a return to "Justice"

M Dec 7: Iris Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Introduction and Chapter 1 ("The Distributive Paradigm" (E-Reserve).

W Dec 9: Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Chapter 2 ("Five Faces of Oppression") (E-Reserve).

Week 16: Finals Week

W Dec 16: *****Writing Assignment 5 (Difference and Democracy) Due*****