

**Department of Political Science  
Rutgers University-Newark  
Modern Political Theory  
Spring 2018**

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 11.30-1.00pm; and by appointment

This course involves a critical survey of early modern and modern political theory, from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. It is divided along two main interpretative threads. The first thread will explore the emergence within Europe of a new conception of politics and political life after the Renaissance. This period begins with the collapse of mediaeval forms of religious authority and the presence of a “discovered” New World, and how these developments transformed European political life in an age of science and “discovery.” Similarly, we will deal with the rise of properly modern forms of power in the context of scientific, economic, and political revolutions. The second thread will focus on the emergence of a modern political spectrum in the immediate global aftermath of the French Revolution, especially in relation to the forms of power and political forms it inaugurated, along with tortuous path of the ideals of freedom and equality that it promised but never fully realized. In doing so, it consists on a critical exploration of the emergence of liberal-capitalist civilization in light of the forms of power that characterized it. Accordingly, we will address the nature of the new modern forms of power and their impact on political life, along with the nature and contradictions of post-revolutionary political and economic orders. The thinkers to be considered are: N. Machiavelli, T. Hobbes and J.J. Rousseau, K. Marx and F. Engels, and S.S. Wolin. We will proceed through a careful and rigorous examination of some of their works in relation to the historical contexts and predicaments of power they inhabited and sought to navigate.

1/17	Introduction
1/22	S.S. Wolin, <i>Politics and Vision</i> , chap. 1
1/24	S.S. Wolin, <i>Politics and Vision</i> , chaps. 3-4
1/29	S.S. Wolin, <i>Politics and Vision</i> , chaps. 5-6
1/31	N. Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , chaps. 1-13
2/5	N. Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , chaps. 14-26
2/7	S.S. Wolin, <i>Politics and Vision</i> , chap. 7
2/12	T. Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction, chaps. I-V, X-XIII

- 2/14 T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chaps. XIV-XXIV, XXXII-XXVI, XLI-XLIII, and “A Review and Conclusion”
- 2/19 S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chap. 8
- 2/21 J.J. Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, 27-92
- 2/26 J.J. Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, 121-152
- 2/28 J.J. Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, 153-190
- 3/5 J.J. Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, 191-252

**Midterm Exam on 3/7**

**SPRING BREAK 3/10 to 3/18**

- 3/19 S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chap. 11
- 3/21 *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 26-65
- 3/26 *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 143-163
- 3/28 *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 176-200, 469-500
- 4/2 *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 222-226, 236-250, 291-293
- 4/7 *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 294-343

**Response Paper Due 4/12**

- 4/9 *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 373-438
- 4/11 S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chap. 12
- 4/16 S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chap. 16
- 4/18 S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chap. 17
- 4/23 Cont. S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chap. 17
- 4/25 **Last Day of Classes**

**Final Essay TBD**

## Required Texts:

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Oxford, 2005)  
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford, 2009)  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Political Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Hackett, 2012)  
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton, 1978)  
Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, Expanded Edition (Princeton, 2004)

The required texts are available for purchase at the Rutgers-Newark University Bookstore (<http://newark-rutgers.bncollege.com>). These books are also easily available in online stores ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com), [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com)). Please read the texts in the assigned translations/editions, otherwise it will be difficult to follow the lectures and discussions. Translations/editions often vary significantly. **No phones, laptops, or electronic books are allowed; you must bring a hard copy of the assigned reading to class. You'd lose 2% of your final grade every time you show up to class without the reading in hand. Make sure that you show me the reading when I call your name at the beginning of each class.**

**Course Requirements:** All students are responsible for the required readings and for participation in class discussions. Your written work consists of one 2-page response paper, a midterm exam, and a 4-6 page final paper. The response paper comprises 20% of your final grade; the midterm comprises 35% of your grade, the final paper 35% and the remaining 10% of your final grade consists of participation/attendance. Essay topics will be distributed in class. This is how the 10% for participation/attendance works: if you participate, your grade will be raised (5 points overall); if you violate the attendance policy, your grade will be lowered (5 points overall). Namely, you get 5 points for attending, and an additional 5 for participating. You are permitted three absences for the semester. Any additional absences will result in the aforementioned penalty. A pattern of unexcused absences will result in the student failing the course (you will get a "F" as your final grade). **I reserve the right to conduct oral examinations on your written work.**

**Analytical Papers:** Make sure that your papers are well organized, clearly and carefully argued, as well as textually supported. Please avoid randomly collecting unanalyzed quotes. We are going to spend some time discussing the structure of an adequate theory paper.

**Cautionary Note/Important Advice:** There are several things that you should keep in mind to avoid unpleasant surprises. I expect students to critically ponder the arguments each thinker presents and to make an effort to understand these arguments with the goal of developing a rigorous and informed critique. Second, the texts under scrutiny are sometimes dry, difficult, and dense, therefore, it is important that you have your thoughts together when you work your way through these texts. As a piece of advice, I encourage you to do the readings when you are awake and in an environment conducive to study, otherwise it will be difficult for you to keep up with the class.

**Academic Integrity:** All work you submit for the course is expected to be your own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will lead to failing the course and action from the University. Whenever you quotes, closely paraphrase, refer to or

make use of arguments or examples from other sources in your written work, you must cite the appropriate source in a footnote, endnote, or in parentheses at the end of the sentence, depending of what citation style you are using. Please see the university's guidelines on student conduct: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct>

### **Disability Accommodations**

Students requiring special accommodations for disabilities are welcome and should provide reasonable prior notice so we can make needed arrangements, which include the use of laptop computers.

**Miscellaneous:** Our classroom discussions are open, frank, and casual. Please respect the perspectives and inquiries of your peers and instructor. Do not interrupt someone who is speaking and refrain from deliberately demeaning language or intimidating behavior. Do not read newspapers or other unrelated materials during class. **Students found doing so will be dismissed. Please make sure that cell-phones are turned off. If your cell-phone rings during class you will be dismissed. There are No exceptions to this rule. All written work is to be typed and double-spaced. Incomplete grades will NOT be automatically given; these will be granted only in reference to particular situations and at the instructor's discretion.**