

# Introduction to Political Thought

Eastern Michigan University  
Winter 2016  
Political Science 213  
TR: 2:00-3:15 p.m.  
119 Marshall

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## Course Description:

Political theory is a systematic critical reflection about the nature of political life. It addresses deep questions regarding the foundations of states and their normative justifications. The purpose of this course is to acquaint the students of political theory with these questions and with the various answers proposed by political theorists. It does so by pursuing four overarching and interconnected issues: first, the nature of political authority; second, the meaning of justice; third, the meaning and scope of liberty; and fourth, the meaning and extent of equality. The course ends with an analysis of some of the most important issues within the realm of applied political philosophy, i.e. deliberative democracy, immigration, and global justice. I have selected the issues of political theory that have proved permanently important.

## Course Requirements:

**Attendance (10%):** You are expected to attend each class session and arrive on time. I will take attendance each class. **Two unexcused absences throughout the semester will be permitted, but each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by a third of a letter.** Missing class and showing up late to class sessions will have a negative impact on your participation grade as well.

**Participation (10%):** I intend to devote a significant proportion of class time to discussing the assigned texts, and expect active participation from all students. This includes listening attentively to other students when they are speaking.

**Mid-term, Final Exams (20%, 25%):** There will be two in-class exams that will require you to identify the author of a given passage, interpret a given passage, define key concepts, and write short essays.

**Papers (15%, 20%):** You will be responsible for writing two papers (1 mid-semester paper 4-6 pages and 1 final paper 6-8 pages long) over the course of the semester. In these papers, you are expected to draw on the course readings to make an argument. A

sample list of possible paper topics can be provided for those who may need help in developing their own research topics.

***Your papers should be typed using a standard 12-point font (such as Times New Roman). The body should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins all around. Please don't forget to use page numbers. Late papers will lower your grade by a third of a letter per day late.***

**Grading Criteria:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Attendance	All the time	10%
Participation	All the time	10%
Midterm Exam	February 18	20%
Midterm Paper	March 1	15%
Final Paper	April 19	20%
Final Exam	April 21	25%

**Academic Dishonesty:**

The EMU Code of Student Conduct forbids plagiarism. Students should be familiar with the Code: <http://www.emich.edu/policies/policy.php?id=124>. Any assignment that is plagiarized will receive a score of zero, and may be referred to the EMU Office of Student Conduct. Similarly, cheating on exams is forbidden and will also result in a zero score on the exam. For more detailed information on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, see: <http://www.emich.edu/library/help/integratingsources.php>

Claims of ignorance and academic or personal pressure are unacceptable as excuses for academic dishonesty. Students must learn what constitutes one's own work and how the work of others must be acknowledged.

**Required Text:**

Matt Zwolinski, 2014, ***Arguing About Political Philosophy***; Routledge, ISBN: 978-0-415-53581-6

## **Introduction**

**Thursday, January 7:**  
What is Political Theory?

## **Political Authority**

**Tuesday, January 12:**

Hobbes, The State of Nature as a State of War, in Zwolinski, pp. 3-22  
Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation, in Zwolinski, pp. 23-40

**Thursday, January 14:**

Locke, The State of Nature and the Law of Nature, in Zwolinski, pp. 41-50  
Hume, Of the Original Contract, in Zwolinski, pp. 51-58

**Tuesday, January 19:**

Rothbard, Society Without a State, in Zwolinski, pp. 59-69  
Held, Non-contractual Society, in Zwolinski, pp. 70-85  
Mills, The Racial Contract, in Zwolinski, pp. 86-108

## **Obedience to Authority**

**Thursday, January 21:**

Plato, Crito, in Zwolinski, pp. 109-118

**Tuesday, January 26:**

Milgram, The Perils of Obedience, in Zwolinski, pp. 119-128  
King, Letter from a Birmingham Jail, in Zwolinski, pp. 129-137  
Smith, Is There a Prima Facie Duty to Obey the Law? in Zwolinski, pp. 138-152

## **Human Rights and Property Rights**

**Thursday, January 28:**

U.N., Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in Zwolinski, pp. 153-161  
Nickel, Making Sense of Human Rights, in Zwolinski, pp. 162-172

**Tuesday, February 2:**

Locke, Property, in Zwolinski, pp. 355-366  
Nozick, Libertarian Rights, in Zwolinski, pp. 173-179

**Thursday, February 4:**

George, The Injustice of Private Property in Land, in Zwolinski, pp. 367-373  
Schmidtz, The Institution of Property, in Zwolinski, pp. 374-388

## **Political Economy**

### **Tuesday, February 9:**

Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, in Zwolinski, pp. 289-308  
Marx, Critique of Gotha Program, in Zwolinski, pp. 309-317

### **Thursday, February 11:**

Smith, The Wealth of Nations, in Zwolinski, pp. 318-329  
Wolf, Market Failure, in Zwolinski, pp. 330-338  
Simmons, Pathological Politics, in Zwolinski, pp. 339-353

### **Tuesday, February 16:**

**MIDTERM REVIEW**

### **Thursday, February 18:**

**MIDTERM EXAM**

### **Tuesday, February 23:**

**NO CLASS: WINTER BREAK**

### **Thursday, February 25:**

**NO CLASS: WINTER BREAK**

## **Political Liberalism**

### **Tuesday, March 1:**

**MIDTERM PAPER**

Sandel, The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self, in Zwolinski, pp. 239-252  
Rawls, Justice as Fairness, in Zwolinski, pp. 253-272  
Gaus, The Moral Foundations of Liberal Neutrality, in Zwolinski, pp. 273-288

## **Utilitarianism and Justice**

### **Thursday, March 3:**

Hume, Justice as Convention, in Zwolinski, pp. 181-193  
Mill, Justice and Utility, in Zwolinski, pp. 194-210

### **Tuesday, March 8:**

Rawls, A Theory of Justice, in Zwolinski, pp. 211-237

### **Thursday, March 10:**

Nozick, The Entitlement Theory of Justice, in Zwolinski, pp. 389-407  
George, The Injustice of Private Property in Land, in Zwolinski, pp. 408-415

### **Tuesday, March 15:**

Cohen, Why Not Socialism, in Zwolinski, pp. 416-430  
Van Parijs, A Basic Income for All, in Zwolinski, pp. 431-442

## **Freedom**

### **Thursday, March 17:**

Mill, Liberty, in Zwolinski, pp. 443-462

### **Tuesday, March 22:**

TBA

### **Thursday, March 24:**

TBA

### **Tuesday, March 29:**

Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty, in Zwolinski, pp. 463-487

### **Thursday, March 31:**

Roosevelt, The Four Freedoms, in Zwolinski, pp. 488-489

Pettit, Republican Political Theory, in Zwolinski, pp. 490-504

## **Equality**

### **Tuesday, April 5:**

Vonnegut, Harrison Bergeron, in Zwolinski, pp. 505-512

Arneson, Equality and Equal Opportunity for Welfare, in Zwolinski, pp. 513-527

Schmidtz, Equal Respect and Equal Shares, in Zwolinski, pp. 528-552

### **Thursday, April 7:**

Rousseau, Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, in Zwolinski, pp. 553-565

Mackinnon, Difference and Dominance, in Zwolinski, pp. 566-578

## **Applied Political Theory**

### **Tuesday, April 12:**

Gutmann, Moral Disagreement in a Democracy, in Zwolinski, pp. 579-603

Bernnan, Political Liberty, in Zwolinski, pp. 604-620

### **Thursday, April 14:**

Huemer, Is there a right to immigrate?, in Zwolinski, pp. 620-649

Miller, Immigration: The Case for Limits, in Zwolinski, pp. 650-661

### **Tuesday, Apr 19:**

**FINAL REVIEW; FINAL PAPER**

### **Thursday, April 21:**

**FINAL EXAM, 1:30-3:00 p.m.**