

# PLSC 307: DEMOCRACY AND POWER

Winter Semester 2017

3 Credit Hours

Room Number: Pray-Harrold 421

Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

Professor: Douglas Walker, M.A.

Email: walke77@emich.edu

Office Number: Pray-Harrold 601k

Office Hours: Tues. and Thur. 11 – 12:15

or by appointment

## **Course Description**

This class introduces students to the history of philosophical thought on politics. Among the several themes we will address are the crucial questions of democracy and power. Perhaps no political question is more important than how power should be organized. We live in a world where democracy is often assumed to be the best form of government, but this has not always been the case. Throughout history, philosophers have debated who should rule, who should be a citizen, how much power the government ought to have, and how the government ought to be organized. To be more specific, we will examine several political theorists who give very different and complementary answers to such questions: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, John Locke, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Karl Marx. My goal in this class is neither to confirm nor undermine the superiority of our current way of life. Investigating the conclusions drawn by these thinkers enables us to re-examine these questions in our own time, a process that is valuable no matter what conclusion we ultimately reach.

## **Course Organization**

This class meets twice a week: Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30 – 1:45 pm. Consistent and punctual attendance is expected. Class time will consist of lectures punctuated by discussion. All of this will be based heavily on daily readings, so doing the reading assignment before class is crucial. Students are expected to connect the material in the readings and the class lectures to current events. The list of books required for this class is given below.

This syllabus gives a tentative reading schedule for this class. This schedule of readings may be changed to adjust to our progress in class. Students are expected to keep up with any alterations in the schedule, although I will give advance notice.

## **Required Books**

*Readings in Classical Political Thought*. Edited by Peter J. Steinberger. Hackett Publishing, 2000. ISBN: 9780872205123.

*Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*. Edited by David Wootton. Hackett Publishing, 2008. ISBN: 9780872208971.

*Online Materials.* In addition, I may require you to find some materials online as supplementary readings (for example, Locke's "Letter Concerning Toleration" or current news articles). Finding these should be fairly straightforward, but a link will be provided via Canvas or email.

## **Assignments and Grading**

Your final grade for this class will be calculated based on the following assignments:

- (1) Two in-class midterm exams, which are each worth 25% of the overall grade (50% combined). Each midterm exam will include 8-10 essay questions based on the course material. I will distribute these questions in advance. On exam day, I will pick two of these randomly, and you must choose to answer one of them.
- (2) One final paper, which is worth 30% of the overall grade. It must be 2,400-2,600 words in length. The available topics for the paper will be discussed in class and distributed. This assignment is a research paper that will ask you to interpret some of the writings we have done in class *in detail*, and then to evaluate them.
- (3) Occasional quizzes, which make up 15% of the grade, will be given randomly in class. In order to encourage attendance in class, I will not announce when I will give a quiz, and I may give a quiz at any time during a class period. Quizzes may take one of two forms. The first is a short quiz on the reading for that day, either multiple choice or short answer format. Second, I will occasionally ask students to answer questions to assess what the class is learning, or to reflect on something we have discussed in class. Simply showing up for the quiz will count for 50% of the grade for each quiz, but anyone not in attendance will get a 0. There will be 13 total quizzes during the semester. 3 lowest quizzes will be dropped, and only the remaining 10 will count toward your final grade.
- (4) Participation in class (asking questions, offering comments, not distracting the other students) is worth 5% of the grade. Disruptive students will receive a 1-2 out of 5 depending on the extent of their disruption. Students who are not disruptive but who do not contribute during class will receive a 3 out of 5. Those who contribute to class will receive an 4-5 out of 10 depending on the extent of their participation.

I may choose to make extra credit options available during the semester.

*Late and Missed Assignments.* Quizzes can never be made up, and I do not ever excuse missed quizzes (even for late arrival at class). This is because I expect you to attend every class that you can. Given that I do not give a quiz every day and I drop the lowest three quizzes, it highly unlikely that you will have so many conflicts. However, if you have a major, ongoing problem (such as an injury), let me know and I will be happy to work with you to make sure you can still complete the class. Late work (i.e. the final paper) will be penalized 1 letter grade for each day it is late (starting at the time it is due). If you need an extension on an assignment or cannot attend class on exam day (for any reason), you are required to notify me (and receive confirmation of approval) before the time of the assignment/exam **via email**. I will accept reasonable excuses. If you are unable to alert me due to an emergency, notify me to seek an accommodation as soon as possible.

*Grading Scale:*

<b>Points/Percentage</b>	<b>Grade</b>
93-100	A
90-91.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
60-69.9	D
Less than 60	F

## **Behavior Policy**

Laptop computers may not be used in class, unless one is required as an accommodation for a disability. Other forms of disruptive behavior, such as talking, use of cell phones, smart phones, tablets, etc. is prohibited. Early departure from class is strongly discouraged. (Please alert me ahead of time when you must leave early.)

## **Academic Honesty Statement**

Eastern Michigan University demands the highest standards of academic honesty. It is up to the student to avoid cheating or plagiarizing. Unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments (including quizzes, exams, and papers) without assistance from any source (although you may cite any number of sources). You are expected to develop original work for this course; you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Contact the instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work.

Academic dishonesty includes:

- Submitting or claiming another person's work as your own (plagiarism). If you quote or make use of another person's ideas, words, or work, you must provide information about where you got that material. To avoid "accidental" plagiarism, it is wise to avoid copying and pasting material from the internet or other electronic sources, even if you plan to summarize that material after you copy/paste it.
- Exchanging the answers to any assignment with another student (both giving and receiving). These should always be completed on your own, unless the instructor explicitly allows working in groups.
- Lying to the instructor or another student about any aspect of your assignments.

Academic dishonesty will, at minimum, result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. If the instructor deems the offense serious enough, dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the course. Such incidents will also be reported as required by the Department and/or University, which may result in further disciplinary action.

## Extra Resources

*Disability Resource Center.* Eastern Michigan University desires to provide equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Disability Resource Center. Here is a link: <http://www.emich.edu/drc/>. Please let me know if you need accommodations.

*University Writing Center.* The University Writing Center (115 Halle Library; 487-0694) offers one-to-one writing consulting for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students can make appointments or drop in between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays. The UWC opens for the Winter 2017 semester on Monday, January 9, and will close on Thursday, April 20. The UWC also has several satellite locations across campus (in Owen, Sill, Marshall, Porter, Pray-Harrold, and Mark Jefferson). The Pray-Harrold UWC satellite (rm. 211) is open Mondays through Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The locations and hours for the other satellites can be found on the UWC web site: <http://www.emich.edu/uwc>. UWC writing consultants also work in the Academic Projects Center (116 Halle Library), which offers drop-in consulting for students on writing, research, and technology-related issues. The APC is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays. Additional information about the APC can be found at <http://www.emich.edu/apc>. Students seeking writing support at any location of the University Writing Center should bring a draft of their writing (along with any relevant instructions or rubrics) to work on during the consultation.

*Student Handbook.* In addition to the articulated course specific policies and expectations, students are responsible for understanding all applicable University guidelines, policies, and procedures. The EMU Student Handbook is the primary resource provided to students to ensure that they have access to all university policies, support resources, and student's rights and responsibilities. Changes may be made to the EMU Student Handbook whenever necessary, and shall be effective immediately, and/or as of the date on which a policy is formally adopted, and/or on the date specified in the amendment. Please note: Electing not to access the link provided below does not absolve a student of responsibility. For questions about any university policy, procedure, practice, or resource, please contact the Office of the Ombuds: 248 Student Center, 734.487.0074, [emu\\_ombuds@emich.edu](mailto:emu_ombuds@emich.edu), or visit the website: [www.emich.edu/ombuds](http://www.emich.edu/ombuds).

Student Handbook Link: <https://www.emich.edu/studenthandbook/index.php>

## Course Schedule

(subject to revision)

### Note on the shorthand for the readings:

For Aristotle readings, the numbers refer to “book.chapter.” So “1.2” = “book one, chapter two.”

For Hobbes, the numbers refer to “chapter.paragraph.” So “IV.11-14” = “chapter 4, paragraphs 11-14.”

Date		Author	Topic	Reading Assignment
1/5	Thursday		Syllabus and Course Introduction	Syllabus
1/10	Tuesday	Plato	Socrates and Philosophy	<i>Apology</i> (pp. 147-159)
1/12	Thursday	Aristotle	The Naturalness of the City	<i>Politics</i> , 1.1-2; 3.1
1/17	Tuesday	Aristotle	Slavery	<i>Politics</i> , 1.3-8,13
1/19	Thursday	Aristotle	Virtue, Habit, and Law	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , 1.1-5,7; 2.1-3; 10.6-9; <i>Politics</i> , 3.4,9
1/24	Tuesday	Aristotle	Regimes and Claims to Rule	<i>Politics</i> , 3.6-9,11-12 (please read 3.9 again)
1/26	Thursday	Aristotle	The Mixed Regime and Preservation of Regimes	<i>Politics</i> , 4.1,3,11; 5.1,8-12; 6.4-5
1/31	Tuesday	Aristotle	The Best Regime	<i>Politics</i> , 7.1-4, 8-11,13-17; 8.1-6
2/2	Thursday	Augustine	Intro to Augustine	<i>City of God</i> , pp. 463-479
2/7	Tuesday	Augustine	Christian Politics	<i>City of God</i> , pp. 479-490
2/9	Thursday	Augustine	Christian Politics	<i>City of God</i> , pp. 490-504
2/14	Tuesday		<b>First Midterm</b>	
2/16	Thursday	Hobbes	Human Nature and Religion	<i>Leviathan</i> , Intro and chapters 1, 2, 4 (last 5 ¶ only), 5, 6 (first 7 ¶ and pp. 135-36 only), 7; 8 (pp. 140-43 only), 11 (pp. 151-52 only); 12
2/21	Tuesday		<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>No Class</b>
2/23	Thursday		<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>No Class</b>
2/28	Tuesday	Hobbes	The State of Nature	<i>Leviathan</i> , chapters 6 (last 3 ¶ only), 8 (first ¶ only), 10 (first 5 ¶ only), 11 (first 4 ¶ only), 13.
3/2	Thursday	Hobbes	The Laws of Nature	<i>Leviathan</i> , chaps. 14-15
3/7	Tuesday	Hobbes	The Social Contract and the Sovereign	<i>Leviathan</i> , chapters 16-17 and 19-20, and Review and Conclusion (pp. 272-274 only)
3/9	Thursday	Hobbes	The Rights of Sovereigns and Subjects	<i>Leviathan</i> , chaps. 18 and 21
3/14	Tuesday	Locke	Natural Rights and the State of Nature	<i>Second Treatise</i> , Preface and chaps. 1-4 (also §54 on p. 300)
3/16	Thursday	Locke	Property	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chap. 5

3/21	Tuesday	Locke	The Social Contract	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chaps. 7-10
3/23	Thursday	Locke	The Right of Revolution	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chaps. 11, 17-19
3/28	Tuesday	Locke	Religious Toleration	“Letter Concerning Toleration,” first half (find online)
3/30	Thursday	Locke	Religious Toleration	“Letter Concerning Toleration,” second half (find online)
4/4	Tuesday		<b>Second Midterm</b>	
4/6	Thursday	Marx	Historical Materialism and Ideology	“Preface” to <i>A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i> ; <i>The German Ideology</i> (pp. 775- 791); <i>Toward a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right</i> : Introduction (first 7 ¶ only)
4/11	Tuesday	Marx	Critique of Capitalism	<i>The German Ideology</i> (pp. 791- 97); <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , parts I-II; “Alienated Labor”
4/13	Thursday	Marx	Communism	<i>Communist Manifesto</i> , parts III- IV
4/18	Tuesday	Marx	Analysis of Marx and the Legacy of Marxism	<i>Critique of the Gotha Program</i>
4/25	Tuesday		<b>End of Class</b>	<b>Final Paper Due at 11:30 am</b>

**Note on the shorthand for the readings:**

For Aristotle readings, the numbers refer to “Book.chapter.” So “1.2” = “book one, chapter two.”

For Hobbes, the numbers refer to “chapter.paragraph.” So “4.11-14” = “chapter 4, paragraphs 11-14.”

For Tocqueville, the numbers refer to “Volume.Part.Chapter.” So “2.II.1” = “Volume 2, Part 2, Chapter 1.”