Course Description

In this course we will explore and discuss ancient and modern responses to questions such as:
What is the relationship between philosophy and politics? What are the qualities of a good citizen? What is a political regime? Which is the best political regime? Who should rule? What are the qualities of a good ruler? What is the nature of man and how does this influence the arrangement of government? What is liberty? What is justice? What is the nature of private property? What is the relationship between history and politics? Can violence, hostility, and war be eliminated from history and politics?
In answering these questions we will understand the differences between ancient and modern political philosophy. We will also understand how modern political philosophers differed from each other in the way they theorized about politics and its relationship with moral, socio-economic, and cultural aspects.

Course Objectives

To understand what political philosophy is: what are its main concerns and its specific manner of answering them;
To grasp the foundations of Western political philosophy, the way they have been set by Greek political philosophy, particularly, by Plato and Aristotle;
To learn about the specific concerns and ideas of ancient and, respectively, of modern political philosophy;
To understand the differences (and the similarities) between ancient and modern political philosophy;
To know the differences between modern approaches to politics;
To comprehend diverse modern arguments about the nature of man, the nature of government, the role and limits of political power, and about the relationship between socio-economic and political factors.
To become better readers, thinkers, speakers, and writers.

Achieving the Course Objectives:

We will learn about the specific nature of political philosophy, particularly, of ancient and modern political philosophy by carefully and closely reading the following books:

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Four short (two page) essays** on topics provided by the professor, at the end of each course section (10% each).
   
   (i) **First essay** is due on October 3 *(topic: Argue about what is the strongest point and what is the weakest point of Plato’s argument about who should rule)*;
   
   (ii) **Second essay** is due on October 19 *(topic: Compare Plato’s and Aristotle’s arguments about the best political regime and its citizens)*;
   
   (iii) **Third essay** is due on November 2 *(topic: Drawing on Hobbes’ view of human nature show the limitations of Locke’s conception of the nature)*;

   (iv) **Fourth essay** is due on November 16 *(topic: Both Kant and Marx believe in the existence of progress in human history. Compare their conceptions of progress (what does progress mean and what are the factors that move human societies towards a better condition/society) and at the end of your essay briefly argue in favor of one of them)*.

2. **One final (take home) exam** (40%). Exam subjects will be posted on Moodle on Saturday, November 19th, at 5:00 PM. Exams will be due on Monday, November 21st, at 5:00 PM. Any late submissions will be penalized.

3. **Active and informed class participation** (20%)”}

**What is Expected from the Students?**

Students will be expected to read, think, form arguments and counter-arguments, understand the fundamental concepts, and participate (in a critical and creative manner) in class discussion. That means that students must keep up in their reading assignments and attend class regularly. Students must be fully prepared at all times to discuss the arguments and concepts from the previous readings. The best students will be knowledgeable, critical but balanced in their critical
assessments, and will develop coherent and sound arguments that they can defend in their essays, in their exams, and in class discussion.

**Academic dishonesty:**

"All assignments, quizzes, and exams must be done on your own. Note that academic dishonesty includes not only cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism, but also includes helping other students commit acts of academic dishonesty by allowing them to obtain copies of your work. You are allowed to use the Web for reference purposes, but you may not copy material from any website or any other source without proper citations. In short, all submitted work must be your own.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with strictly. Each such case will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College. A formal finding of responsibility can result in disciplinary sanctions ranging from a censure and a warning to permanent dismissal in the case of repeated and serious offenses.

The academic penalty for a finding of responsibility can range from a grade of zero in the specific assignment to an F in this course."

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS:**

**September 12:** Introduction – What is political philosophy? Why study it?
  Differences and similarities between ancient and modern political philosophy

  **Politics and Truth: Plato and Aristotle**

  *Plato: Politics and Philosophy*

  **September 14:** Justice: the just soul and the just city
  *Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book I and II

  **September 16:** Politics and education: the education of the guardians
  *Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book III and Book IV (to 428)

  **September 19:** Political virtues and political life in the just city: property and family
  *Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book IV (from 428 to the end of Book IV) and Book V (to 471b)

  **September 21:** The rule of the philosopher and the sophist danger
  *Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book V (from 471c to the end of Book V) and Book VI

  **September 23:** The myth of the cave: the education of the philosopher
  *Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book VII
**September 26:** The decay of the city: types of political regimes (the critique of democracy)
*Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book VIII

**September 28:** The enemies of justice: the tyrant and the poets (orators included)
*Reading:* Plato, *Republic*, Book IX and Book X

*Aristotle: Politics and Friendship*

**September 30:** The place and role of political partnership in the human life
*Reading:* Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1

**October 3:** Citizenship, qualifications for citizenship: the difference between citizen and the good man
*Reading:* Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 3, Chapters 1-13, 18

**October 5:** The nature of the political regime, types of political regimes, and the stability of political regimes
*Reading:* Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 4, Chapters 1-4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, Book 5, chapters 1-3, 5-8

**October 7:** The best (practicable) political regime
*Reading:* Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 4, Chapters 8, 9, 11, Book 7, chapters 1-3, 7, 13-15

**October 10:** Debate: Plato and Aristotle: is democracy the best political regime?

*Government and the nature of man: Hobbes and Locke*

**October 12:** Speech, Reason, and Power
*Reading:* Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction, Part One, Chapters iv, v, vi, viii, x, and xi

**October 19** The natural condition of man: natural law and natural rights
*Reading:* Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part One, Chapters xiii, xiv, xv, and xvi

**October 21:** The commonwealth
*Reading:* Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part Two, Chapters xvii, xviii, xix, xxi, xxx

**October 24:** The state of nature: liberty, reason, and acquisition
*Reading:* Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Book II, Chapter II, III, V, VI, VIII
**October 26:** The ends of government  
*Reading:* Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Book II, Chapters IX, XI, XII, XIII, XVIII, and XIX

**October 28:** Debate: Hobbes and Locke: human nature and government

**Politics, History, and Reason: Kant and Marx**

**October 31:** Kant’s conception of the Enlightenment  
*Reading:* Kant, *An Answer to the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’*

**November 2:** Kant’s view of history  
*Reading:* Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose”

**November 4:** Kant on reason and history  
*Reading:* Kant, On the Common Saying: ‘This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice’

**November 7:** Kant on reason and history  
*Reading:* Kant, On the Common Saying: ‘This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice’

**November 9:** Marx’s historical materialism  
*Reading,* Marx, *German Ideology*, pages 155-175

**November 11:** Marx on the direction of human history  
*Reading:* Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 473-491

**November 14:** Debate: Kant and Marx: what is the moving (progressive) force of human history and how does it influence politics?

**November 16:** Final Review