

POLS 3313- 201
Introduction to Political Theory
Instructor: Dr. Sam Watson

Spring Semester 2025
Midwestern State University
209 Prothro-Yeager Hall
11 am – 12:20 pm T, R

Office: O'Donohoe 119
Phone: 397-4746
Hours: By appointment

Course Description

POLS 3313 is an advanced hour, undergraduate lecture course that examines the ideas and works of the major classical theoreticians of politics. Specific political philosophers to be studied include Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Mill, Hegel, and Marx.

Course Goals

The purpose of the course is for each student to develop a deeper understanding of the tremendous impact certain individuals and their ideas have had, and continue to have, on the development of modern politics.

Required Materials

- 1) William and Alan Ebenstein, Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present, 6th ed. (Harcourt)

Strongly Recommended Materials

- 1) A map of the world and a map of the United States.

Resource Materials

The University (Moffett) Library contains valuable resources which can aid students in their study and research for this course. In addition to many relevant books, a number of periodicals will be particularly useful (recent issues will be found on the current periodicals shelves; back issues are either bound or on microfilm/microfiche). A list of selected periodicals available in the library and local sources of broadcast media significant for political science research is attached to this syllabus.

Course Requirements

1 st Examination	Thursday, February 27	25 percent
2 nd Examination	Tuesday, April 8	25 percent
Final Examination	Tuesday, May 13 (1 pm)	40 percent
Attendance		10 percent

The first, second, and final examinations consist of a series of short answer, essay questions. The second exam tests only the material covered since the first exam. The final exam, however, is cumulative.

In order to pass this class, a student must participate. Participation means coming to and preparing for class. Attendance will be checked periodically by signature sheet.

Schedule of Assignments

- Introductory session 1/21
- The Origins of Political Theory and Plato
E, pp. 1-74 1/23, 28
- Aristotle
E, pp. 75-115 1/30; 2/4
- Biblical Background and St. Augustine
E, pp. 173-198 2/6, 11
- St. Thomas Aquinas
E, pp. 218-244 2/13, 18
- Niccolo Machiavelli
E, pp. 283-301 2/20, 25
- Thomas Hobbes
E, pp. 355-379 3/4, 6
- John Locke
E, pp. 380-407 3/18, 20
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau
E, pp. 442-472 3/25, 27
- Edmund Burke
E, pp. 504-532 4/1, 3

- The Utilitarian School and John Stuart Mill
E, pp. 578-623 4/15, 22
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
E, pp. 624-638 4/24, 29
- Karl Marx and Review
E, pp. 639-679 5/1, 6, 8

Holidays

Spring Break—3/11, 13

Holiday Break—4/17

No Class

4/10