

POLITICAL THEORY FIELD SEMINAR

L32 568
SPRING 2024

Thursdays 10:00 – 11:50 am
Seigle 248

Clarissa Hayward's office hours:
Tuesdays, 2:30–4:00 pm, and by appointment, Seigle 238

Frank Lovett's office hours:
Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 1:00–2:00 pm, and by appointment, Seigle 282

This course is a graduate survey designed to introduce students to key methods, approaches, and concepts in political theory. Its intended audience is PhD students in political science, philosophy, and related disciplines who have an interest in political theory. Over the course of the semester we will ask, "What is political theory, and how does one do it?" exploring methodological debates in the history of political thought and in contemporary theory. We will ask, "What are some valuable approaches to analyzing and evaluating political phenomena?" considering as possible answers utilitarianism, Kantian liberalism, Marxism, feminism, and realism. We will engage debates about key concepts in the field as well, devoting one week each to the study of justice, equality, power and domination, freedom, and democracy.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Because our schedule of readings is ambitious, you will not be expected to read outside the syllabus or to write a research paper. However, you should complete all readings carefully and in a timely fashion and participate actively in class discussions. Participation—quality, not just quantity—counts for 10 percent of your grade.

NB: If you are unable to be present due to illness or some other extenuating circumstance, please let us know as soon as possible and (barring truly exceptional circumstances) no later than the day of the meeting in which you are unable to fully participate.

2. In addition, a clear, concise, and thoughtful reaction paper—one single-spaced page (normal font, normal margins)—is due via Canvas no later than 5 PM the day before most class meetings (see exceptions below). Your papers should engage—i.e., question, critique, support, and/or apply—the readings. They should not merely or mostly summarize. For most classes, you will be free to choose the focus of your paper. For some, we may suggest questions. You should not write a reaction paper for the first class of the semester or for the classes for which you are discussion leader (see #3, below). Thus, you will write a total of 10 reaction papers. These count for 50 percent of your grade (5 percent each).

3. You will sign up, alone or with a partner, to be discussion leader for at least one class in each of the three course modules. Your in-class responsibilities as discussion leader are:

- to summarize the key points from the readings, spending about ten minutes on summary;
- to highlight the main points your classmates made in their response papers (posted on Canvas); and
- to formulate two or three provocative questions that will prompt an analytic / critical discussion of key aspects of the readings.

You have two additional responsibilities when you serve as discussion leader:

- First, you should write a clear and concise version of the text of your presentation, for circulation. Please post this on Canvas before you go to sleep the night before we meet, ideally no later than midnight.
- Second, after the classes for which you serve as discussant, you will write a one-page summary of the discussion, which you will also post on Canvas, no later than the end of the weekend (i.e. midnight Sunday) following the class meeting.

Your performance as discussion leader and your written summaries count for 30 percent of your grade.

4. You will write a short (1-2 page) prospectus in which you outline how you could use one or more of the texts, methods, approaches, and/or concepts we covered this semester in your empirical research. Your prospectus is due via Canvas no later than 11:59 PM on Friday, April 19th. On our last day of class, we will have an in-class prospectus workshop, in which you will give feedback to your colleagues on their prospectuses and receive feedback on yours. Your prospectus counts for 10 percent of your grade.

COURSE SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Thursday, Jan. 19: Introduction and Course Overview (no readings)

Module 1: Methods of Political Theory

Thursday, Jan. 25: Political Theory as Interpretation

Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* 8, 1 (1969): 3–53.

Charles Taylor, “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man,” pp. 15–57 in *Philosophical Papers, Volume II: Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge University Press 1985). [C]

Optional: Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy?” *The Journal of Politics* 19, 3 (1957): 343–368.

Thursday, Feb. 1: Political Theory as Political Science

John Gunnell, “American Political Science, Liberalism, and the Invention of Political Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 82, 1 (1988): 71–87.

Ian Shapiro, “Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What’s Wrong with Political Science and What to do About It,” *Political Theory* 30, 4 (2002): 596–619.

Alexander Kirschner and Jeff Spinner-Halev, “Why Political Theory Should Be Robust,” *American Political Science Review* (2023): FirstView, doi:10.1017/S0003055423000898.

Optional: Robert Dahl, “The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest,” *American Political Science Review* 55, 4 (1961): 763–772.

Thursday, Feb. 8: Political Theory as Political Criticism

Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation," *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969): 1062–1082.

Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge University Press 1981).

Optional: Joseph Heath, "Ideology, Irrationality, and Collectively Self-defeating Behavior" *Constellations* 7, 3 (2000): 363–371.

Optional: James Tully, "Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity," *Political Theory* 30, 4 (2002): 533–555.

Module 2: Approaches to Political Theory

Thursday, Feb. 15: Kantian Liberalism

T. M. Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism," pp. 103–128 in Amartya Sen and Bernard Williams, eds., *Utilitarianism and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Jürgen Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's *Political Liberalism*," *Journal of Philosophy* 92, 3 (1995): 109–131.

Optional: Charles Larmore, "Political liberalism," *Political Theory* 18, 3 (1990): 339–360.

Optional: John Rawls, "Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas," *Journal of Philosophy* 92, 3 (1995) 132–180.

Thursday, Feb. 22: Marxism

Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" pp. 469–500 in Tucker, ed. *Marx- Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition (W.W. Norton, 1978).

Allen Wood, "The Marxian Critique of Justice" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, 3 (1972): 244–282.

G. A. Cohen, "Capitalism, Freedom, and the Proletariat," pp. 163–182 in David Miller, ed., *The Liberty Reader* (Routledge, 2016).

Optional: Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, pp. 302–343, 361–384, 417–419 in Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition (W.W. Norton, 1978 [1848]).

Thursday, Feb. 29: Feminism

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, H. M. Parshley, trans. (Vintage, 1989 [1949]): introductions, translator's note, chs. XVI and XXV, conclusion.

Iris Marion Young, "Gender as Seriality: Thinking About Women as a Social Collective," *Signs* 19,3 (Spring 1994): 713-38.

Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" *Noûs* 34, 1 (2000): 31–55.

Optional: J. S. Mill, "The Subjection of Women," chs. 1–2, pp. 119–165 in *On Liberty with The Subjection of Women and Chapters on Socialism*, Stefan Collins, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1989 [1869]).

Thursday, Mar. 7: Realism

Bernard Williams, "Realism and Moralism in Political Theory," pp. 1–17 in *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

Matt Sleat, "Legitimacy in Realist Thought: Between Moralism and *Realpolitik*," *Political Theory* 42, 3 (2014): 314–337.

Ugur Aytaç and Enzo Rossi, "Ideology Critique without Morality: A Radical Realist Approach," *American Political Science Review* 117, 4 (2023): 1215–1227.

11 AM: Guests, Ugur Aytaç and Enzo Rossi

Thursday, Mar. 14: Spring Break (no class meeting)

Module 3: Concepts in Political Theory

Thursday, Mar. 21: Justice

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 2005 [1971]): sections 1–3, 5–8, 11–17, 24–30.

Alasia Nuti, *Injustice and the Reproduction of History* (Cambridge University Press, 2019): chs. 2–3.

Optional: J. M. Mill, “Utilitarianism,” chs. 1–2, pp. 131–158 in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, John Gray, ed. (Oxford University Press, 1997 [1869]).

Optional: Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (Basic Books, 1983): ch. 1.

Thursday, Mar. 28: Power and Domination

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd edition (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), ch. 1.

Michel Foucault, “Afterword: The Subject and Power,” pp. 208–226 in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, eds. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd edition (University of Chicago Press, 1983)

Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 1990): chs. 1–2.

Thursday, Apr. 4: Equality

Amartya Sen, “Equality of What?” *Tanner Lecture on Human Values* (1979).

Arneson, Richard, “Equality and Equality of Opportunity for Welfare,” *Philosophical Studies* 56, 1 (1989): 77–93.

Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” *Ethics* 109, 2 (1999): 287–337.

Optional: Derek Parfit, “Equality or Priority?” pp. 81–125 in Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams, eds. *The Ideal of Equality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1995).

Thursday, Apr. 11: Freedom

Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” pp. 33–57 in David Miller, ed., *The Liberty Reader* (Routledge, 2016).

Charles Taylor, “What’s Wrong with Negative Liberty?” pp. 141–162 in David Miller, ed., *The Liberty Reader* (Routledge, 2016).

Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford University Press, 1997): ch. 1.

Optional: Nancy Hirschmann, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom,” pp. 200–222 in David Miller, ed., *The Liberty Reader* (Routledge, 2016)

Thursday, Apr. 18: Democracy

Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (Yale University Press, 1991): chs. 6–9.

Jürgen Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy,” pp. 239–252 in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff, eds. (MIT Press, 1996).

Optional: Sean Ingham, “Social Choice and Popular Control,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 28, 2 (2016): 331–349.

Optional: Cristina Lafont, *Democracy Without Shortcuts* (Oxford University Press, 2020): introduction and chs. 1–2.

Thursday, Apr. 25: In-class prospectus workshop (no new readings)