SYC 501E Political Philosophy

Spring 2023-2024 Monday 9:30-12:30 FEB ITB Seminar Hall

*Office*: # B4-320 Dept. Humanities and Social Sciences, FEB

Office Hours: Wednesday 09.00-15.00 Phone: 285 7277, email: kocan@itu.edu.tr

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the major works of political philosophy in the Western tradition, from ancient Greece to modern times. The course will examine the main questions and arguments of political thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Mill, and others. The course will use lecture and class discussion as the mode of instruction, and will require students to read and analyze key texts, compare different perspectives, and apply basic theoretical concepts to contemporary issues. The course will also explore the philosophical and historical contexts of political ideas, and how they relate to the development of political institutions and practices. The main goal of the course is to enable students to critically engage with the questions central to political philosophy using the ideas and arguments of political thinkers. Some of the questions that will guide our inquiry are:

- Who are we and how shall we live together?

- What is the nature of justice, freedom, and equality?

- What is meant by the term "state"?

- What is the justification for the authority of the state?

- What should the relationship be between the individual and the state?

- How should we envision the relationship between ethics and politics?

- What is a just society?

- What constitutes a good citizen?

- What is the relationship between order, authority and freedom?

- What rules should govern the political community?

**Course Objectives:**

This course introduces students to the history of political thought and the main concepts and debates in political philosophy. By reading and discussing the works of influential thinkers from ancient to contemporary times, students will learn how to analyze and evaluate different visions of the good society and the role of government, justice, liberty, equality, democracy, and human rights. Students will also develop their skills in critical thinking, argumentation, and communication, as well as their ability to apply political concepts to real-world problems and issues. The course will challenge students to question their own assumptions and perspectives, and to engage with diverse and sometimes conflicting views on political matters. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe and identify historical philosophical theories that contributed to the development of modern political models.

- Generate and describe the ideals of "good society" drawing from the thoughts of political philosophers.

- Demonstrate knowledge of key political philosophers and concepts over time.

- Read and interpret carefully, write and speak clearly, and think critically and analytically about political problems.

- Gain a critical understanding of some of the most important issues and theories in political philosophy.

- Think more critically and reflectively about the nature of political concepts.

- Understand the changing meaning, nature and scope of political concepts

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance:**

This course requires both attendances in class and participation in class. I will take attendance at the start of each class. Please make sure that I have marked your presence. You can only miss two classes without a valid reason; otherwise, your grade will suffer**. If you miss more than two classes without a valid reason, you will fail this course with a grade of FF (FAIL).** If you have a medical or personal emergency that prevents you from attending class, you need to show me official documentation. This will count as an 'excused' absence. However, if you have a chronic medical condition or a personal crisis that causes you to miss many classes, you should drop this course and take it again when you can meet the course requirements.

**Participation:**

To participate effectively in the class discussions, students need to read the assigned materials beforehand and be ready to share their insights and questions with the rest of the class. The instructor will facilitate the discussions by pausing the lectures and presentations at suitable intervals and inviting students to comment on the main points of the readings. The discussions are an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of the political themes, connect them to their own research interests, and learn from each other. Therefore, every student is expected to contribute actively and respectfully, regardless of whether they are presenting or not.

**Oral Presentation:**

Presentations are an opportunity to engage with the assigned readings in a deeper and more critical way. They should not merely repeat what the readings say, but rather identify and evaluate the main conceptual positions and philosophical arguments that they present. Moreover, they should raise questions and challenges to the readings, and propose alternative perspectives or implications. A presentation is a way of communicating your understanding and evaluation of the philosophical ideas and arguments in the assigned readings. You should start by giving a brief overview of the main points and how they relate to the topic of the course. Then, you should analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, and compare and contrast them with other perspectives. Finally, you should raise some critical questions or objections to the readings, and invite the audience to join the discussion. Your presentation should be clear, concise, and respectful of different views.

**Book Review:**

The book review must be no longer than 2500 words, double-spaced with a 12-point font, and conform to APA style. The choice of book for your book review should not be in the required reading list of the course.

The book review is a way of exploring and explaining a philosopher's specific work. It has two parts: a summary and an analysis of the text. It only uses the text that the student is reviewing as a source. Here is how to write a book review:

• The first part gives a short overview of what the work is about and why it was written.

• The second part states the main claim and arguments of the work

• The third part summarizes the main ideas, themes, concepts and arguments of the text.

• The fourth part evaluates and critiques the strengths and weaknesses of the main arguments of the text

• The final part says the main political lessons that come from the writings of the text.

**Term Paper:**

The aim of this assignment is to explore a specific aspect of political philosophy in depth and to demonstrate your ability to engage with philosophical arguments and concepts. You are free to choose any topic that is relevant to the course content or to the broader field of political philosophy, as long as you can justify its significance and relevance. You are expected to conduct a thorough literature review of the existing scholarship on your chosen topic and to critically analyze the main arguments and positions. You should also develop your own original perspective or thesis and support it with clear and sound reasoning. The paper should be well-structured, coherent, and persuasive, and follow the academic standards of writing and citation. The paper should be between 5000 and 6000 words in length, double-spaced, using a 12-point font, and formatted according to the APA style. You must cite at least 10 sources from reputable philosophical journals and books, using in-text citations and a reference list at the end of the paper.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence in ITU and many other educational institutions around the world. The Oxford Compact English Dictionary defines plagiarism as "to take the work or idea of someone else and pass it off as one's own". Plagiarism includes copying words, sentences, or ideas from another source without giving credit; paraphrasing without citation; and using other student's work as your own.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\* *There is a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism in this course: even a small amount of plagiarized material will result in an VF for the course.*** If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.

**Turnitin.com: S**tudents will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. This will be available via the İTÜ site for the course.

**Evaluation Profile**

Term Paper 50%

Presentation 20%

Review 20%

Class Participation 10%

**Main Texts:**

Readings will be drawn from *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* (New York: Hackett Publishing Company 2006) edited by Morgan, Michael L. and *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts* (Oxford, 2005), edited by Steven M. Cahn, in addition to selections of primary texts reproduced in a course packet.

**The following are also useful introductions to Political Philosophy**

Boucher D. and Paul Kelly (2009) *Political Thinkers from Socrates to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boucher, D. & P. Kelly eds, (1991) *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls* Routledge.

Brown, A. (1986) *Modern Political Philosophy* Penguin USA

Christman, J. (2002) *Social and Political Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction* Routledge

Feinberg, S. (1973) *Social Philosophy* Pearson

Geuss, R. (2010) *History and Illusion in Politics* Cambridge University Press

Coole, Diana (1993) *Women in Political Theory* Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 2nd ed.

Dryzek, J., Honig, B. and Phillips, A. (eds.) (2006) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Edwards, A. & J. Townsend eds, (2002) *Interpreting Modern Political Philosophy. From Machiavelli to Marx* Palgrave.

Edwards, Jason (2007) *The Radical Attitude and Modern Political Theory* Palgrave.

Farrelly, C. (2004) *Introduction to Contemporary Political Theory* London: Sage.

Gaus, G. (2000) *Political Concepts and Political Theories* Boulder: Westview Press.

Gaus, G. and Kukathas, C. (eds.) (2004) *Handbook of Political Theory* London: Sage.

Goodin, R. and Pettit, P.(eds.) (1993) *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* Blackwell, Oxford.

Hampsher-Monk, Iain (1992*) A History of Modern Political Thought* London: Blackwell.

Hampton, J. (1997) *Political Philosophy* Westview Press.

Knowles, D. (2001) *Political Philosophy* McGill-Queen's University Press

Kymlicka, W. (2001) *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Matravers et al., D. (2001) *Reading Political Philosophy. Machiavelli to Mill* Routledge

McClelland, J.S. (1996) *A History of Western Political Thought.* London: Routledge

McKinnon, C. 2008 *Issues in Political Theory* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Miller, D. (2002) *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press

Robinson, D. (2003) *Introducing Political Philosophy*. Icon Books.

Swift, A. (2001) *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians* Oxford: Polity.

Swift, A. (2006) *Political Philosophy: a beginners' guide for students and politicians* Cambridge, Polity.

White, M. (2003) *Political Philosophy: A Short Introduction* Oneworld Publications

Wolff, J. (2006) *An Introduction to Political Philosophy.* Oxford University Press,

Wolff, J. (2006) *Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

Wolin, Sheldon (2004) *Politics and Vision* 2nd edition, New York: Princeton UP

**Anthologies of Contemporary Political Philosophy**

Forsyth M. & M. Keens-Soper (eds) (1988) *A Guide to the Political Classics: Plato to Rousseau. Short introductions;* Oxford University Press

Germino Modern Western Political Thought: Machiavelli to Marx.

Goodin, R.E. and Pettit, P. eds. (1995) A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy

Goodin, R.E. and Pettit, P. eds. (1997) Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology

Hampsher-Monk, I. (1992) A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx, Oxford, Blackwell.

Levine, A. (2001) *Engaging Political Philosophy: From Hobbes to Rawls* Wiley-Blackwell

McClellan, J.S. (1988) *A History of Western Political Thought.* Routledge

Plamenatz, J.P. (1963) *Man and Society: A Critical Examination of Some Important Social and Political Theories from Machiavelli to Marx*. London: Longmans.

Rauch L. (1981) *The Political Animal: Studies in Political Philosophy from Machiavelli to Marx.* University of Massachusetts Press

Redhead, B. ed. (1984) *Plato to Nato: Studies in Political Thought*, 2nd ed. British Broadcasting Corp.

Sabine G.H. (2018) *A History of Political Theory* Oxford and IBH Publishers

Schneewind, J. B. (1997) The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy Cambridge University Press

Simon, R.L. ed. (2002) *The Blackwell Guide to Social and Political Philosophy*. Blackwell Publ.

Tannenbaum, D. and Schultz, D. (1998) *Inventors of Ideas: Introduction to Western Political Philosophy.* Palgrave Macmillan

Will, Patrick Riley (1999) *Will and Political Legitimacy. A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel.* Universe.

**Background Resources**

The Cambridge Companion series

A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy (Blackwell).

Encyclopedia of Political Theory (3 vol., Sage).

The Oxford Classical Dictionary.

Encyclopedia of Political Theory

The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory

Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy by Edward Craig (Editor)

The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy by Edward Craig

The Wiley Encyclopedia of Political Thought by Michael T. Gibbons

**Course Mechanics**

**Week One**

Introduction: What is Political Philosophy?

JAMES TULLY (2002) "Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity", Political Theory, 30, 4 pp. 533-556.

**Week Two**

PLATO:

*Euthyphro*;

*Apology*;

*Crito*;

*Phaedo*;

*Republic*

**Week Three**

ARISTOTLE:

*Nicomachean Ethics*.

*Politics* (Bk. I; Bk. II, 1-5, 9; Bk. III; Bk. IV, 1-15, 16; Bk. VII, 1-3, 13)

**Week Four**

EPICURUS:

*Letter to Menoeceus*

*Principal Doctrines*

CICERO:

*On the Republic*

*On the Laws*

**Week Five**

AUGUSTINE:

*The City of God*

AQUINAS:

*On Kingship* (I, 1)

*Summa Theologica* (I–II, Q.90. 1–4, Q.91. 1–4, Q.94. 1–6, Q.95. 1–4, Q.96. 1–6;

II–II, Q.40. 1, Q.42. 2, Q.66. 1–2) 463

*Disputed Questions on Virtue* (On the Virtues in General, 1–9, 13;

*On the Cardinal Virtues*, 1–2)

**Week Six**

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI I:

*Letter to Francesco Vettori*;

*The Prince*;”

*Discourses* (Bk. I. 1-2; Bk. II, 1-2, 20, 29; Bk. III, 1, 9).

**Week Seven**

HOBBES:

*Leviathan* (Introduction, (Pt. 1-2, *Review and Conclusion*).

BARUCH SPINOZA

*Theologico-Political Treatise*

Chapter. XVI: *Of the Foundations of a State; Of the Natural and Civil Rights of Individuals; and Of the Rights of the Sovereign Power*

Chapter XX: *That in a Free State Every Man May Think What He Likes, and Say What He Thinks*

**Week Eight**

JOHN LOCKE

*Second Treatise of Government*

*Letter Concerning Toleration*

ALEXANDER HAMILTON and JAMES MADISON

*The Federalist Papers*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Gettysburg Address*

*Second Inaugural Address*

**Book Review paper due to**

**Week Nine**

DAVID HUME

*A Treatise of Human Nature*

*Of Parties in General*

*Of the Original Contract*

ADAM SMITH

*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

*The Wealth of Nations*

**Week Ten**

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

*Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

*Of the Social Contract*

**Week Eleven**

IMMANUEL KANT

*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Moral*s

*To Perpetual Peace*

**Week Twelve**

JEREMY BENTHAM

*Principles of Legislation*

JOHN STUART MILL

*Utilitarianism*

*On Liberty*

*The Subjection of Women*

**Week Thirteen**

KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS

*Alienated Labor*

*On the Jewish Question*

*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

*The German Ideology*

*Manifesto of the Communist Party*

*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*

**Week Fourteen**

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

*On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*

*On the Genealogy of Morality*

MAX WEBER

*Politics as a Vocation*

**Term paper due**