

## POT 6505: Politics and Theory (Fall 2018)

Prof. Steven Klein  
Tuesday 11:45 AM – 2:45 PM  
Office: Anderson Hall 004

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Political Science Conference Room  
Office Hours: M 1 – 4 PM

**Course Description:** This seminar will introduce you to the field of political theory and encourage you to reflect on the relationship between theoretical and normative concepts and the scientific study of politics. We will examine the main debates within political theory as well as debates about the relationship between theory and political science and between theory and political practice. Theories and topics we will consider include pragmatism, liberalism, realism, critical social theory, post-structuralism, theories of race, gender, and colonialism, and different approaches to the history of political thought. Beyond familiarizing you with the major debates in political theory, this course will teach you how to reflect on the concepts and commitments that inform your work.

### Required Texts:

All the books are available at the main bookstore.

1. John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*
2. John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*
3. Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*
4. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*
5. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*
6. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*
7. Carole Pateman and Charles Mills, *The Contract and Domination*
8. Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*
9. Franz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*

All other readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

This is a reading and discussion focused seminar. You are expected to come to the seminar having completed all the readings and prepared to discuss the material.

Your seminar grade will be based on three components.

- 1) Presentation and Discussion Paper (30%)
- 2) Class Participation (20%)
- 3) Final Exam (50%)

1. Presentation (10%) and Discussion Paper (20%).

You will be required to give one presentation and circulate one discussion paper based on the readings for one of the weeks, together worth 30% of your overall grade. You must send your

response paper to the class as a Word document by 5 PM the night before the seminar. Everyone is expected to read these before seminar.

*Discussion Paper:* A 6-8 page, double spaced paper that critically grapples with one or two ideas from the readings. The goal of this paper is to discuss, in more depth, some of the issues you will raise in your presentation. You should emphasize what you see as tensions, contradictions, or insufficiencies in the arguments being made by the author(s) under consideration. Quote from the text for crucial passages but make sure that your own voice and argument predominate.

*Presentation:* Your 15 minute presentation will set up our class discussion. This presentation should accomplish three things: 1) highlight what you take to be the most central point of the reading; 2) situate those points in the context of larger questions we have been asking across the seminar; and 3) pose some questions to start the discussion. These can be based off your arguments in the discussion paper. However, you should assume everyone has read that, and you can also pose additional questions or problems.

## 2. Seminar Participation

20% of your grade will be based on your preparation for discussion and your active seminar participation. This means having ideas and questions in mind and contributing to the discussion every week.

## 3. Final Exam

50% of your grade will be a take-home final exam. This will be modeled on the comprehensive exam in political theory. You will select two questions from a prepared list. You will then have 48 hours to write your responses. Each answer should be approximately 10 pages, double-spaced.

If you require accommodation for disability, you must register with the Dean of Students Office and provide their documentation. If you need an accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible. All students are required to abide by UF's Academic Honesty Guidelines, which may be viewed at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>

## **Readings:**

### **1. Aug 28: Introduction**

### **2. Sept 4: What is Political Theory?**

Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation"

Wendy Brown, "At the Edge"

James Tully, "Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity"

Leslie Paul Thiele, "Theory and Vision"

Ruth Grant, "Political Theory, Political Science, and Politics"

James Johnson, "Models Among Political Theorists"  
Andrew Rehfeld, "Offensive Political Theory"

### **3. Sept 11: Value-Neutrality and Political Science**

Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," "The 'Objectivity' of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy"

Jürgen Habermas, "Reconstruction and Interpretation in the Social Sciences"

Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," "Neutrality in Political Science"

Julian Reiss and Jan Sprenger, "Scientific Objectivity"

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scientific-objectivity/>

### **4. Sept 18: A Democratic Political Science? Pragmatism and the Role of Experts**

John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*

James Farr, "John Dewey and American Political Science"

Matthew Festenstein, "Inquiry as Critique: On the Legacy of Deweyan Pragmatism for Political Theory"

### **5. Sept 25: The Problem of Historicism**

Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy?" "Persecution and the Art of Writing"

Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas"

Arthur Melzer, "Esotericism and the Critique of Historicism"

Adrian Blau, "Anti-Strauss"

Ian Ward, "Helping the Dead Speak: Leo Strauss, Quentin Skinner and the Arts of Interpretation in Political Thought"

### **6. Oct 2: Refounding Liberalism: Freedom**

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"

Judith Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear"

Philip Pettit, "The Instability of Freedom as Noninterference: The Case of Isaiah Berlin"

Christian List and Laura Valentini, "Freedom as Independence"

### **7. Oct 9: Refounding Liberalism: Justice**

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*

Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?"

### **8. Oct 16: Moralism and Politics: The Realist Critique**

Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*

Bernard Williams, "Realism and Moralism in Political Theory"

Enzo Rossi and Matt Sleat, "Realism in Normative Political Theory"

**9. Oct 23: Science and Human Emancipation: Critical Social Theory**

Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*  
Jürgen Habermas, “Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective”

**10. Oct 30: Political Action Without Foundations**

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

**11. Nov 6: Post-Structuralism and the Death of the Subject**

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*  
Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”  
Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?”

**12. Nov 13: Race, Gender, and the Subject of Political Theory**

Carole Pateman and Charles Mills, *The Contract and Domination*  
Sharon Krause, “Contested Questions, Current Trajectories: Feminism in Political Theory Today”  
Michael Hanchard, “Contours of Black Political Thought: An Introduction and Perspective”

**13. Nov 20: Decolonizing Political Theory**

Franz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*  
Charles W. Mills, “Decolonizing Western Political Philosophy”

**14. Nov 27: The Problem of Political Concepts: Unpacking Power**

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*  
Ian Shapiro, “Gross Concepts in Political Argument”