The tasks of political theory are to understand, and search for answers to, fundamental questions of political life: How should we live, as individuals and as a society? What is justice, and what does it require of us? What is the best form of government? In lecture we will survey the most important thinkers of Western civilization who have tried to answer those questions, but we will focus on four of them. The objectives of the course are (1) to develop the skills of close reading and of writing, (2) to analyze the arguments made by the philosophers, and (3) to learn how those arguments help us, the inheritors of their thinking, to understand our own political life.

Readings:
The following books have been ordered for purchase and are also available at the library on two-hour reserve:

Schedule of Readings:
M Aug 28     Introduction
I. Early Modern Political Theory
M Sep  4  No class (Labor Day recess)
W Sep  6  Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chaps. 8-14
W Sep 13  Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chaps. 20-26
W Sep 20  Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chaps. 6-9; **paper #1 due**
W Sep 27  Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chaps. 16-19
II. Late Modern Political Theory
M Oct 16  Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, pp. 91-117, 147-51
M Oct 23  Rousseau, *Social Contract*, bks. 3-4
W Oct 25  **Midterm examination**
M Oct 30  Lecture on Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche

III. Ancient Political Theory

W Nov 1  Plato, Republic, bk. 1
M Nov 6  Plato, Republic, bk. 2
W Nov 8  Plato, Republic, bk. 3
M Nov 13 Plato, Republic, bk. 4
W Nov 15 Plato, Republic, bk. 5
M Nov 20 Plato, Republic, bk. 6; paper #2 due
W Nov 22 Plato, Republic, bk. 7
M Nov 27 Plato, Republic, bk. 8
W Nov 29 Plato, Republic, bk. 9
M Dec 4  Plato, Republic, bk. 10
W Dec 6  Lecture on Aristotle and Augustine; review

Final examination: W Dec 13, 3:10-5:10

Format:

Sessions will combine lecture and discussion. It is imperative, therefore, that you come to class having done the assigned reading for that day. A superior method of preparation is to read the material twice: first fairly quickly in order to grasp the direction of the argument, then slowly and thoroughly, taking notes as you go. Often I will refer to page numbers in the readings, so it is important that we all have the same editions of them and that you bring your book to class.

Use of a computer or other electronic device during class is prohibited, except with prior permission; unauthorized use will be considered the equivalent of an absence for that class. Unauthorized recording of the class is also prohibited. Our focus should be on the readings and on our fellow human beings trying to learn from the readings; computers tend to be a distraction. Electronic books are permitted, but you should let me know that you are using one, and the electronic book must be the same edition as the print edition.

Assignments:

Written assignments include:

● several pop quizzes, to be given at the beginning of certain classes, which will count a total of 10% of your final grade;
● an interpretive, analytical paper of about 500 words on a topic to be assigned from the readings (paper #1), which will count 15% of your final grade;
● a midterm examination, which will count 15% of your final grade;
● an interpretive, analytical paper of 1,250 to 1,750 words on a topic to be assigned from the readings (paper #2), which will count 30% of your final grade; and
● a final examination, which will count 30% of your final grade.

The papers will be due at the beginning of class on the specified dates. Extensions for submitting papers will be granted only in an emergency (e.g., personal illness, preferably with a note from a doctor, or serious illness in one’s family). The grade on a paper will be reduced by one increment (e.g., from B+ to B) for each business day it is late without an approved extension.

The examinations will consist mainly or entirely of essay questions. No alternative arrangements for examinations are likely to be made except in an emergency.

You must complete all written assignments to be eligible to pass the course. A record of significant contributions to discussion in class will increase the grade on one of the assignments by one increment. Your grade may be reduced if you have more than two unexcused absences; lateness normally counts as an absence.
Other Information:

The university requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair-use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violation of copyright and fair-use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for violation of fair-use laws. Violation of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability as well as disciplinary action under university policies. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair-use policies, the university encourages you to see http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright.

Any academic misconduct will make a student liable to failure of the course. One example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: using the words or ideas of another, from any source (including the Internet), without proper citation. The academic misconduct policy for students may be reviewed at https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct.

By UNLV policy for the sake of students’ privacy, faculty should send e-mail to students only via students’ Rebelmail accounts. Please use that account to send me e-mail. If you use another account, I will use my discretion in deciding whether to respond.

Free assistance with writing is available at the Writing Center (CDC 3-301; telephone 702-895-3908). Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority.

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you should contact the Disability Resource Center (SSC A143; telephone 702-895-0866) for coordination of services. If you are registered with the center, bring your academic accommodation plan to me so that we may work together to implement the accommodations to meet your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach me in front of others to discuss your needs.

If you miss a written assignment because of observance of a religious holiday, you will be given an opportunity during the semester to make up missed work. The makeup will apply only to the absence on the religious holiday. It is your responsibility to notify me within the first fourteen calendar days of the course of your intention to participate in religious holidays that do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For more information, see http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531.

This class meets the requirements for the Great Works Academic Certificate.