**POLS 220, Section 02**

**Foundations of Political Thought**

Fall Quarter 2011, 3 units

(MWF, 1-1:50pm)

University Hall 3218

Dr. Sina Kramer

Office: University Hall 4135

Office Hours: M W 10-12

Email: sina.kramer@lmu.edu

Extension 82675

**Purpose of Class**:

Political life is as nearly as varied and complex as the persons who seek to live together in political communities. The goal of this course is to get you to think about what makes up political life, and to examine your own political lives in new ways. We will pursue such questions as: what is politics? What are humans such that they are drawn to live together and form political communities? Who makes up our political communities, who does not, and why? How different can we be, and how similar must we be, in order to live together? And how do we determine this? What is the distinction, and the relation, between ethics and politics? How do we determine the common good as a political community? Who is authorized to rule in political bodies, and why? What is the nature of justice, and how is it practically enacted? Under what conditions, if any, are force and violence justified? What is the nature of freedom? What freedoms are necessary to, and what are destructive of, political life? What is the nature of equality? In what sense are political subjects equal? How can we be both different and equal?

I suspect that you have thought about these questions at some point, and I suspect that you will think about them throughout your lives as citizens. The purpose of this class is to give you an idea of how these questions have come down to you, to explore the historical contestation of these issues, or in other words to give you some sense of your inheritance. Far from a dead letter, these questions have been contested and continue to be contested at every level of political life, from the White House to the corner store and the kitchen table. While you may be hard pressed to find final answers to these questions, you should come out of this class with a better map of the issues. A clearer theoretical understanding of the major concepts of political theory will better equip you to analyze them in empirical cases and apply them in experimental settings.

This is a three credit course as well as an intensive writing course. It will be conducted primarily through student discussion, supplemented by lecture. Because this is a writing-intensive course, you will also develop your writing skills. You should be able by the end of the quarter to effectively explicate an argument, and to mount a convincing argument of your own. As the practice of writing is the most important method of developing one’s skills as a writer, we will be writing a lot: there will be five papers in this course. In order to support the practice of writing, I have designated some days for workshopping papers and for peer review.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. **Students should become familiar with the major concepts and theories of political philosophy** from a wide range of perspectives, including specifically theories of human nature, the state and the social contract, power and freedom, democracy and rights, representation and deliberation, distributive justice, equality, and property, gender, identity/difference and recognition.
2. **Students should understand the nature of normative theory and the role it plays in understanding politics,** including specifically the relationship between empirical and normative arguments, the contribution of normative theory to empirical political science, and the difference between mere opinion and reasoned argument.
3. **Students should improve substantially in their capacity for normative argument**, including specifically the ability to arrive at coherent and compelling normative views, the ability to express those views in speech and in writing with greater focus, clarity, force, and sophistication, and the ability to persuade and mobilize others to political action. Achievement of this outcome should also improve students as writers with respect to other courses and with respect to their lives and careers.
4. **Students should improve in their ability to apply abstract theories to concrete cases**, recognizing the challenges and possibilities that are always inherent to bringing theory to bear on practical action.
5. **Students should improve substantially in their capacity for critically evaluating political institutions and practices** – students should be able to use normative arguments as a lens for perceiving more clearly the values at stake in the social world around them and the importance and complexity of political choice from a value-sensitive perspective; for evaluating critically the values promoted or inhibited by specific political actions, practices, institutions, and commitments; and for enlisting the normative dimension of their political imagination to envision a broader range of alternative possibilities for public life.
6. **Students should grow intellectually and personally as individuals and as active citizens:** the hope and expectation of the course is that students will increase intellectually in their curiosity, courage, sure-footedness and self-reliance; and grow personally in their valuing of active and engaged citizenship and in their orientation toward and capability for pursuing their own individual role in the university’s mission of the promotion of justice.

**Required Books**:

All books are available at the bookstore. You are of course welcome to find them elsewhere. I would prefer you have your own copy, but if that is impossible, you should be able to get all of these at the library or through inter-library loan. Additional readings will be located on the Blackboard site for this course. You must have a physical copy of the reading, whether book or print-out, with you in class every day. Please refer to the reading schedule to see what readings to prepare for each class and where to find them.

*Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, Ed. Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon (Princeton, 1996)

Sophocles: *Antigone* (Hackett, 2011)

Arendt, Hannah: *On Violence* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1970)

Mills, Charles W.: *The Racial Contract* (Cornell, 1998)

Okin, Susan Miller: *Justice, Gender and the Family* (Basic, 1989)

**Assessment**:

**Participation**: 20%

Attendance: 10%

In-Class Participation: 10%

**Writing**: 80%

Paper 1 (writing exercise: explication) (10%)

Paper 2 (justice) (20%)

Paper 3 (liberty) (20%)

Paper 4 (force) (20%)

Final paper – (comparative analysis) (30%)

**Participation:** will be evaluated on the basis of two components: attendance and participation in class discussion. As participation counts for so much, and is vital to the process of learning, it is vital that you be here to participate. I will therefore take attendance each day. You may miss three classes without penalty. Continued missed classes will result in a half-letter grade deduction for each class missed beyond three. Being grown folks, the classes you miss are your responsibility and your choice; *I require no defense from you for them*. If for any reason you must miss a class, please arrange with me beforehand to receive and turn in assignments.

Participation, however, extends beyond merely showing up. I expect the classroom to be a kind of intentional community, where the free and vital exchange of ideas is encouraged; respect for persons is fundamental to that atmosphere. For further guidance in cultivating respect for persons, please refer to the Lion’s Code (<http://www.lmu.edu/AssetFactory.aspx?vid=30313>) or to Loyola Marymount University’s Community Standards (see <http://www.lmu.edu/studentlife/Judicial_Affairs/Standards_Publication.htm>; for the Student Conduct Code, Section IV. D.). Because thinking requires focus and engagement, both with the text and with your interlocutors, the use of electronic devices, such as computers, phones, smartphones, etc. is not permitted. Most importantly, don’t come to class unprepared. Much of how well you will do in this class will rely on how much effort you put into it. If you don’t read the text, you can’t discuss it, and you won’t be prepared to write a good paper about it*.* **I retain the right, therefore, to give quizzes or assign reading questions as I see fit, depending on the level of engagement with the text.**

**Writing:** There will be no exams in this class, but there will be five papers. The first will be an in-class writing exercise in explication, the second will address justice, the third will address freedom, the fourth will address force and violence, and the fifth will be a comparative paper that addresses at least two authors in different units. While each of the three papers in the middle are of equal weight, **you may drop your lowest grade amongst these three papers**. The first paper and the final paper grades are non-droppable. I will give you a written question and guide to answering it for each paper about a week before the papers are due by posting them to the Blackboard site for the class; we will go over the paper topic in class the following day. We will also occasionally devote time in class to peer review of drafts; I will also notify you of these in advance and post guides to our in-class work that day. I will also post a couple of guides to writing and argumentation on the website for the class to help you craft your papers. It is up to you if you want to turn in a paper late. **You will be granted ONE free twenty-four hour extension**; if you choose to use this, please indicate it at the top of your paper. Beyond that instance, I will deduct ten percent per day for late papers (late being after the posted time due). **YOU MUST TURN IN EVERY PAPER**. Failure to do so means failure of the course.

**I will accept papers via email on the day and at the time they are due. Please use your LMU student address; using your LMU student email is the best way to ensure your email doesn’t get caught by a spam filter. If you do not receive a reply from me, then you have not turned in your paper.**

If you find that you need some help with your writing, please do not hesitate to contact the writing center. They are available to help you to write a paper long before the paper is due or even assigned, and their skills are invaluable.

If you need help thinking through some questions or working on your writing, please visit my office hours or schedule a time to talk with me. If you are in need of other resources to help you to succeed in this course or at LMU more generally, talk to me and we will locate them.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated under any circumstances in this course. If you do not turn in your own work, I cannot evaluate your work and help you to become a better student. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which appears in the *LMU Bulletin 2010-2011* (see <http://www.lmu.edu/about/services/registrar/Bulletin/Bulletins_in_PDF_Format.htm>.). If you are in a bind, such that you would resort to plagiarism, let me know and we can try and resolve the problem honestly. I can do a whole lot more to help you before rather than after. If you commit plagiarism, you may receive an F for the course and you will be reported to the Dean.

**Gender Neutral & Gender Specific Language and Names and Accents:** Academics no longer use the pronoun “he” to apply universally to all persons, nor do we use the term “man,” when we are referring to humanity or people in general. In our writing, when we are making generalizations we should use gender neutral pronouns, that is, sie and hir, s/he, him or her, they/their, etc. When referring to a specific person or group of people, we should use the language and pronouns *that they prefer* if we know them. Further, we should be attentive to the spelling and accents of author’s names (note for example María Lugones and bell hooks). Finally, all authors must be referred to by their entire names, or only their last names, *not by their first names*, orally and in writing.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Loyola Marymount University is committed to equality in education. Students with special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

**(Rough) Grading Criteria**

**Participation**:

**For an A (100-90)**: Attends class consistently. Comes prepared and having done the reading. Contributes positively to class discussion. Does not merely state opinions, but instead uses the texts to interrogate one’s own opinions and struggles honestly with the texts. Is curious and engaged.

**For a B (89-80)**: Attends class consistently. Comes prepared and having done the reading. Contributes to class discussion with some regularity. Sometimes unprepared or not participatory.

**For a C (79-70)**: Attends class with some kind of regularity. Often prepared, though unencumbered by reading and thinking.

**For a D (69-60)**: Attends class occasionally, without having prepared, and usually unencumbered by reading and thinking.

**For an F (59-0)**: I have no idea who you are.

**Papers**:

**For an A (100-90)**: Shows clear familiarity with the text; supports claims with references to the text; answers the questions completely; its claims and argumentative structure moves from point to point effortlessly and elegantly; it has a clear and often original thesis and the argument of the paper supports the thesis; it engages the text with interest. Clearly excellent work.

**For a B (89-80)**: Shows some familiarity with the text but relies mostly on class discussion for that familiarity; presents a plausible interpretation but does not always support or document it with the text; does not always move logically from point to point; good work, but not excellent work.

**For a C (79-70)**: This paper does all that it absolutely needs to in order to prove that the student has the knowledge and skills to pass the class. Shows a passing familiarity with the text, but only passing; the narrative or argument structure shows some signs of intelligibility and rationality; overall, the exam reflects information from class discussion, and not always in coherent argumentative form.

**For a D (69-60)**: Fails to reflect even the most basic information from class discussion, much less the texts; answers questions incompletely or not at all; offers little or no support for claims; answers are disorganized and argumentative or narrative structure is non-existent.

**For an F (59-0)**: Fails to reflect much of anything at all, except perhaps one’s own opinions, whether they relate to the text and to class discussion or not; has no structure; makes no attempt at argument, intelligibility, coherency, etc.

**Reading Schedule**

Though these classic texts work through many concepts, I have organized the course into four different themes: justice; freedom and equality; force and violence/war and peace; and political epistemology (or difference, knowledge, and politics).

*Unit One: Justice.*

Week One

M Aug. 29: Course Introduction

W Aug. 31: Sophocles, *Antigone* (Introduction-14)

F Sep. 2: Sophocles, *Antigone* (pages 14-58)

Week Two

M Sep. 5: Labour Day: **NO CLASS**

W Sep. 7: Plato, *Republic* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 2, pages 39-65)

F Sep. 9: Plato, *Republic* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 2, pages 65-84; optional: 84-94)

Week Three

M Sep. 12: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 41, pages 669-684)

W Sep. 14: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 41, pages 684-697)

F Sep. 16: Discussion, **Writing Exercise: Explicating an Argument**

Week Four

M Sep. 19: Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (Chapters 1 and 5 - pages 3-24; 89-109)

W Sep. 19: Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (Chapter 6 - pages 110-133)

F Sep. 21: Paper workshop (Justice Paper Peer Review)

*Unit Two: Liberty.*

Week Five

M Sep. 26: What is liberty? Declaration on the Rights of Man and the *Citoyen*; Declaration on the Rights of Woman and the *Citoyenne,* Declaration of Independence, Ten-Point Plan of the Black Panther Party (Princeton Reader; Blackboard: “Ten-Point Plan) (**justice paper due**)

W Sep. 28: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 11, pages 205-222)

F Sep. 30: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 11, pages 222-242)

Week Six

M Oct. 3: Locke, *Second Treatise* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 12, pages 243-258)

W Oct. 5: Locke, *Second Treatise* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 12, pages 258-270)

F Oct. 7: Mill, *On Liberty* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 21, pages 375-388)

Week Seven

M Oct. 10: Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” Part One (Blackboard)

W Oct. 12: Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” Part Two (Blackboard)

F Oct. 14: Fall Day **NO CLASS**

Week Eight

M Oct. 17: Midterm discussion and paper prep

W Oct. 19: Student-led paper workshop and peer review(SPEP)

F Oct. 21: **NO CLASS (SPEP)**

*Unit Three: Force and Violence, War and Peace.*

Week Nine

M Oct. 24: When, if ever, is violence or war justified? (Blackboard: “Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002: H.J.Res. 114”) (**liberty paper due**)

W Oct. 26: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 8, pages 167-187)

F Oct. 28: Hobbes, *Leviathan,* selections; Locke, *Second Treatise* (Princeton Reader, Chapter 12, pages 270-279)

Week Ten

M Oct. 31: Kant, “Perpetual Peace” (Blackboard)

W Nov. 2: Lenin, “What is To Be Done?” (Princeton Reader, Chapter 29, pages 530-534)

F Nov. 4: Arendt, *On Violence* (Part One - pages 3-31)

Week Eleven

M Nov. 7: Arendt, *On Violence* (Parts Two and Three - pages 35-87)

W Nov. 9: King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (Princeton, Chapter 37, 622-635); Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (in Princeton, Chapter 38, pages 636-641)

F Nov. 11: Paper Workshop

*Unit Four: Political Epistemology (Difference, Knowledge, Politics).*

Week Twelve

M Nov. 14: Who counts as a political agent, and how do we know? (**force paper due**)

W Nov. 16: Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (Forethought, chapter 1) (Blackboard)

F Nov. 18: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (TBA)

Week Thirteen

M Nov. 21: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (TBA)

W Nov. 23: *NO CLASS*

F Nov. 25: *NO CLASS*

Week Fourteen

M Nov. 28: Alcoff, “On Judging Epistemic Credibility: Is Social Identity Relevant?” (Blackboard)

W Nov. 30: Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet OR “How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay” (TBA; Blackboard)

F Dec. 2: Marilyn Frye, *Politics of Reality* (selections TBA; Blackboard)

Week Fifteen

M Dec. 5: María Lugones, “Playfulness, ‘World’-Travelling, and Loving Perception” (Blackboard)

W Dec. 7: Butler, Introduction to *Frames of War* (Blackboard)

F Dec. 9: Final paper workshop

**Final Paper Due Wednesday, Dec 14th at 4pm**.

*(Note: the instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and the reading schedule at any time.)*