Introduction to Political Theory  
(GE Credit: Society and Culture)  
POLSCI 10  
Time: T/Th: 12:30-1:45  
Location: Online

Professor Davide Panagia  
davidepanagia@ucla.edu  
Office Hours:  
I will hold office hours for 30 minutes at the conclusion of each class session.

Section Instructors:  
Alex Diones  
Naomi Ellis  
Vanessa Pooudomsak  
Rui Zhou

Introduction:  

Among many other things, political theory involves the practice of critical thinking in everyday life and politics. Critical thinking takes various forms, like diagnostics (as in the medical professions), or argumentation and the dissection of case histories (as in the legal professions), or the imaginative creation or reinvention of value (as in marketing and business ventures). In short, political theory is very much a part of your current life whether you’re aware of it or not. And it is the ambition of this course to prepare your critical thinking capacities for whatever future ambitions, professions, or goals you may have.

In this course we will read a rich variety of works of political theory spanning from the ancient Greeks to modern times. Likely, many of you will not have encountered such works before, and even more likely for many of you this is your first class in a Political Science department. This class focuses on two basic objectives: 1. The reading of political theory; and 2. The writing of and about political theory.

Reading and writing are the basic critical skills of political theory just like addition and subtraction are the building blocks of mathematics. But reading and writing are more complicated than just absorbing information and transmitting it. Thus, it is very possible that you will at first feel lost with the material you will engage in this class and with the expectations of reading and writing that this course has of you. I encourage you to not be discouraged and to rely on me and all of your instructors for help.

On Reading:  

Our guiding question is the following: what is the study of political theory? That question presupposes the following: What does it mean to be a political being?

These are very open-ended questions and each of the texts you will read contributes to our understandings of how to think about these questions. The works are written in specific
historical periods and with specific audiences in mind. And so our approach will also be to understand an author’s political context, their ambitions in writing, and the specific styles or genres of writing they use. For instance, why do Marx & Engels write the *Communist Manifesto* as a manifesto, rather than as an essay, or a newspaper article? What is a philosophical treatise and why is it political? For that matter, why does Plato choose to write dialogues to address the political issues he wishes to address? And what kind of political work is the Bible? These are just some of the questions we will take on in this class.

**Course Resources:**

- Spark Notes is **NOT** a legitimate source of reference for this class. It offers standardized summaries of works and not critical perspectives on them. If you chose to refer to it but do not cite it, you are in violation of the University rules for plagiarism and will receive a zero grade on your assignment.
- Thus, your most relevant and helpful reference resources for your reading and writing assignments will not be Spark Notes but the following web sites:
  1. https://plato.stanford.edu
     (This is accessible via the UCLA libraries.)
- Podcasts:
  - Philosophize This! (Apple, etc.)
  - Talking Politics: History of Ideas (Apple, etc.)
  - Philosophy Bites (Apple, etc.)

**Assignments:**

1. **The Weekly Assignment:** Submit a screen shot of an annotated page of the week’s readings. This will be due every Tuesday before class and is worth 20% of your final grade (i.e., this is your participation grade 2% x 10 weeks).
2. **The PS TEN-TALK/Lecture:** 3 assignments x 20% = 60%
3. **Section Participation:** (2% x 10 Weeks) = 20% of Final Grade

**Assignment Specifications:**

**Weekly Assignment:** as noted above, each week you are responsible for submitting a screen shot or image of an annotated page of the readings (1%) you did for that week. This due on the Tuesday before the start of class. That is, you will be expected to demonstrate you have done the readings by documenting your reading of the text. Along with this screen shot, you will submit a typed or clearly hand written page of notes (1%) on the week’s assignments.

**The PS TEN-TALK/Lecture:** You are expected to prepare three lectures based on the assignment prompts, kind of like a TED Talk. Each of the lectures asks you to compare a scene in an assigned film with a set of readings you have done for class. The format of the assignment can be either written (a complete essay that is 1500 words minimum and 2000 words maximum); a 10 minute podcast; or a 10 minute video lecture.
Assignment Expectations:

1. Remember that first and foremost, you are producing a lecture, and a lecture has an audience. You can imagine any audience, but maybe it helps to think of it this way: **What** are you going to tell your parents, or your siblings, or your best friends that you have learned? And **how** are you going to explain what you have learned to them?

A lecture requires you to demonstrate authority of a knowledge field, and imparting your knowledge of that material to others in a clear and coherent manner. **This requires planning, outlining, research, and critical analysis. How** you chose to do this is up to you (not up to either the course instructor or the section instructors). First and foremost, you must be able to answer this question:

   **“What do I want my students/audience to learn in my PS.TEN-TALK?”**

2. **Every PS.TEN-TALK, like every essay assignment, has a story to tell.** Specifically, you are telling the story of what you want your audience to learn. So be aware that your **PS.TEN-TALK** should be structured like an essay – with an introduction; a body of insights, research, and evidence; and a conclusion.

3. In your **PS.TEN-TALK** you are expected to provide a clear and well-articulated interpretive argument that connects the passages from the readings (that you chose) with a scene of the film (also of your choosing).

4. **Do not summarize** either the scene or the readings. We have all read them and seen them and don’t need you to rehearse these for us.

5. **Describe** what is happening in the scene in a **clear and precise** language. This is NOT the same as summarizing. **Describing** requires you to account for the specific elements you wish to emphasize in the scene and **explain how they matter to your argument** so that your student/audience can pay attention to those things as sources of evidence for your **PS.TEN-TALK**.
   
   a. As you’re preparing your **PS.TEN-TALK** you should have the following questions in the back of your mind:
      i. Why are you pointing the audience to the scene you’ve chosen?
      ii. How does that scene matter to the prompts you are asked to address?
      iii. How does that scene relate to the passages from the readings you’ve selected?
      iv. How do the readings help you and your audience understand the scene?

   b. **Note:** specify the scene by noting the temporal marker; i.e., *The Matrix*, 6:25-10:15. This indicates that the scene is at 6 mins. 25 secs to 10 mins. 15 secs. If you have the skills, you may upload the scene to your lecture; but the inclusion of the scene will not be counted as part of your 10 minute lecture
(i.e., if you upload a 3 minute scene, then the expectation is that the total running time of your lecture will be 13 minutes).

Please note the following:

- No re-dos of assignments are permitted.
- There are no mid-term or final exams for this course.
- All assignments must be turned in on our course website.
- It is not our responsibility, as appraisers of your work, to try and decipher poor grammar. Writing is both a skill and an art. And you are being given the opportunity to develop that skill and that art in this course. But this class is not a class in language instruction or grammar. Thus, as your evaluators, we will NOT GRADE a submission if we deem it unreadable because of poor grammar. If you have difficulties with writing, please contact the Undergraduate Writing Center (http://wp.ucla.edu/index.php/home).

**On Class Conduct in the Age of Zoom:**

- All class meetings will be recorded and will be available on our class Moodle web site. This means that if you can’t attend them synchronously, you will be able to follow asynchronously.
- All classes will begin with either a 3 or 5 minute meditation (depending on the Quarter stress levels). These are available from the UCLA Mindful Meditation Center:

  5 minute: https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mpeg/01_Breathing_Meditation.mp3
  3 Minute: https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mpeg/Body-Sound-Meditation.mp3

  Other Guided Meditations are available here (but there’s also an App for that!): https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations

- Students are expected to participate either synchronously or asynchronously in all sessions, be attentive to class assignments, and be respectful during class Zoom sessions.
- EMAIL CLASS POLICY: expect a 36-48 hour turnaround for all email contact. We are all experiencing digital exhaustion!

**On Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is NOT tolerated in this class. Please familiarize yourself with the University’s Code of Conduct on Academic Integrity (http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/StudentGuide.pdf), (as well as www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess) particularly as these relate to plagiarism, which includes:

- The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied verbatim or near verbatim form. This includes Spark Notes.
- Improper or lack of acknowledgement of sources (including websites) in essays or papers or lectures.
• Best practice is to cite any outside material that you consult, even if you do not use it verbatim.
• If you cite a text, author, or idea, that citation must be documented according to the Chicago Manual of Style, as specified by the American Political Science Association Style Manual available here: https://mk0apsaconnectbvy6p6.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/07/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-July-2020-Revision.pdf

Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to address the following learning outcomes as stipulated by the Department of Political Science:

1. Think critically about basic political processes, institutions, and concepts as these operate in different national and cultural contexts. Evaluate arguments in an impartial fashion.
2. Locate, evaluate, and use information and scholarship needed to place particular political events in broader historical, cross-national, and theoretical contexts. Demonstrate familiarity with various approaches to the study of politics, and their application to specific questions, puzzles, and debates.
3. Acquire a knowledge of diverse theories of politics, by engaging critically with texts, media, and contexts. Learn to employ cultural, hermeneutical, normative and historical approaches.
4. Make written and oral arguments about significant political processes, events, and concepts using appropriate evidence, with sensitivity to opposing perspectives.

Required texts:
Note: all readings for the course are available as .pdfs on our course Moodle site. If you wish that refer to the actual works, these are the texts you can search for:

Plato: The Republic
The Basic Works of Aristotle
The Bible: Authorized King James Version
Augustine: The Confessions
Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings
T. Hobbes: Leviathan
J.J. Rousseau: The Discourses and Other Early Writings
F. Nietzsche: Basic Writings of Nietzsche

Course Readings and Assignments:

Week 0:

Thursday: PS10 in the Year of the Pandemic: Expectations, Anxieties, and Disease
• Syllabus Review
• Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK on Susan Sontag Reading Assignment:
“Disease as Political Metaphor”

- **Listen to:** Susan Sontag Interview on AIDS:

**Week 1:**  *Political Theory as a Practice of Close Reading*

**Tuesday:** Workshop: Relearning How to Read: Close Reading, Textual Annotation, and Other Approaches to Reading Political Theory

**Reading assignment due:** S. Sontag: “Disease as Political Metaphor”

**Thursday:**  *Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:*
Plato, Dialectics, and Justice

**Week 2:**  *Plato and the Legacy of Political Criticism*

**Tuesday:** **Reading Assignment Due:** Plato, *Republic*: Books VI-VII

- **Listen to:** Philosophize This! Episode 004: Plato

**Thursday:**  *Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:*
Aristotle, Language, and Political Action

**Week 3:**  *Aristotle’s Invention of “Political Understanding”*

**Tuesday:**  **Reading Assignment Due:**
Aristotle *Poetics* (Books 1-10); *Politics* (Book 1)

- **Listen to:** Philosophize This! Episode 005: Aristotle Pt.1

**Thursday:**  *Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:*
The Bible and the Law: Justice, Vengeance, and Violence

**Week 4:**  *Christianity and Western Political Theory*

**Tuesday:**  **Reading Assignment Due:**
*The Bible*, Genesis (Books 1-11)
*The Bible*, The First Epistle of Paul to Corinthians

- **Listen to:** The Guardian Podcast: Who was St Paul? With Christos Tsiolkas and Tom Holland

**Thursday:**  *Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:*
The Foundations of Augustine’s Political Theory: The Human Self, Judgment, and Evil
Assignment # 1 Due:

Required Viewing: *The Matrix*

Do a PS.TEN-TALK on one of the following two topics:

1. Select a scene from the movie *The Matrix*. Then select a political metaphor represented in that scene. Drawing from your class lecture notes, from your podcast listening, and especially from your readings, focus your PS.TEN-TALK on the following questions:
   - What is a political metaphor and why is it important to our thinking about politics?
   - What is the specific political metaphor you have selected and what does it mean?
   - How is it political?
   - How is it represented in the film?
   - How is the political metaphor important to the film?

Or:

2. Do a PS.TEN-TALK that critically analyzes 3 political metaphors associated with COVID-19. You will choose any 3 metaphors that matter to you from contemporary popular discourse, and you will discuss their political meaning by referring to the readings by Plato, Aristotle, Susan Sontag, as well as *The Matrix*, your annotations of those works, and your class notes.

In your PS.TEN-TALK you must provide answers to the following questions:

   - What is a political metaphor and why is it important to our thinking about politics?
   - What are the three specific political metaphors you have selected and what do they mean?
   - How are they political?
   - How do these metaphors play out in contemporary popular discourse?

Week 5: *Augustine, Politics, Life, and the Self*

Tuesday: **Reading Assignment Due:**
Augustine: *Confessions*, Books II, VII, VIII
   - **Listen to:** Philosophize This! Episode #016 – St. Augustine

Thursday: **Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:**
Martin Luther: The First Viral Influencer
Week 6: *What Luther Did to Political Authority*

**Tuesday:** **Reading Assignment Due:**
Martin Luther: 95 Theses
- **Listen to:** BBC Podcast “The History Hour: Martin Luther’s 95 Theses”
  Also available on Apple Podcasts and here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csvstv

**Thursday:** **Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:**
Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Representation

Week 7: *Thomas Hobbes and the Theory of Political Representation*

**Tuesday:** **Reading Assignment Due:**
- **Listen to:** Quentin Skinner and Jon Pike on Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*: https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/philosophy/reading-political-philosophy-machiavelli-mill?track=3

**Thursday:** **Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:**
Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the European Enlightenment

**Assignment # 2 Due:**

**Required Viewing: The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence**

The film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* thematizes the relationship between violence, the law, and the state and seems to indicate that state sovereignty requires and legitimizes the use of violence, and even the right to execute citizens, as a legitimate tool for maintaining justice.

Present a PS.TEN-TALK that answers the following question:

Does the state have the right to use violence? In your PS.TEN-TALK you should justify whether state violence is legitimate, and why; and if not, why not?
Your PS.TEN-TALK must draw on either the Bible, Augustine, and Hobbes’s *Leviathan*, or on all of these – and a scene from the film.

Here are some questions you might consider addressing in your PS.TEN-TALK:

Does a system of authority and rule have the right to impose violence upon its citizens?
Does the Bible/Augustine/Hobbes defend the use of violence to instill respect for the law? If so, how is that principle defended?
If you don’t think either the Bible, Augustine, or Hobbes defends the idea of violence as a legitimate tool for obedience to the law, why don’t they and on the basis of which principles don’t they?

Week 8:  
**J-J. Rousseau’s Challenge: Diversity and Political Equality?**

Tuesday:  
**Reading Assignment Due:**  
- **Listen to:** Philosophize This! Episode 405; Rousseau Government Part I

Thursday:  
**Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK:**  
Karl Marx and the Steam Engine

Week 9:  
**Karl Marx, Diversity, and Oppression**

Tuesday:  
Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (All)  
- **Listen to:** Talking Politics/History of Ideas: Marx and Engels on Revolution: The Communist Manifesto (1848)

Thursday:  
**THANKSGIVING – NO CLASSES**

Week 10  
**Friedrich Nietzsche and Political Difference**

Tuesday:  
**Reading Assignment Due:**  
Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*  
Read: “Second Essay: Guilt, Bad Conscience, & the Like”  
- **Listen to:** Philosophy Bites: Aaron Ridgley on Art and Truth

Thursday:  
**Prof. Panagia’s PS.TEN-TALK: What is Genealogy?**

Final Assignment: **Due Monday, December 14, 2020:**

**Required Viewing: Trading Places**

*Trading Places* is a movie that executes a social science experiment to show how social, economic, and racial inequality is not natural. Rousseau, Marx, and Nietzsche also make arguments about whether or not inequality is natural. On the basis of your viewing and your readings, prepare a PS.TEN-TALK that does the following:

- Compare and contrast Rousseau, Marx, and Nietzsche on the naturalness of inequality.
- How are their arguments similar and how are they different?
- Do these thinkers offer solutions for overcoming inequality?
- Choose a scene from the movie and elaborate how each thinker would respond to it on the basis of what you’ve argued.
ALL APPOINTMENTS WILL BE ONLINE, USING GOOGLE DOCS & ZOOM

The UWC is a free service for all UCLA students. We are happy to work with you on course papers, capstone & senior thesis papers or application materials (resumes, CVs & Statements of Purpose)

FALL 2020 HOURS & LOCATIONS


We offer 25-mn. and 50-mn. scheduled appointments. If there are no available appointments to book, we will offer 25-mn. VIRTUAL drop-in appointments. Please see our website for details.

**DAYTIME**

Undergraduate Writing Center
M-Th: 10am — 6pm | F: 10am — 3pm
M/T: 8 — 10am
Sat: 8 — 11am (Wks. 3, 7 & 10)

The History Writing Center
See uwc.ucla.edu/locations & hours

**EVENING**

Sun/W/Th: 6pm—10pm
M/T: 6pm—9pm

**VIRTUAL DROP-INS**

Sun. 6 — 10pm | M/T: 8am — 9pm |
W/Th: 10am — 10pm | F: 10am-3pm