

PLSC 100: Political Theory
John Felice Rome Center
Summer 2025
Dr. Francesco Mariani
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Tues. & Thurs. | 9:00 - 12:20
Office Hours: Tues. 12:20 - 13:20
(by appointment)

Course Description

This course aims to illuminate some of the fundamental thinkers and concepts of political theory. By tracing a trajectory from the origins of Western philosophy to the 21st century, the course intends to highlight the reciprocal relationship between philosophy and politics. Through the analysis of the thought of major philosophers, it will emerge how philosophy has from the beginning understood politics as its own inescapable mission and how different historical epochs, depending on the contingencies of the moment, have reformulated the nexus between thought and action, between knowledge and political transformation. Many themes still essential to contemporary philosophical-political debate will thus be addressed and discussed: knowledge and power, competence and democracy, individual and community, freedom and moral principles, state and sovereignty, war and peace.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the various approaches of the philosophical questions related to political theory, with attention to the historical and conceptual development of these questions, and be able to articulate some of the major problems and responses central to this area of philosophy.

This course will also enable students to:

- (a) distinguish alternative paradigms on political theory, the individual's understanding and evaluation of his or her role in the world, the relationship between the individual and the community;
- (b) look for and appreciate the reasons given in support of the different views, to assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each poses for the others;
- (c) grasp the historical and cultural determinacy of any philosophical conception of politics;
- (d) identify in the different philosophical conceptions the point of balance between historical material elements, on the one hand, and theoretical and spiritual, on the other hand;
- (e) engage in dialogue with great philosophers, paying close attention to their meaning, their reasons, their concerns, their vision;
- (f) insert their own reflections into the dialogue;

Required Texts/Materials

Assigned and supplementary readings posted on Sakai;

Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* (available online)

Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace* (available online)

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student. Any lateness or leaving class early will impact the final course grade. Attendance is mandatory at every class meeting. Absence due to sickness or injury needs to be corroborated by a doctor's note. Students late to class twice will be credited with one absence in accordance with the JFRC's Attendance policy. Any absence, up to a maximum of two, will result in a 1% lowering of the final grade. Three (3) absences will result in an automatic failure (F). Travel does not constitute reason to miss class.

Assessment Components

• Midterm Exam (in-class test)	35 %
• Final Exam (in-class test)	35 %
• Participation	15 %
• Presentation	15 %

Grading

94-100: A

90-93: A-

87-89: B+

84-86: B

80-83: B-

77-79: C+

74-76: C

70-73: C-

67-69: D+

60-66: D

59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (use of AI included) are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

Assignments and Final Examination Policy

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. All students must sit for their final examinations on the day scheduled. No exams are to be given on another day or at another time without express consent from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Travel plans or other personal commitments may not interfere with already scheduled finals.

Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Title IX

The University's Title IX policies are published within the Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation. Loyola is fully compliant with Title IX and related laws and regulations but considers them to be a minimum standard for ensuring a safe and inclusive University environment. To raise any concern or conflict of interest regarding the Title IX Coordinator, or to report any misconduct or discrimination committed by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the Vice President for Human Resources/Chief Human Resources Officer.

DEI

In line with Loyola's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, students are expected to embrace and contribute to a learning environment that is open, welcoming, and aims for mutual understanding. As members of the JFRC community, we strive to create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages the expression of diverse opinions. Both students and faculty have a responsibility to convey respect when interacting with others and to honor the dignity of all community members.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Text/Assignment
Tue. 5/20	Introduction to the course. The death of Socrates	<i>The Apology of Socrates</i> (full text)
Thurs. 5/22	Plato's Republic	<i>The Republic</i> (Book I-III-VII, excerpts)
Tue. 5/27	Plato's Republic	<i>The Republic</i> (Book IV-VI, excerpts)
Thurs. 5/29	Machiavelli	<i>The Prince</i> (Chap. 5-6-9-15-18-25)
Tue. 6/3	Midterm Exam	
Thurs. 6/5	Hobbes vs Rousseau	<i>Leviathan, The Social Contract</i> (excerpts)
Tue. 6/10	Kant and the Perpetual Peace	<i>Perpetual Peace</i> (Section I-II)
Thurs. 6/12	Marx	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (excerpts)
Tue. 6/17	Rawls	<i>A Theory of Justice</i> (excerpts)
Thurs. 6/19	Final Exam	