

# PSCI 3320 Political Theory: Eighteenth Century to Today

University of North Texas \* Spring 2015

TR 2:00-3:50  
Sage Hall 329

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## Instructor Information

**Evan M. Lowe**

**Office Hours:** TR 11-12:30 & by appointment

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## 1 Introductory Material

### 1.1 Course Purpose

This course seeks to provide an overview of the foundations of modern political philosophy and moves forward to address the foundations of contemporary liberalism and its debated decline. Is our contemporary political *weltanschauung* in decline? If so, by what is it being challenged – if anything? Is it capable of defending itself against these challenges? What strengths, if any, does it have? This course seeks to address these questions and more like it.

We do not take issue with particular contemporary political issues, although they may come up as a particular example of more general trends and concepts. Rather, this course provides the groundwork for understanding our – indeed, *any* – political ecosystem in its theoretical condition. This is important regardless of one's political affiliation, ideological identification, issue interest or even one's level of apathy toward political matters.

### 1.2 Objectives

By the end of the course, the student should:

1. Grasp the fundamental ways in which modern political philosophy departs from the assumptions that guided classical political thought, the reasons for, and the consequences of that departure.
2. Identify the origins of contemporary political opinions, values, and/or beliefs, as well as the reasoning behind the cultivation of those things.
3. Be capable of producing a *polished* argumentative paper that both takes a position on a question and also defends it in the face of a counterargument.

### 1.3 Note to the Student

The authors that we will read this semester are slippery. Be sure to keep an eye on the political implications of the philosophical notions espoused by each. Do not trust them when they draw a conclusion for you! By the end of the course, the philosophic foundations of the contemporary political crisis – and it *is* a crisis – should become more clear. If the way out of this crisis does not become more clear, you should at least be able to identify the landscape in which we live and know the pitfalls we must avoid lest we suffer them.

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<sup>1</sup>In addition to our Blackboard site, I will host relevant course information on my personal website. It is easier to navigate, monitor, and update. In accordance with FERPA, however, no grade information or material that may identify students will be posted here.

## 2 Course Information

### 2.1 Required Texts

1. Bacon, Francis. *New Atlantis*. Jerry Weinberger, ed. (ISBN: 978-0882951263).  
\* Amazon (\$11.35): <http://amzn.to/1zsfbWx>
2. Bacon, Francis *New Organon*. Cambridge (ISBN: 978-0521564830)  
\* Amazon (\$36.16): <http://amzn.to/1zsfjW2>
3. Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Hackett (ISBN: 978-0872201774).  
\* Amazon (\$14.64): <http://amzn.to/1zsf9hp>  
\* e-Book (secure PDF) from eBooks.com (\$14.95): <http://bit.ly/1zsgd4M>
4. Locke, John. *Two Treatises on Government*. Cambridge (ISBN: 978-0521357302).  
\* Amazon (\$17.76): <http://amzn.to/1zsf0dL>
5. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. Cambridge (ISBN: 978-0521424455)  
\* Amazon (\$20.74): <http://amzn.to/1zsgqFf>
6. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Portable Nietzsche*. Portable Library. (ISBN: 978-0140150629).  
\* Amazon (\$16.38): <http://amzn.to/1J3EvC2>

These editions have been carefully selected to maximize both readability in the case of translations and utility. *You must have these editions!* NOTE: If you find these available as an e-Text, you must be sure the pagination matches the print edition! Kindle books do not contain consistent pagination markers that I'm aware of.

### 2.2 The Internet!

**Blackboard:** Our course has a Blackboard site which can be accessed at <http://learn.unt.edu>. On Bb, you will find a current electronic copy of the syllabus, your grades, and links to the daily reading quizzes (discussed below).

**My Website:** In addition to the Bb site, I will host course-relevant information on the appropriate page on [my website](#) (url listed above), which is much easier to access, check, and update. There is a discussion board for students, web-links of note, and periodic updates to post events or other things that may be of interest to students of this course. No identifying student information will be posted here in accordance with federal law.

**Your Email:** Periodically I may email the course. I do this through Blackboard, which uses your university-affiliated email address by default. I expect that you receive these communications from me and take them as read. That means one of two things: (1) you must regularly check your university email account, even if it is not your primary email account; or (2) you must change the email address registered in your Blackboard profile to match the email address that you *do* use. The latter can be done by logging into Bb, selecting the dropdown menu from your name in the upper-right-hand corner and then navigating to settings>personal information>edit personal information.

At least I am under the impression that (2) works. The safer alternative, however, is (3): set up forwarding rules in your EagleConnect account so your UNT email is forwarded to the email address that you use. (Instructions on forwarding EagleConnect [here](#); or you can set it up to work with IMAP/POP3 including *within* Gmail, instructions [here](#).)

### 3 Course Structure and Grades

#### Assignments & Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows.

Percent of Total Grade	Assignment	Due Date
13%	Reading Quizzes (on Blackboard)	<i>Daily</i> (each <u>class</u> day)
10%	Short Paper (2-4 pages)	February 10
15%	Midterm Exam	March 12
15%	Midterm Paper (4-6 pages)	March 24
25%	Final Paper (5-8 pages)	April 28
25%	Final Exam	May 14 @ 1:30–3:30
<b>103%</b>	<b>Total</b>	

UNT grading scale: (>90% = A, 80-99% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, <60% = F).

#### 3.1 Extra Credit

You will notice that you may receive up to 103%. The course is scored on a traditional 100-point scale. “Extra credit” is, therefore, built into the grading system. No additional extra credit will be given. No exceptions. If you have difficulty with the course in any way whatsoever, please seek assistance from me *as soon as possible* so that we can work together to turn things around early.

#### 3.2 Attendance

Attendance will be taken in this course. Regular attendance is highly correlated with success. I want students to be successful! Although not incorporated into your grade insofar as attendance does not “earn” points, you will be penalized 2% on your final grade for every course meeting beyond three that you miss. These three absences are intended to account for sickness, car trouble, family emergencies, etc. You do not need to notify me of these things. 2% is substantial, though attendance is also a substantial portion of your commitment to this course. Again: **You may miss three meetings. No more. For each absence over three, 2% will be deducted from your final grade.**

University sponsored activities (with written note from adviser or coach) are exempt from this rule. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange for proper notification of university sponsored absences. These events are scheduled in advance, so please give advance notification.

#### 3.3 Other Grading Business

Any grade dispute must be made within 2 weeks of return receipt of the assignment. After 2 weeks, grade disputes will **not** be heard or acknowledged.

I am bound by federal law (FERPA) to not discuss grades with anyone other than the student and, then, to only do so in person. I will not violate federal law. Grade questions must be made in person. Questions asked via email or telephone will be neither answered nor acknowledged.

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### 4 Assignment Descriptions

#### 4.1 Exams

This course will have 2 in-class exams. These will be taken in a bluebook that will be provided. *Do not bring your own bluebook.* No exam will be distributed after the first exam is turned in. No exceptions.

Exams will require that students be familiar with the text enough to answer general questions. You should be able to speak in detail about the question, provide a summary of the author’s view(s) on it, and the rationale for those views. Exams do *not* require the student to produce work of the same detail as the accompanying paper. That is why the midterm and final are divided into both an exam and a paper – depth and breadth, respectively.

**Make-up Policy:** Granting make-up exams will be *entirely* at the instructor's discretion. Requests for make-up exams must be made *in person* and be accompanied by a valid reason. No request for a make-up exam will be heard after one week past the exam date. Requests for make-ups *prior* to missing the exam are quite obviously preferred and will receive a more favorable hearing.

## 4.2 Paper Assignments

Students will be given a handout with prompts approximately two weeks prior to the due date of each paper. Page limits are to be followed. Learning how to write clearly and with concision is a must. Papers should **not** be a "book report." Your first task is to *answer the question*. You should demonstrate your understanding of the question and present your evidence from the text in a clear manner. We will talk more about this when we hand out paper topics.

Papers must be turned in at the beginning of class on the date that they are due *and* submitted to turnitin.com (see below for log-in details; do *not* use Turnitin via Blackboard). As long as the paper is submitted at the beginning of class (hard-copy), it will be considered on time. No grade will be released, however, until your paper is submitted to turnitin.com. Papers must be stapled and given a descriptive title. Failure to include either of those things may result in grade reduction.

Late papers will be docked 10% for every calendar day late. (The first calendar day runs from the end of class on the due date through the end of the next day.)

### Turnitin.com Information

<b>Course ID:</b>	9363939
<b>Course Password:</b>	Leviathan! (case sensitive)

## 4.3 Reading Quizzes

There will be a reading quiz for each day of class. These must be completed by the beginning of the class in which the material will be discussed.

Each quiz will consist of a few questions designed to measure familiarity with the text. You will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz once it is opened. *You may not save and return to it later.* Plan accordingly. You will have one attempt. This means that you should read the text *before* opening the quiz. The time allotted is more than enough to find and check answers if you are familiar with the text. It is not, however, enough time to search for answers having not yet read the text.

**Make-up Policy:** No reading quiz may be made up. They will be available in advance of the due date. You should take advantage of this early availability.

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## 5 Miscellaneous Information

### 5.1 Contact

The preferred contact method for the instructor **in person** during office hours. I am happy to schedule appointments outside of scheduled office hours if needed. You will need to plan ahead to schedule these alternative meeting times.

My office telephone is the second best option. I will answer it during office hours and if I am in my office during non-office hours. You should try this before emailing me. You should *not*, however, leave a voicemail. You may also try to call my home number during reasonable hours (940.535.7171). You may leave a message there if I do not answer. Please only use this for course-related inquiries! Note that this is a landline and, thus, will not receive text messages – only voice calls.

## 5.2 Email

If you are unable to speak with me in person or via telephone, you should resort to using email. There are, however, rules for email which I list below:

1. Include your name, course number, an appropriate salutation, and a direct question. I should know to whom I am responding and what the response need entail. I will not respond to emails that lack these things.
2. Check the syllabus for an answer to your question. If your question is directly addressed on the syllabus, I will not respond.
3. Do not count on a response over the weekend or, generally speaking, an immediate response. I generally do not email outside of the work week, and will not respond Friday night or Saturday. That said, I do make every effort to respond in a timely manner, usually within a day.
4. No texting language. (I dnt no wat ur tlkng bout n wll nt strggle 2 figr it out. kthnxbai!)
5. If you have not received an email response from me after a reasonable amount of time – and your email does not fall into the above categories – you should email me again as a reminder. If a day or two has gone by without a response from me, it is likely that something happened and a reminder is more than appropriate.

## 5.3 Classroom Conduct

There will be no tolerance for disruptive behavior. Students are to be attentive and awake in class, respectful of the instructor, and especially respectful fellow students. Texting, online chatting, surfing the internet, carrying on a conversation with those around you, etc. will not be tolerated. These things are a distraction and no one student will be permitted to distract another. Students who do not display appropriate conduct will be asked to leave class. Coffee, water, and other beverages are fine, but please do not eat in class.

## 5.4 Academic Integrity (Cheating & Plagiarism)

**Cheating:** Absolutely no form of cheating whatsoever will be tolerated. The UNT catalogue states that cheating includes but is not limited to: (1) depending on sources that are unauthorized and/or without proper citation, (2) unauthorized assistance on exams/assignments, (3) possession of faculty or staff's academic material.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism includes but is not limited to: (1) a direct quotation or paraphrase of uncited material, whether intentional or owing to neglect; (2) use of work done by another individual, even if done expressly for you; or (3) use of a paper or other material submitted for another course.

Cheating and/or plagiarism will be treated severely and will, at least, result in filing a report with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility, and failure of the assignment and/or the course. The OSRR may take further disciplinary action.

If anything about this is unclear, or if you are uncertain about anything, ask.

## 5.5 Religious Observances

I will be happy to recognize and excuse religious holidays and observances that conflict with class assignments or meetings provided that I am given advance warning. Notification is the student's responsibility. (See UNT Policy 15.2.5)

## 5.6 ADA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA)

to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, *ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible* in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.

Students who qualify for accommodation may opt to not use it. Though, should a student later wish to take advantage of their accommodation, having the paperwork taken care of already is very helpful.

Note that students must obtain a *new letter of accommodation for every semester* and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## **5.7 UNT Program for Student Success:**

UNT has recently developed a program to help students be successful in coursework and life. Their advice consists of six points: (1) show up, (2) find support, (3) take control, (4) be prepared, (5) get involved, and (6) be persistent. I fully subscribe to their admonition. For more information on this program, please see this website: <http://learningcenter.unt.edu/asp>

## **5.8 Course Drop Information**

See schedule at <http://www.unt.edu/catalogs/2014-15/calendar.htm>

## 6 Reading Schedule

Readings listed are to be completed by the date on which they are listed. This is the material that we will discuss in class on that day and, therefore, you should already have it read.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is also the case, that the reading quiz to be completed on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, for example, will be over the material listed on the same line as January 22<sup>nd</sup>. NOTE: Reading quizzes are not listed as "due", but they are due every day by the beginning of class.

### 6.1 Proto-Liberalism, A Radical Transition

#### Politics of Hope & Change: Or, A New Hope (Bacon)

Date	Reading	Due
January 22	<i>New Atlantis</i> , pp. 35-64	
January 27	<i>New Atlantis</i> , pp. 65-83	
January 29	<i>New Organon</i> , Preface and Aphorisms 1-3, 10-19, 27, 35, 38-68, 121-122, and 129 <i>The Great Instauration</i> , pp. 1-17	
February 3	Bacon Summary and Review	

#### Politics of Comfort and Safety: Or, Nature Did a Bad, Bad, Thing (Hobbes)

Date	Reading	Due
February 5	Dedicatory Letter; Author's Introduction; Part I, chapters 1, 4-5 (pages 1-7, 15-27)	
February 10	Part IV, Chapter 46; Part I, chapters 6, 10 (pages 453-468; 27-35, 50-57)	<b>Short Paper due</b>
February 12	Part I, chapters 11-14 (pages 57-88)	
February 17	Part I, chapters 15-16; Part II, chapters 17-18, 21 (pages 89-118, 136-145)	
February 19	Part II, chapters 26, 29-20; "A Review and Conclusion" (pages 174-181, 219-231, 489-497)	
February 24	Hobbes Summary and Review	

### 6.2 Development of Contemporary Political Life: The Birth of Liberalism

#### Liberalism, Law, and Individual Rights (Locke)

Date	Reading	Due
February 26	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Treatise</i> : Title page; Preface; Chapters 1, 4-6, and skim 9 (pages 136-143, 156-194, 202-216)	
March 3	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Treatise</i> : Chapters 1-4 (pages 267-285)	
March 5	<del><i>2<sup>nd</sup> Treatise</i>: Chapters 5-6 (pages 285-318)</del>	<i>Cancelled</i>
March 10	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Treatise</i> : Chapters 5-6 (pages 285-318) & Exam review	
March 12	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
March 17	Spring Break	
March 19	Spring Break	
March 24	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Treatise</i> : Chapters 7-10 (pages 318-355)	
March 26	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Treatise</i> : Chapters 11-17 (pages 355-198)	
March 31	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Treatise</i> : Chapters 18-19 (pages 398-428) – Review	<b>Midterm Paper due</b>

<sup>2</sup>The following schedule is tentative and subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced and the syllabus updated to reflect the changes on Blackboard.

## 6.3 Critiques

### First Critique: Critique of the Enlightenment (Rousseau)

NOTE: Rousseau might tell you that reading his footnotes is optional. Don't believe him! It is not. You should read his footnotes in addition to the body text of the assignment. These footnotes contain substantive information that we will address.

Date	Reading	Due
April 2	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Discourse</i> pp. 1-28	
April 7	"Last Reply" & "preface to <i>Narcissus</i> " (pp. 63-85, 92-107)	
April 9	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Discourse</i> (pp. 114-144)	
April 14	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Discourse</i> (pp. 145-171)	
April 16	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Discourse</i> (pp. 171-188)	
April 21	Rousseau Summary and Review	

### Second Critique: Critique of the Enlightenment (Nietzsche)

Date	Reading	Due
April 23	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> , Part 1, Zarathustra's Prologue (pp. 121-137)	<b>Final Paper due</b>
April 27	<i>Thus Spoke</i> Part I, aphorisms 3, 6-7, 9-11	
April 30	<i>Thus Spoke</i> Part I, aphorisms 14-16; Part II, aphorisms 5, 7, 12	
May 5	Nietzsche TBA	
May 7	Nietzsche Summary and Review & Course Review	

## 6.4 Final Exam

May 14: 1:30-3:30 in Sage 329