

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

Political Science (POLS) 327

Fall 2013, 4 Units

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| <i>Instructor:</i> | Prof. Andrew Dilts | <i>Class Meetings:</i> |
| <i>Office:</i> | University Hall 4134 | MWF, 2:00p–2:50p |
| <i>Office Hours:</i> | MW 4:30-5:30p, F 12:30-1:30p http://dilts.org/officehours | St. Robert's Hall 022 |
| <i>Email:</i> | andrew.dilts@lmu.edu | <i>Course Website:</i> |
| <i>Phone:</i> | 310.338.5165 | https://mylmuconnect.lmu.edu/ |

COURSE INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION: This is a survey course of late 20th and early 21st century political theory. We will cover a range of theoretical approaches in contemporary political theory, including: (1) social welfare liberalism, (2) libertarianism, (3) civic and humanist republicanism, (4) identitarian critiques and critical theory, (5) post-structuralism, and (6) queer/trans* theory. Throughout the semester, we will pay special attention to two constellations of questions centered on the ideas of “freedom” and “critique.” What do we mean by freedom? Who is the “free agent” or “free subject” of political life? What is the relation between political freedom and freedom in social, economic, and moral spheres? Secondly, what is critique? What is the object of critique? What grounds critique? What role does critical analysis play in political theory? What does it mean to be a critical political thinker in our daily lives and in our multiplicity? What, in the end, is the relationship between freedom and critique?

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION: Loyola Marymount University’s mission is to encourage student learning, to educate the whole person, and to serve faith and promote justice. The Department of Political Science pursues this mission by encouraging and challenging students to be perceptive observers of political life in all its variety and richness; to seek a systematic understanding of the causes and consequences of political institutions, policies, and behavior; to develop a moral and ethical perspective that allows them to critically evaluate actions, institutions, and policies; and to prepare themselves for a life of active citizenship and involvement in creating a more just and humane world. “Contemporary Political Theory” serves these university and departmental missions by reinforcing on students knowledge of political theory, which draws a variety of moral values and political realities into a relationship of dialogue, challenge, compromise, and conflict. The course will serve to equip students with sharper analytical tools, and hopefully also greater moral sensitivity in perceiving and confronting the political dimensions of the world around them.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will learn about key movements and thinkers in contemporary political theory.
2. Students will dramatically expand their understanding of *freedom* as a normative and descriptive idea in political theory.
3. Students will reflect on the method of political theory, and in particular, on the role that *critique* plays in contemporary political theory.
4. Students will improve their critical, argumentative, and interpretive writing skills.
5. Students will improve their research and information literacy skills.
6. Most importantly, students will develop their critical thinking skills and apply them to their political and social lives, allowing them to grow as persons and as reflective citizens.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: Students should have completed POLS 220 and be familiar with the history of political thought. Preference will be given to students who have taken some combination of POLS 323, 324, 325, and 326.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is a 4-unit, upper-division course, that carries a CORE writing flag. In particular, it has **intensive reading requirements** and you will be held accountable for that reading with frequent writing assignments; it will require **multi-draft writing** throughout the semester; it will substantively focus attention on **methodological training** in political theory (through its emphasis on *critique* as a practice); it includes a **significant individual mentoring component**. To reflect these ends, the course has the following requirements:

- (1) You will submit **write a substantial research paper** during the semester. This paper must be formatted and submitted properly to receive full credit, as documented in the course paper requirements on the course website.
- (2) You will submit multiple drafts of this paper throughout the semester, both to the instructor and to your peers. You will take part in a formal **peer-review** session, editing and commenting on two of your colleagues' paper drafts.
- (3) You will prepare an **annotated bibliography** supporting your research paper, turned in and updated a multiple points throughout the semester.
- (4) You must schedule an **individual mentoring meeting** with the instructor **no later than 6th week** to discuss your planed term paper.
- (5) You will submit an **abstract and detailed outline** of your research paper **no later than 9th week**.
- (6) You will be held accountable to each other for the substantial course reading by **submitting a written reading question twenty-four hours before** each class meeting. Your reading questions must demonstrate (a) completion of the reading assignment and (b) thought and reflection on the reading assignment. The grading criteria for these questions are discussed in detail below. You should make it a practice read each others questions before the class meets.
- (7) You must **attend class** and be an **active participant** in discussion. Because this is a text-driven course, you must always bring a hard-copy of the day's reading to class and you must be prepared to publicly present your reading question in class. If you are more than 5 minutes late to class, you will be marked as absent. If you do not bring your copy of the reading with you to class, you will be marked as absent.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

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| Term paper: | 40% |
| Peer Review: | 20% |
| Paper Abstract & Outline: | 10% |
| Annotated Bibliography: | 10% |
| Reading Questions: | 10% |
| Attendance: | 5% |
| Participation: | 5% |

GRADING SCALE:

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|----|--------|
| A | 93-100 |
| A- | 90-92 |
| B+ | 88-89 |
| B | 83-87 |
| B- | 80-82 |
| C+ | 78-79 |
| C | 73-77 |
| C- | 70-72 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | 0-59 |

****Any student who receives a failing grade for attendance and participation will receive a failing grade for the class. Any student who has not turned in all paper drafts will receive a failing grade for the class.****

READING QUESTIONS: A good reading question is one that directly and explicitly engages with the text. Your question should **cite** a specific passage, term, or concept that you are puzzled about, and it should offer your interpretation of the passage at hand. It should be focused on something that genuinely puzzles you in the reading, and which you can probably assume that others find puzzling or confusing as well.

You will submit one question per class meeting. Questions must be **submitted twenty-four (24) hours before** class meets. Late questions will be accepted for partial credit. Questions posted after class meets will receive no credit. Questions will be graded on a three point scale: Excellent = 2, Satisfactory (or late) = 1,

Unacceptable (or not submitted) = 0.

In the unlikely event that students are not keeping up with the reading, the instructor reserves the right to add short reading quizzes without notice.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE: Timely, prepared, and engaged attendance is required. Absences will only be excused in the case of illness or emergency. If there is a conflict between course participation and religious observance, please contact me in advance. It is not necessary to obtain prior approval from the instructor when missing a meeting is unavoidable, but note that students bear the *entire responsibility* for the decision to miss class and for whatever effect that may have on their course grade and their learning experience. Repeated absences and lateness will directly affect the discussion and attendance portion of a student's grade, as detailed in the course requirements section. Participation in class discussions will be evaluated on quality, quantity, and appropriateness of student questions and comments. Please note: it is just as possible to talk *too much* as it is to talk too little in class. Likewise, there is such a thing as active listening, and yes, your professors are capable of distinguishing this from passive listening. If you are worried about your the level and/or quality of your participation, the best thing to do is to come to office hours, where the professor can give you direct feedback throughout the semester, rather than at the end (when it is too late to change your behavior!).

RESPECT FOR OTHERS: Given the sensitive nature of the topics explored, a spirit of toleration and civility is crucial for classroom discourse. Students should respectfully listen to others' critiques and articulate responses in a thoughtful manner.

LATE PENALTIES: Assignments are accepted when they are due. Assignments must be turned in at the designated time and place. Failure to turn in an assignment on time is unacceptable except with the prior agreement of the instructor (which will be given only in exceptional circumstances). Except in documented cases of illness or emergency, a penalty of **up to a full letter grade** may be assessed for each day (24hrs) the assignment is late. When assignments are submitted electronically, this includes weekend days.

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC HONESTY: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter. Proven plagiarism of any kind may result in automatic failure of the course, and will be referred to the University for further disciplinary action without exception. I reserve the right to submit your electronic document to plagiarism detection websites if necessary. It is **never** permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including the Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. 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 2013-2014. It is not permissible to turn in work for a class that has been previously submitted in part, or in whole, for credit in another course. Any doubts of questions related to this policy should be brought to your instructor as soon as they arise and before you turn in the work. You should also refer to the additional statement on academic honesty in the writing requirements posted on the course website.

GENDER NEUTRAL & GENDER SPECIFIC LANGUAGE, NAMES & 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, *she* and *he*, *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. 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.

Where this is not possible (either because the claim you are making is gendered, or because you are relying on a text that uses gender-exclusive pronouns), you must explain why this is the case. Usually, this requires no more than a footnote (e.g. Rawls uses "he" or "mankind" as universals. Add a footnote at your first usage of his language, directly quoted or not, and say that you are following Rawls' usage here, and do not mean to

endorse his usage). You aren't necessarily required to solve these problems, but you are required to make note these problems and signal your awareness of them.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION: At times I will communicate with the entire class using campus email systems, so it is essential that you regularly check your lion.lmu.edu email address or forward your lion account email to your preferred email address. I encourage you to contact me via email with questions about the course, the material we cover in class, and assignments.

You are expected to be professional in all communication with the instructor. All email communication should be in complete sentences with a proper salutation and conclusion. Treat the email more as a letter and less like a text message. Include a comprehensible subject heading (e.g. "POLS 327 paper question"), address and sign the email, making sure to identify what class you are in (usually instructors are teaching more than one class) and explain clearly what it is that you are inquiring about. Failure to do these will guarantee that you will not get a response. Also, unless I've explicitly stated otherwise, I generally check my faculty email only during normal business hours (more or less from 7am to 6pm).

Finally, here is a short list of things to which **I will not respond:**

- Questions that can be answered by checking the course syllabus or looking online.
- A request to know **if** you missed anything during an absence. (The answer is yes.)
- A request to know **what** you missed during an absence. (Instead of asking this through email, take the appropriate next steps to catch up: ask a classmate for notes, meet with me in my office hours, etc.)

TECHNOLOGY USE DURING CLASS: You are welcome to bring a computer or tablet to class provided that it enables you to engage *more* in the class discussion. You may also use a computer or tablet to help you take notes. Email, Twitter, Facebook, or anything at all that is not directly related to the *conversation* we are having will not be tolerated. Using a computer in this way during a seminar is rude and disrespectful to your classmates. **If you need to use a computer in class, you will be expected to post copies of your class notes on the class website immediately following the class session to share with others.** If you are not willing to do this, do not bring a computer with you.

Please note that E-Reserve texts should be *printed* and brought to class. Electronic/digital editions of the texts are not acceptable for this course.

There is no reason to use your phone. It should be **turned off and put away**. If your phone rings during class, be prepared for me to answer it for you, and you will be marked absent for the session.

OFFICE HOURS: I look forward to meeting with you all during regularly scheduled office hours, or by appointment when meeting during office hours is not possible. Students who would like to discuss issues raised in the course further than class discussions will permit, or students who encounter difficulties with the course or the assigned material, are especially encouraged to attend office hours. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule office hour appointments in advance and to keep those appointments promptly.

ACCOMMODATION: Loyola Marymount University is committed to equality in educational opportunity. 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.

TENTATIVE NATURE OF THE SYLLABUS: If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications distributed in class or posted on MYLMU Connect

REQUIRED TEXTS

These texts will all be available for purchase from the bookstore. You are welcome to purchase them wherever you please or borrow them from the library, but *please use these editions of the texts* so that we are all literally on the same page during class. You will be expected to come to class with the text in hand. Some readings will be made available via electronic reserve in PDF format. You must **print** hard copies of these readings, i.e. do not bring your computer or e-reader in order to refer to the texts.

- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition (Belknap, 1999), ISBN: 0674000781
- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1977), ISBN: 9780465097203.
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago, 1998), ISBN: 9780226025988.
- Iris Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 1990), ISBN: 9780691023151.
- Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Cornell, 1997), ISBN: 9780801484636.
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (Vintage, 1990), ISBN: 9780679724698.
- Dean Spade, *Normal Life* (South End Press, 2011), ISBN: 9780896087965.
- Michael Harvey, *Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* (Hackett, 2003), ISBN: 9780872205734.
- Stanley Chodorow, *Writing a Successful Research Paper* (Hackett, 2011), ISBN: 9781603844406.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

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| Week 1: | What is Contemporary Political Theory? |
| M Aug. 26: | Course Introduction / Giorgio Agamben, “What is the Contemporary?” (E-reserve) |
| W Aug. 28: | NO CLASS - Instructor Absence |
| F Aug. 30: | NO CLASS - Instructor Absence |
| | *** During this week, read Chodorow, <i>Writing a Successful Research Paper</i> , Introduction & Chapters 1-3, and familiarize yourself with Harvey’s <i>Nuts and Bolts of College Writing</i> .*** |
| Week 2: | Welfare Liberalism 1: Rawls |
| M Sep. 2: | LABOR DAY, NO CLASS |
| T Sep. 3: | ***Research Paper Proposal Due by 5pm.*** |
| W Sep. 4: | John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §1-4, 11-13. |
| F Sep. 6: | John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§16, 17, 20-26. |
| Week 3: | Welfare Liberalism 2: Rawls |
| M Sep. 9: | John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 43, 44 |
| W Sep. 11: | John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§65-67, 77, 78, 82, 85, 86 |
| F Sep. 13: | Will Kymlicka, “Liberal Equality” in <i>Contemporary Political Theory</i> (E-Reserve). |
| Week 4: | Libertarianism 1: Nozick |
| M Sep. 16: | Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i> , pp. 1-20 (top), 22 (bottom)-53. |
| W Sep. 18: | Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i> , pp. 54-62 (middle), 65-91 (top), 93 (top)-119. |
| F Sep. 20: | Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i> , pp. 149-164, 167-182, 189-209 (top), 228-231. |
| Week 5: | Libertarianism 2: Nozick |
| M Sep. 23: | Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State and Utopia</i> , pp. 297 – 299 (middle), 307-334. |
| T Sep. 24: | ***Updated Paper Proposal and Bibliography Due by 5pm*** |
| W Sep. 25: | Will Kymlicka, “Libertarianism” in <i>Contemporary Political Theory</i> (E-Reserve). |
| F Sep. 27: | G.A. Cohen, “Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: how patterns preserve liberty” (E-reserve). |

- Week 6: Neo- “Republicanism” 1: Arendt**
M Sep. 30: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Prologue & Chapter 1, pp. 1-21
W Oct. 2: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapter 2, pp. 22-78.
F Oct. 4: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 79-174.
- Week 7: Neo- “Republicanism” 2: Arendt**
M Oct. 7: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapter 5, pp. 175-247.
W Oct. 9: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapter 6, pp. 248-325.
F Oct. 11: NO CLASS, AUTUMN DAY
- Week 8: Identitarian Critiques / Critical Theory 1: Young**
M Oct. 14: NO CLASS - Instructor Absence / Chodorow, *Writing a Successful Research Paper*, Chapters 4-5
W Oct. 16: Iris Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Introduction, Chapters 1-2, pp. 3-65.
F Oct. 18: Iris Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Chapters 3-4; pp. 66-121.
- Week 9:**
M Oct. 21: Iris Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Chapters 5-6; pp. 122-191.
W Oct. 23: Iris Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Chapters 7-8; pp. 192-256.
F Oct. 25: NO CLASS - Instructor Absence
****Abstract, Outline, and Complete Bibliography due 5:00pm****
- Week 10: Identitarian Critiques 2: Mills**
M Oct. 28: Class attends Bellarmine Forum Panel, details TBA.
W Oct. 30: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Introduction and Overview.
F Nov. 1: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Chapter 2 (Details) & Chapter 3 (Naturalized Merits).
- Week 11: Post-Structuralism 1: Foucault**
M Nov. 4: Robert Gooding-Williams, “Race, Multiculturalism, and Democracy” (E-Reserve)
W Nov. 6: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-50. (skim pp. 51-73).
F Nov. 8: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, pp. 76-133.
- Week 12 Post-Structuralism 2: Foucault / Butler**
M Nov. 11: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, pp. 76-133. (reread; this is a difficult but important section)
W Nov. 13: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, pp. 133-159.
F Nov. 15: Judith Butler, *Precarious Lives*, “Indefinite Detention” (E-Reserve).
- Week 13: Post-Structuralism 3 / Queer & Trans* Theory: Spade**
M Nov. 18: Judith Butler, *Precarious Lives*, “Violence, Mourning, Politics” (E-Reserve).
W Nov. 20: Dean Spade, *Normal Life*, Preface, Intro, Ch. 1 (7-78); Susan Stryker, “An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts” (E-Reserve).
F Nov. 22: Dean Spade, *Normal Life*, Chs. 2-4 (79-170).
- Week 14: Queer & Trans* Theory 2: Spade**
M Nov. 25: Dean Spade, *Normal Life*, Chs. 5-6, Conclusion (171-228).
T Nov. 26: ****First Draft of Paper Due 5:00pm via email****
W Nov. 27: NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break
F Nov. 29: NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break
- Week 15:**
M Dec. 2: Peer Review Day 1
W Dec. 4: Peer Review Day 2

*****Final Paper Due, Monday December 9, by 5pm*****