

**Fundamentals of Political Theory  
GOVT 780**

Fall 2020

T 3:30pm-6:00pm EST

Zoom Link: <https://georgetown.zoom.us/j/95568804347>

Professor Stefan Eich

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Office hours: Mondays 1pm - 3pm (zoom)

Sign up here: <https://calendly.com/prof-stefan-eich/office-hours>

### **Course Description**

This seminar explores key texts and arguments in modern political thought at a level appropriate for graduate students. Our thematic focus in the seminar will be the historical study of political theory and the complex relation of such a history of political thought to both the modern state and to capitalism. Since the middle of the nineteenth century a particular mode of political thought emerged that engaged with contemporary politics through the medium of historically informed reflection about it. This seminar studies this historical development, engages itself with some key canonical texts, and points toward some of the difficulties and blind spots involved in doing so. Pursuing this history of histories of political thought opens up new ways of understanding the dynamic modern relationship between philosophy, state, and economy.

The seminar is structured in three parts: 1) The first part offers a thematic introduction to the history of political thought by way of five seminal interpreters: Friedrich Meinecke, Hannah Arendt, John Pocock, Albert Hirschman, and Michel Foucault. 2) The second part is organized around the close analysis of six canonical texts. We will read these works carefully and put them in conversation with later interpreters in order to understand their conceptual strategies and argumentative resources. 3) The third part takes a step back again by turning to several unresolved questions concerning the relation of the history of political thought to crisis, the global, and the future.

### **Requirements**

1. Attend class every week, having done the readings and be prepared to discuss them.
2. Submit weekly reading responses to the class ahead of the seminar.
3. Write two short essays throughout the semester:
  - a. **Conversation paper** placing 2-3 readings in conversation with each other (c.2000 words).
  - b. **Short analysis paper** explaining an individual passage (c.1000 words).
4. By the end of the semester: Write a **Research Proposal** that links the course readings and discussion to a specific research question in any area of political science (c.5000 words).

### **Remote Learning Experience**

Due to COVID-19 our classroom experience will be different from any other semester. We will be holding our meeting over zoom on Tuesdays at 3:30pm-6:30pm EST and we will experiment with different ways to structure our time in order to make the course content just as engaging, rigorous, and hopefully exciting.

Our zoom link throughout the semester will be: <https://georgetown.zoom.us/j/91439998293>.

## Office Hours

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me under [stefan.eich@georgetown.edu](mailto:stefan.eich@georgetown.edu) if you have any questions, either organizational ones or concerning the course content. For more in depth discussions, please sign up to my zoom office hours here: <https://calendly.com/prof-stefan-eich/office-hours>. Once you have signed up for a slot, you will also receive a confirmation with the zoom link (<https://georgetown.zoom.us/j/2623247646>).

## Technical Support

All Georgetown students have 24/7 access to technical support for any questions related to Canvas, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. Also check out the Canvas Student Guide which has detailed answers to many questions: <https://guides.instructure.com/m/4212>. An overview of Canvas resources for Georgetown students can be found here: <http://canvas.georgetown.edu/student-resources>

More generally, Georgetown's University Information Services (UIS) offers tech support here: <https://help.georgetown.edu/support/home>. You can also reach UIS directly at: [help@georgetown.edu](mailto:help@georgetown.edu)

## Background Readings

If you are looking for more background readings, consider the following three, very different texts:

- Michael Oakeshott, *Lectures in the History of Political Thought*, ed. Terry Nardin (Imprint, 2007).
- Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- Quentin Skinner, "The Sovereign State: A Genealogy," in: *Sovereignty in Fragments*, ed. Hent Kalmo and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 26-46. (available on Canvas).
- John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

## Books (highly recommend you buy these!)

I will be providing PDF copies of all the readings on Canvas. However, I highly recommend buying copies of the texts below. Beyond the class, these books reward returning to in a few years as you work on own research.

Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and its Place in History* [1924], trans. Douglas Scott (Yale, 1957).

- Several editions and reprints available at [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com) for \$15-20 (including the 1998 paperback by Transaction Publishers).

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, with a foreword by Danielle Allen (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).

- Or any other used edition. I have the 1998 second edition with an Introduction by Margaret Canovan which has the same text and pagination as the more recent edition.

Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interest: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before its Triumph* [1977] (Princeton Classics Edition, 2013).

- Or any other used edition. They all have the same pagination.

J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* [1975] (Princeton Classics Edition, 2016).

- Notice that Pocock added a new afterword in 2003 to the second paperback edition. This is not included in editions prior to 2003 but is included in the 2016 Princeton Classics Edition.

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (University of Chicago Press).

Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford World's Classics).

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge University Press, 1996) OR Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan. With selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*, ed. Edwin Curley (Hackett, 1994).

- The definitive critical scholarly edition is Noel Malcolm's in three volume: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford: Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, 2014). It is expensive though, even as a paperback.

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, two vols. (Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith: Liberty Fund).

- For scholarly citations, the standard issue is now the Glasgow edition in two volumes, reprinted in paperback by the Liberty Fund. If you are looking for an unabbreviated edition in one volume get the following one: Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (University of Chicago Press, 1977).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. John T. Scott (The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford University Press, 1977).

- This translation is still the standard, though it is far from perfect. Terry Pinkard's recent translation is much better and worth the investment: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard (Cambridge, 2018).

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. I., trans. Ben Fowkes (Penguin, 1976).

Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Hackett, 1994) OR *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton, 1978).

## Schedule<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Orientation (September 1)

Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation," *APSR*, Vol. 63, Issue 4 (December 1969), 1062-82.

Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" [1971], in: Charles Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 15-57.

Amia Srinivasan, "Genealogy, Epistemology and Worldmaking," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. cxix, Part 2 (July 2019), 127-156. [See especially section V.]

### 2. The State and the History of Political Thought (September 8)

Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and its Place in History* [*Die Idee der Staatsräson*, 1924], trans. Douglas Scott (London, 1957), 1-48, 207-23, 272-342, 343-91, 409-33.

Friedrich Meinecke, "Preliminary Remarks," in *Historism: The Rise of a New Historical Outlook* [*Die Entstehung des Historismus*, 1936], trans. J.E. Anderson (London, 1972), liv-lxi.

\*\* Robert A. Pois, *Friedrich Meinecke and German Politics in the Twentieth Century* (University of California Press, 1972), chapter 3 ("Statism Triumphant: Meinecke up to November 1918"), 12-25.

### 3. Political Action and the History of Political Thought (September 15)

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).

Hannah Arendt, "The Concept of History," in: Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1961).

\*\* Patchen Markell, "Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of *The Human Condition*," *College Literature* Vol. 38, No. 1 (Winter 2011), 15-44.

### 4. The Republican Tradition and the History of Political Thought (September 22)

J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975), vii-x, 49-80, 156-218, 462-552.

J.G.A. Pocock, "Afterword" to the second edition of *The Machiavellian Moment* (2003), 553-83.

\*\* Mira Siegelberg, "Things Fall Apart: J.G.A. Pocock, Hannah Arendt, and the Politics of Time," *Modern Intellectual History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2013), 109-34.

### 5. Capitalism and the History of Political Thought (September 29)

Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interest: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before its Triumph* (Princeton, 1977).

Albert Hirschman, "Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive, or Feeble?," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. XX (December 1982), 1463-84.

\*\* Jeremy Adelman, *Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman* (Princeton, 2013), Chapter 16.

### 6. Power and the History of Political Thought (October 6)

Michel Foucault, '*Society Must Be Defended*': *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, trans. David Macey (New York: 2003), lectures 2, 3, 5, 6 and course summary (23-64, 87-140, 265-72).

Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*, trans. Graham Burchell (2007), lectures 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, and course summary (87-134, 227-83, 311-67).

\*\* Pasquale Pasquino, "Political Theory of War and Peace: Foucault and the History of Modern Political Theory," *Economy and Society* 22 (1993), 77-88.

**\*\*\* First Writing Assignment due on Friday, October 9 \*\*\***

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<sup>1</sup> Two stars (\*\*) indicate optional readings that provide historical or theoretical context.

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## 7. Machiavelli (October 13)

Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* (1531), selections.  
Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1532).

Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3-22.

## 8. Hobbes (October 20)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (1651), Letter Dedicatory, The Introduction, Chapters 1-21, 29-32, 44-46.

Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), chapter 6 (“Imperfect People”), 69-84.

Lorenzo Rustighi, “Rethinking the sexual contract: The case of Thomas Hobbes,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol 46, Issue 3 (2020), 274-301.

## 9. Rousseau (October 27)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (1755).

Robert Wokler, “Perfectible Apes in Decadent Cultures: Rousseau’s Anthropology Revisited,” in: Wokler, *Rousseau, the Age of Enlightenment, and Their Legacies* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 1-28.

Pankaj Mishra, “How Rousseau Predicted Trump,” *The New Yorker* (July 2016).

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/08/01/how-rousseau-predicted-trump>

## 10. Smith (November 3) \*ELECTION DAY!\*

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Bk I (chapter 1), Bk III (entire).

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Book [tbd].

Istvan Hont, “Adam Smith and the Political Economy of the ‘Unnatural and Retrograde’ Order,” in: = Hont, *Jealousy of Trade* (Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2005), 354-388.

Dennis C. Rasmussen, “The Problem with Inequality, according to Adam Smith,” *The Atlantic* (June 2016).

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/06/the-problem-with-inequality-according-to-adam-smith/486071/>

## 11. Hegel (November 10)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), selections.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, “Introduction” to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837).

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1820), selections.

Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), Introduction to Part 1.

## 12. Marx (November 17)

Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (written 1844, only published posthumously in the 1930s).

Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" (1844).

Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. I (1867), Preface to the First Ed., Chapters 4 and 24.

William Clare Roberts, *Marx's Inferno. The Political Theory of Capital* (Princeton University Press, 2016), Introduction.

**\*\*\* Second Writing Assignment due at the latest on Friday, November 20 \*\*\***

**\* Thanksgiving Break \***

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## 13. Political Thought in the Face of the Global (December 1)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3-46, 237-255.

Jennifer Pitts, "Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 13 (2010), 211-235.

J.G.A. Pocock, "On the unglobality of contexts Cambridge methods and the history of political thought," *Global Intellectual History* (2019).

## 14. Political Thought in the Face of the Future (December 8)

Joel Wainwright and Geoff Mann, *Climate Leviathan: A Political Theory of Our Planetary Future* (New York: Verso, 2018), chapter 1.

Jamie Susskind, *Future Politics: Living Together in a World Transformed by Tech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), Introduction.

Katrina Forrester, "The problem of the future in postwar Anglo-American political philosophy," in Melissa Lane et al. (eds.), *Climatic Change: Special Issue on Historicizing Climate Change* (2016).

**\*\*\* Research Proposal due on Thursday, December 17 \*\*\***