Course Description
In this course, we will read a sampling of works from some of the most influential thinkers in the Western political theory tradition. Through these readings, we will discover what political theory is and why it is important for the study of politics. For this course, we will be most interested in studying how various thinkers define freedom and how they think that we can be free. These thinkers will be divided into three groups: “Freedom and Truth,” “Freedom and Economics,” and “Freedom and Government,” so they can “debate” the answers to three important clusters of questions: 1) Does the search for truth lead to freedom? If so, how can we arrange our political and/or governmental institutions to facilitate that search for truth, so that we can be free? If not, what does that mean for our political institutions; 2) How do various economic institutions lead toward or away from freedom? How can we build economic institutions that make us free? How will this affect our political and/or governmental institutions?; and 3) Can we construct governmental institutions that lead to freedom? If so, how? If not, then what other options do we have? We will tackle one of these cluster of questions for each section of the course.

Course Objectives
1) To read and understand some of the most important political texts in the Western political theory tradition
2) To understand how the different writers of these texts conceptualized freedom and to understand how these various conceptions compare to and contrast with each other
3) To connect these various concepts and ideas of freedom to the contemporary political scene
4) To better learn how to read complex texts and to comprehend the nuances within and among these difficult texts
5) To better learn how to communicate difficult ideas and how to translate them into political practice

Course Requirements
• Arrive on time to all lectures.
• Complete all readings on time.
• Bring the assigned readings to class.
• Come to class ready to participate. This requires you to not only read the assigned readings but also to think about them in advance of the lecture. Be prepared to answer questions about the text and to ask questions of your own. It may help to
take notes while you are reading, to underline key passages of the text, or to write
down questions that you still have about the text.
* Complete two midterm exams and one final exam.

**Course Approach and Methodology**

* This course is a hybrid of lecture and discussion. As you will see below, participation
  is a valuable component of political theory in general and of this course in
  particular. Though there will be complex parts of the readings that will require extra
  explication, I expect that you will be ready and able to discuss the material.
* I do not use PowerPoint. I do this by design. Active note taking is an important part
  of the learning process. Actively making decisions about what is important and how
  to structure the important material helps you to take charge of the material and to
  remember it better. I will, however, utilize the board to “write along with you.”
* Reading is an essential part of this course as well. It is also a skill, like writing, that
  must be constantly developed. As such, throughout the course, we will discuss how
  to read political theory texts. You will be expected to put these skills into practice as
  you read each class’s material.
* At the beginning of each new thinker, we will examine the life and times of the
  thinker. This will help us contextualize the theories that we are reading. While this
  is an important component of the course, all exams will ask you to engage with each
  thinker’s theories rather than with their biographies.
* Throughout the course, we will be interested in how the theories are put together as
  well as the content of the theories. That is, we will pay attention to how each thinker
  wrote, spoke, and argued.
* Even though these thinkers did not all live at the same time, they are still having a
  conversation with each other. As we will see, many of these thinkers read the earlier
  thinkers and are explicitly responding to them. As we go through the course, we
  want to reconstruct the conversation that these thinkers are having across the
  millennia. We want to see how these thinkers are interested in many of the same
  fundamental questions, and we want to see how and when they propose to add new
  questions.
* This also means that these thinkers are giving different answers to the same
  questions. At the end of the course, we will not have a single answer as to what
  freedom or justice is, for example. We will want to see the multiple answers that are
  given, to see how they are different from each other and why those differences
  matter, and begin to make decisions about which answers are most convincing.
* As we do this, we should start questioning each of the thinker’s ideas. However, we
  should also let each thinker interrogate us. Just as any theory could be wrong, our
  own thinking could be wrong. Before rejecting any theory, we should see if it is
  instead our own thinking that needs to be modified. My job is to make each thinker
  sound as convincing as possible, but as we do this throughout the course, we will
  also begin to see how different thinkers question the thinking of the other thinkers.
Required Readings
The following books are required for this course and are available at Mary Jane Books or online (please be sure to get the correct edition so we are, literally, all on the same page):

- Plato (Translated by G.M.A. Grube), Republic (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1992) 978-0872201361
- Alexis de Tocqueville (Translated by Gerald Bevan), Democracy in America (Penguin Classics, 2003) 978-0140447606

Additional readings will be made available online. They are marked with “*” in the “Schedule of Readings and Assignments” section of this syllabus.

Attendance Policy
Political theory is an activity not a formula. The process is at least as important as the result, which is to say it is impossible to understand the theory without understanding how the theory is put together. To understand how the theory works and moves, we will need to pick it up, mull it over, and try it out. This takes both time and conversation, which is the purpose of the class lectures and any resulting class discussions during our thrice weekly meetings. If you miss class time, you will not be able to fully make up what you missed. Even though I will not take attendance, I strongly recommend that you attend all classes.

Office Hours
In a class of this size, it is not easy to generate discussions with widespread participation during our scheduled class meetings. Fortunately, the conversations and musings do not need to stop in the classroom. I am always happy to further the discussion in my office hours, and, in fact, I encourage it. The more you can actively engage with the material, the better you will understand it. If your class schedule makes it impossible for you to meet with me during my regularly scheduled office hours, please send me an e-mail so that we can arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. Attending my office hours affords you the opportunity to ask questions that are pertinent to your individual struggles and also allows you to formulate the theories in your own words.

Excused Absences:
If you must miss a class with a scheduled exam, you must have documentation from the dean of undergraduate studies that details the reason for your absence and excuses you from that absence. Barring extraordinary circumstances (in which case you must notify me as soon as possible), you must notify me of your absence no later than 1 class after the exam was taken, and you must submit proper documentation to me within 1 week of the exam being taken. Absent this timely, proper documentation, you will not be allowed to take a makeup exam.
In addition, if you know that you will miss class time (for an athletic event, a religious holiday, or the like), please bring these to my attention (with proper and official documentation) within the first 3 class meetings or, if that is not possible, as soon as you become aware of them.

**Grading**
Midterm 1: 30%
Midterm 2: 30%
Final Exam: 40%

This course is graded on a scale of A-E. Please note that you cannot pass the course if you do not take all three exams.

**Exams:**
This class will have two midterm exams and one final exam. All three exams will be essay exams. Each midterm exam will ask you to answer one essay question, which will ask you to synthesize all three thinkers from the preceding unit. Midterm Exam 1 will cover the first unit entitled “Freedom and Truth.” Midterm Exam 2 will cover the second unit entitled “Freedom and Economics.” The final exam will ask you to answer one or two essay questions: either one question on the course as a whole (with special emphasis on the final unit of the course: “Freedom and Government”) or one on the final unit of the course (“Freedom and Government”) and one on the course as a whole. That means that the **final is cumulative**.

Prior to each exam, I will distribute a sheet of paper that includes all of the possible essay questions. You will not have a choice of which question(s) you would like to answer, but you will have seen every possible question before taking the exam.

As per the “Excused Absence” policy outlined above, make-up examinations, early examinations, or incomplete grades will be given only in the event of serious personal or family illness or other unusual circumstances as they are approved by the dean of undergraduate studies. You are required to take all three exams. For the university’s full incomplete grades policy, please refer to: [https://www.albany.edu/undergraduateeducation/grading.php](https://www.albany.edu/undergraduateeducation/grading.php).

**Classroom Decorum:**
*Disruptive Behavior:*
Participation includes not only actively adding to the academic discourse of the classroom, but it also includes not engaging in activity that is disruptive of that discourse. This behavior includes, but is not limited to, making loud or distracting noises, visually distracting students or the instructor, repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom, persisting in speaking without being recognized, or resorting to physical threats or personal insults.
Laptops and Electronic Devices:
All cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices must be silenced and stored out of sight for the duration of class time. Usage of laptops, iPads, or the like for any activity other than note taking is prohibited. Please see me after the first class if you anticipate taking notes on a laptop or similar device.

Grade Appeals:
In order to appeal a midterm exam grade, you should see me during office hours within 1 week of the class receiving back the exam and submit a 1-2 page typewritten explanation of your reasons for believing that the grade should be changed. A grade appeal may result in the grade being raised, lowered, or left unaltered. After 1 week, grade complaints will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances such as a serious illness.

Cheating and Plagiarism
Under no circumstances should you submit someone else’s work as your own. This includes, but is not limited to: copying text from another student on tests or papers, copying text from internet sites (e.g. Wikipedia, Sparknotes) or other sources without quotation marks and full citations, or submitting your own work from another course.

Cheating on an exam or plagiarizing written work will result in course failure and referral of the case to a university committee. For more information, please see the undergraduate bulletin: http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html. For more information, see: https://library.albany.edu/infolit/integrity.

Reasonable Accommodation
Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 130, 518-442-5490, DRC@albany.edu). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations (http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml).

If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, for the above reasons or other cases including religious holidays, inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. Reasonable accommodations are generally established well in advance and are rarely granted retroactively.

Writing Center (Humanities 140)
The writing center provides tutorials on writing essays and improving language skills (ESL). Visit their website at: http://www.albany.edu/writing/.

Academic Support Services (Library Room 94)
Academic support services arrange individual and group tutorials as well as study skills workshops on time management, how to improve your concentration, essay exam skills, listening skills, and overcoming procrastination. Visit their website: http://www.albany.edu/oaae/index.shtml.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments
Reading selections not from required books will be made available online.
** This schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class. **

Aug. 27   Introduction

I.   Freedom and Truth

Aug. 29   Plato Republic Book I (all)
Aug. 31   Plato Republic Book II (all)

Sept. 3   NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)
Sept. 5   Plato Republic Books III (ln.412b8-end), IV (all), and V (beg.-ln. 471c)
Sept. 7   Plato Republic Books V (471c-end) and VI (ln. 487e6-ln. 489d4; ln. 496a11-end)

Sept. 10  NO CLASS (ROSH HASHANAH)
Sept. 12  Plato Republic Book VII (beg.-521c7)
Sept. 14  Plato Republic Books VIII (all) and X (ln. 608b2-end)
Sept. 17  Mill On Liberty Chapter 1

Sept. 19  NO CLASS (YOM KIPPUR)
Sept. 21  Mill On Liberty Chapter 2
Sept. 24  Mill On Liberty Chapter 2
Sept. 26  Foucault “Two Lectures” *
Sept. 28  Foucault “Two Lectures” *
Oct. 1    Foucault “Two Lectures” *

Oct. 3    NO CLASS (USE THIS TIME TO REVIEW)
Oct. 5    Midterm Exam 1

II.   Freedom and Economics

Oct. 8    Locke Second Treatise of Government Chapters I-IV
Oct. 10  Locke *Second Treatise of Government* Chapter V
Oct. 12  Locke *Second Treatise of Government* Chapters VI-IX
Oct. 15  Locke *Second Treatise of Government* Chapters XIX
Oct. 17  Marx *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Pages 66-105 *
Oct. 19  Marx *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Pages 66-105 *
Oct. 22  Marx *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Pages 66-105 *
Oct. 24  Marx *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Pages 66-105 *
Oct. 26  Friedman “Introduction” and “The Relation Between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom” *
Oct. 29  Friedman “The Role of Government in a Free Society” *

**Oct. 31**  NO CLASS (USE THIS TIME TO REVIEW)

Nov. 2  Midterm Exam 2

**III. Freedom and Government**

Nov. 5  Rousseau *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* Preface; Part I; and Part II
Nov. 7  Rousseau *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* Preface; Part I; and Part II
Nov. 9  Rousseau *Social Contract* Book I (all)
Nov. 12  Rousseau *Social Contract* Book II (all)
Nov. 14  Rousseau *Social Contract* Books III (Ch. 1, 10-15, 18) and IV (Ch. 1-3)
Nov. 16  Tocqueville *Democracy in America* (“Author’s Introduction” and Vol. 2, Part 3, Ch. 1)
Nov. 19  Tocqueville *Democracy in America* Vol. 1, Part 1, Ch. 4, 5

**Nov. 21**  NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

**Nov. 23**  NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Tocqueville <em>Democracy in America</em> (&quot;The Author's Note to the Second Volume; Vol. 2, Part 1, Ch. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
<td>Tocqueville <em>Democracy in America</em> (Vol. 2, Part 2, Ch. 1-9; Vol 1. Part 2, Ch. 4, Ch. 7; Vol. 2, Part 3, Ch. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Tocqueville <em>Democracy in America</em> (Vol. 2, Part 2, Ch. 1-9; Vol 1. Part 2, Ch. 4, Ch. 7; Vol. 2, Part 3, Ch. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>Tocqueville <em>Democracy in America</em> (Vol. 2, Part 2, Ch. 10, 13, 14; Vol. 2, Part 4, Ch. 1-4, 6, 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Goldman “A New Declaration of Independence;” “Was My Life Worth Living;” “An Anarchist Looks at Life;” and “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For” *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>Semester Wrap Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Exam: Friday, December 14, 2018 10:30am-12:30pm**