

## **Inventors of Political Ideas (PSI 2208)**

Peter Schimert

**Methods:** A few lectures but mostly discussions.

**Goals:** 1. To expose the student to some of the major political thinkers of European civilization; 2. To familiarize the student with the basic political systems of western civilization, which have emerged historically, as well as with the advantages and disadvantages of each of these; 3. To expose the student to various issues concerning the legitimacy of these political systems; 4. To examine fundamental questions such as what is justice, what constitutes the good life, how should society be properly organized, what is the role of government, what is the proper form of government, what are government's proper functions, how should government's make decisions, how should we finance government, and how should government spend its revenue.

**Outcomes:** 1. To increase the student's understanding of various sources of western political thought; 2. To increase the student's familiarity with some of the leading western political thinkers; 3. To foster the appreciation of the student for the basic problems underlying various political systems and some of the various ways of trying to resolve these difficulties; 4. To encourage the student to formulate their own ideas on what is the proper form of political organization and how we should live.

**Required Reading:** Brief statements and arguments by a variety of political thinkers on some of the major problems of European history and political thought. The selections will be taken from William O. Ebenstein and Alan O. Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present*. The page numbers given are from the sixth edition. Questions to guide your reading will be provided for each author.

**Course Requirements:** Each student will be expected to attend classes regularly, do the assigned readings, contribute to the class discussions, as well as take the midterm and the final examination.

**Evaluation:** Grades will be determined in the following manner:

Contributions to the class discussions	30%
Midterm Test	30%
Final Examination	40%

**Course Policies:** The McDaniel College attendance policy will be enforced. Neither mobile phones, nor laptop computers will be allowed to be used in class, unless specifically authorized.

**Please also note:** This class will be conducted in strict observance of the Honor Code. In order to be graded all written work must include the student's signature on the honor pledge: *I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this work, nor have I knowingly tolerated any violation of the honor code.*

**Schedule of Lectures, Reading Assignments and Discussions:**

Sept. 05 – Introduction

Sept. 07 – Ancient Greece

Sept. 12 – Greek Philosophy

Sept. 14 – The Ideal Political Community: Plato, *The Republic* (30-74)

Sept. 19 – The Political Systems of the Ancient Greek World: Aristotle, *Politics* (85-100)

Sept. 21 – Aristotle, *Politics* (100-115)

Sept. 26 – Ancient Rome

Sept. 28 – Roman Government: Polybius, *The Histories* (119-126) and Cicero, *The Republic* and *The Laws* (131-140)

Oct. 03 – Stoicism: Epictetus, *Discourses* and *Manual* (151-156); Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (157-167)

Oct. 05– Medieval Political Thought: St. Augustine, *City of God* (186-198) and St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship* and *Summa Theologica* (230-244)

Oct. 10 – The Renaissance: Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (291-301)

Oct. 12 – The Reformation: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (364-379)

Oct. 17 – \* \* \* **Midterm Test!** \* \* \*

Oct. 19 – The Enlightenment: John Locke (389-407) and Montesquieu (413-421)

Oct. 24 – The Enlightenment: David Hume (428-441)

Oct. 26 – The Enlightenment: Jean Jaques Rousseau (452-472)

Oct. 31 – \* \* \* **Fall Break – No Class!** \* \* \*

Nov. 02 - Immanuel Kant: (477-491)

Nov. 07 – Classical Liberal Economics: Adam Smith (498-503) and Conservatism: Edmund Burke (513-532)

Nov. 09 – Democracy: Alexis de Tocqueville (564-577)

Nov. 14 – Liberalism: John Stuart Mill (586-623)

Nov. 16 – New Morality: Friedrich Nietzsche (694-707)

Nov. 21 – Revolution: Lenin (680-687) and Fascism: Mussolini (712-720)

Nov. 23 – Non-violence: Mohandas K. Gandhi (742-753)

Nov. 28 – The End of *Laissez-faire*: John Maynard Keynes (794-805)

Nov. 30 – \* \* \* **Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class!** \* \* \*

Dec. 05 – The Limits of the State: Friedrich Hayek (825-839)

Dec. 07 – Capitalism and Freedom: Milton Friedman (840-847)

Dec. 12-16 - \* \* \* **Final Examinations!** \* \* \*