

POLI 1001
Fundamentals of Politics
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MWF 10:30-11:20

*“Wilkommen, Bienvenue/Welcome
Fremde, Etranger, Stranger
Glücklich zu sehen; Je suis enchanté, Happy to see you
Bleibe, reste, stay
Wilkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome
zu Cabaret, aCabaret, to Cabaret”
-The Master of CeremonieCabaret*

Overview

Fundamentals of Politics is an introductory class to the social scientific study of politics. However, that which we call "politics," the study of group behavior and common life, involves a number of vastly different elements that require explanation and application. For instance, questions of mythology, religion, philosophy, and history all inform how humans live together and how these orders can collapse or decline into tyranny. Thus, we endeavor to parse these concepts out as a class in order to gain a greater shared understanding of that which constitutes "politics" before you begin to apply these ideas in narrower ways as you develop in your collegiate life.

In this course, I want to help you all learn to encounter texts not m4 (e)3 na(n)3 (1 (x)-t)1 (e (a)-1 (p)61

I only require the purchase of three books that we will read at various points in the semester; however, the rest may be found on Moodle or elsewhere online. As implied by this heading, many of the topics we will engage do not even require one to “read” but watch, listen, or explore

Books recommended for Purchase:

- Edith Hamilton, *Mythology*
- Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers*
- Manfred Steger & Ravi K. Royne, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*

All three of these texts, especially the first two, can be found very cheaply and commonly. All other texts are available on Moodle.

Topic One– The State

What is the state? What can it do? What should it do? Does it “do?” We will consider some preliminary topics as a class that can spark the political imagination.

Watch & Listen Scenes from Bob Fosse's *Cabaret*

Watch: Raul Hilberg's interview with Claude Lanzmann about Nazi bureaucracy.

Topic Three– World Religions

While today's age and its obsession with technological and scientific progress appears secular, vast swaths of the world in America and beyond still adhere to different religious beliefs with wildly divergent implications for political life. Three of the most influential religious traditions are Christianity, practiced in the Americas, as well as Europe and much of the Middle East; Islam, practiced primarily in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia; and Confucianism, whose adherents mostly live in China. However, as we will see later in this course, the globalized nature of the world's economy brings these three traditions into contact and indeed, conflict with one another.

Christianity:

Listen/Read Dr. Cole reads from *Genesis* 4.

Read: *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, Ch. 25 *Romans* Chs. 6, 13; Nicene Creed

Read: St. Augustine of Hippo, Parable of the Pirate and Empire of God, Book IV

Islam:

Listen: Yusuf Islam's *A is for Allah*

Explore: BBC's description of the Five Pillars of Islam

Watch: A scene from Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* depicting X's conversion to Sunni Islam and adoption of the name "Elhajj Malik ElShabaz"

Confucianism:

Watch: The School of Life's overview of Confucius and Confucianism.

Read: The Stanford Encyclopedia's Entry on Confucius.

Topic Four–

The study of politics is dear to me and I have greatly enjoyed teaching parts of this course in the