

Politics, Society & the Role of Government : HIS 401 – Fall 2025

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Room 302 ~ Mondays 11:30 - 12:20 / Tuesdays 8:30 – 9:20 / Wednesdays 11:30 – 12:20

Office Hours by appointment.

Course Description

Students grapple with readings, discussion, and debate centered on famous theories and experiments in political science viewed in their historical context, culminating in a study of Archbishop Lefebvre's *They Have Uncrowned Him* along with an assessment of contemporary American politics. Starting with classical civilization and working to the present, this course serves as a powerful and pertinent review of the various time periods studied in SMC's history curriculum, ultimately prompting students to assess their own place and role in society.

Evaluation Criteria

Reading Questions & Participation – 40%

Throughout the semester, students read significant portions of key historical texts related to political science. Hard copies of these primary sources along with sets of professor-generated questions are distributed well in advance of scheduled in-class discussions. For each discussion, groups of students are assigned different questions; students can work together in their group to generate some initial ideas, but each student must compose a written response individually and independently. The professor will prompt each group to generate and guide a class-wide discussion based on these questions, gradually working through all the assigned topics. Finally, at the end of each in-class discussion, students submit printed copies of their respective responses, which are then graded and returned.

Tests – 35%

Students use their notes and reading packets to construct an in-class essay based on a single prompt. A test follows each of the first five sets of readings.

Final Essay – 25%

The last series of readings focuses on politics during the twentieth century, particularly the traditional Catholic notion of the social kingship of Jesus Christ and the traditional American notion of a secular, capitalist democracy. Since these are the two main political currents which will inform and shape the lives of SMC's graduates, students in this final assignment will assess the compatibility of these two political visions. Specific instructions are provided in a separate handout.

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	ASSESSMENT
T 9/2	Introduction	
W 9/3	Lecture: Ancient Greece and Rome	
M 9/8	Greek City-States: Part One	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 1.1
T 9/9	Greek City-States: Part Two	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 1.2
W 9/10	Roman Republic	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 1.3
M 9/15	Roman Empire & Christianity	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 1.4
T 9/16	Test: Greco-Roman Tradition & Christianity	TEST #1
W 9/17	Lecture: Kingship during the Middle Ages	
M 9/22	Monarchy & Papacy: Part One	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 2.1
T 9/23	Monarchy & Papacy: Part Two	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 2.2
W 9/24	Monarchy & Papacy: Part Three	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 2.3
M 9/29	Test: Temporal Rights of the Church	TEST #2
T 9/30	Lecture: Challenges to the Catholic Tradition	
W 10/1	Renaissance Humanism	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 3.1
M 10/6	Catholic Conservatism	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 3.2
T 10/7	Body Politic & Social Contract	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 3.3
W 10/8	War, Slavery & the Law of Nations	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 3.4
M 10/13	Test: Challenging Tradition	TEST #3
T 10/14	Lecture: Early American State	
W 10/15	Framing the American Republic	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 4.1
M 10/20	Court Rulings & Party Politics	<i>Reading & Questions</i> 4.2

T 10/21	Slavery & States' Rights	<i>Reading & Questions 4.3</i>
W 10/22	Test: Early America	TEST #4
M 10/27	Lecture: New Roles & Definitions for the State	
T 10/28	Nineteenth-Century Germany & Nationalism	<i>Reading & Questions 5.1</i>
W 10/29	Classical Liberalism	<i>Reading & Questions 5.2</i>
M 11/3	American Idealism, Reform & Activism	<i>Reading & Questions 5.3</i>
T 11/4	Test: New Visions of the State	TEST #5
W 11/5	Lecture: The Popes Confront Modernity	
M 11/10	Confronting Secularism: Pope Leo XIII	<i>Reading & Questions 6.1</i>
T 11/11	Confronting Secularism: 20th-Century Popes	<i>Reading & Questions 6.2</i>
W 11/12	A Democratic Church	<i>Reading & Questions 6.3</i>
M 11/17	Lecture: Liberalism in the Church	
T 11/18	They Have Uncrowned Him: Part One	<i>Reading & Questions 7.1</i>
W 11/19	They Have Uncrowned Him: Part Two	<i>Reading & Questions 7.2</i>
M 11/24	Lecture: Conflicting Ideologies	
T 11/25	Wall of Separation: Church & State in America	<i>Reading & Questions 8.1</i>
T 12/2	Democracy & a Planned Economy	<i>Reading & Questions 8.2</i>
W 12/3	Communism & Capitalism	<i>Reading & Questions 8.3</i>
T 12/9	(Professors Available to Discuss Final Essay)	
W 12/10	Review & Essay Submission	FINAL ESSAY DUE

*** Note: the professors will provide general feedback on the essays to the entire class during the scheduled exam period. ***

HIS 401 – Sequence of Primary Source Readings with Bibliographic Information

#1.1 Greek City-States: Part One (Shwartz)

Plato, *The Republic*. Translated by Tom Griffith. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

#1.2 Greek City-States: Part Two (Shwartz)

Aristotle, *The Politics*. Translated by Stephen Everson. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

#1.3 Roman Republic (Shwartz)

Cicero, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*. Translated by James Zetzel. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

#1.4 Roman Empire and Christianity (Shwartz)

Augustine, *Political Writings*. Translated by Michael Tkacz and Douglas Kries. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994.

#2.1 Papacy and Medieval Monarchy: Part One (Shwartz)

Aquinas, *Political Writings*. Translated by R. W. Dyson. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

#2.2 Papacy and Medieval Monarchy: Part Two (Shwartz)

John of Paris, *On Royal and Papal Power*. Translated by J. A. Watt. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971.

Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*. Translated by Brian Tierney in *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 188-189.

#2.3 Papacy and Medieval Monarchy: Part Three (Shwartz)

Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*. Translated by Annabel Brett. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

#3.1 Renaissance Humanism (Shwartz)

Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Translated by Quentin Skinner and Russell Price. Cambridge University Press, 2019.

#3.2 Catholic Conservatism (Shwartz)

Robert Bellarmine, *De Laicis* or *The Treatise on Civil Government*. Translated by Kathleen Murphy. New York: Fordham University Press, 1928.

#3.3 Body Politic and Social Contract (Shwartz)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*. Translated by Roger Masters and Judith Masters; excerpted from Mitchell Cohen (ed.), *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, Second Edition (Princeton University Press, 2018), pp. 270-275.

#3.4 War, Slavery and the Law of Nations (Shwartz)

Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace*. Translated by Stephen Neff. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*. Translated by Anne Cohler, Basia Miller and Harold Stone. Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Voltaire, *Political Writings*. Translated by David Williams. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

#4.1 Framing the American Republic (Gresham)

Federalist Papers, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Anti-Federalist Essays from *The Essential Debate on the Constitution*, Robert Allison and Bernard Bailyn, eds. Penguin Random House, 2018.

#4.2 Experiments in Democracy (Gresham)

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Andrew Jackson, "Farewell Address," 1838. *The American Presidency Project*.

#4.3 Court Rulings and Party Politics: A Weak State? (Gresham)

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Martin van Buren, *Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties in America*. Hurd and Houghton, 1867.

#4.4 Slavery and States' Rights (Gresham)

John C. Calhoun, "A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States," from C. Gordon Post, ed., *Calhoun: A Disquisition on Government and Selections from the Discourse*.

Abraham Lincoln, *Lincoln: Political Writings and Speeches*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

#5.1 Sturm und Drang: Nineteenth-Century Germany (Gresham)

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*. Translated by Samuel Moore; edited by Gareth Jones. New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbet; edited by Allen Wood. Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Carol Diethe; edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

#5.2 Classical Liberalism (Gresham)

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings*. New York: LG Classics, 2016.

#5.3 American Idealism, Reform, and Activism (Gresham)

Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements," *Philanthropy and Social Progress Seven Essays delivered before the School of Applied Ethics at Plymouth, Mass.* Thomas Crowell, 1892.

William Jennings Bryan, *The Cross of Gold*. Henry Homer, 1896.

Theodore Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism*. Outlook Company, 1910.

#6.1 Confronting Secularism: Papal Pronouncements Part One (Gresham)

Leo XIII, *Diuturnum: On the Origin of Civil Power*, 1881.

Leo XIII, *Humanum Genus: On Freemasonry*, 1884.

Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei: On the Christian Constitution of States*, 1885.

Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum: On Capital and Labor*, 1891.

Adapted from the English translations at vatican.va.

#6.2 Confronting Secularism: Papal Pronouncements Part Two (Gresham)

Pius X, *Vehementer Nos: On the French Law of Separation*, 1906.

Pius XI, *Quas Primas: On the Feast of Christ the King*, 1925.

Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno: Rebuilding the Social Order*, 1931.

Pius XII, *Benignitas et Humanitas: Radio Message for Christmas*, 1944.

Adapted from the English translations at vatican.va.

#6.3 A Democratic Church (Gresham)

Jacques Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*.
Translated by Doris Anson. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011.

United Nations, *Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948. [from the official UN website]

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes: On the Church in the World of Today*. Translated
by Norman Tanner in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Volume Two. Georgetown
University Press, 1990.

#7.1 Christ the Eternal King: Part One (Shwartz)

Marcel Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him: From Liberalism to Apostacy, the Conciliar
Tragedy*. Translated by Gregory Post. Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1988.

#7.2 Christ the Eternal King: Part Two (Shwartz)

Marcel Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him: From Liberalism to Apostacy, the Conciliar
Tragedy*. Translated by Gregory Post. Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1988.

#8.1 A Wall of Separation: Church and State in America (Gresham)

Thomas Jefferson, "The Different Religions received into that State?" from *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

Thomas Jefferson, *Danbury Address*, 1802. From the Library of Congress.

De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Torcaso v. Watkins, *US Supreme Court Opinions, Vol. 367*, 1960.

John F. Kennedy, "Address to Southern Baptist Leaders," *American Catholic History*. NYU Press, 2017.

#8.2 Democracy and a Planned Economy (Gresham)

Rexford Tugwell, "The Principle of Planning and the Institution of Laissez-Faire." *American Economic Review*, 1932.

F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*. University of Chicago, 2007.

#8.3 Communism & Capitalism (Gresham)

Vladimir Lenin, *The State and Revolution*. The British Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Press, 1919.

Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Mao Tse Tung, *Little Red Book*. Foreign Language Press, 1966.

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