



SYLLABUS

Machiavelli's Political Thought in its historical context

Instructor: Roberto Fineschi

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 5

Contact Hours*: 45

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*:

Level: 300

Siena, Italy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the development of Machiavelli political thought in its historical context. It was a period of dramatic change, with the passage from either city or regional states to national monarchies. The Florentine Republic, cradle of the Renaissance and Western modern civilization, saw the rise and fall of the Medici family among nearly continuous wars among the French and Spanish crowns for control over the city-states or kingdoms of Italy. In this period Machiavelli wrote his most famous work, *The Prince*, in which he tried to show how a politician has to effectively found or run a country. He also dealt with the problem of consensus and the role of the army, anticipating issues that are crucial in the current debate. His thought is still extremely influential on several contemporary political thinkers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course will enable students to understand the political context of Niccolò Machiavelli's life and writings, as well as the modern application of his works. We will also examine various scholarly analyses of the impact of his writings on the modern world.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. understand the complex relationship between the rise of city-states in northern Italy and the development of modern national monarchies.
2. be able to assess the impact of religious, social, and political conflict on the lives of inhabitants, both in their historical context and more in general as members of a society.
3. be familiar with substance and influence of Machiavelli's political philosophy.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will have two class sessions a week, consisting of lectures/discussion. There might also be required excursions or film sessions.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Students will be evaluated as follows:

- 20% attendance and participation
- 40% midterm exam (multiple choice questions, open questions, short essays)
- 40% final exam (multiple choice questions, open questions, short essays)

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Rise of the “Civiltà comunale” in the period 1000-1400. Its economic and social structure.

Week 2: The city states; development and crisis. The Italian wars (1494-1559)

Week 3: Florence and the Renaissance

Week 4: Machiavelli’s Prince. Introduction

Week 5: Machiavelli’s Prince: analysis of relevant passages

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 6: Machiavelli’s Discourses: introduction

Week 7: Machiavelli’s Discourses: analysis of relevant passages

Week 8: Machiavelli’s on war, history, and literature
Croce’s interpretation of Machiavelli

Week 9: Gramsci’s interpretation of Machiavelli

Week 10: Schmitt’s interpretation of Machiavelli
FINAL EXAM

COURSE READINGS

- Benner, Erica. *Be Like the Fox: Machiavelli in his World*, Norton, 2017.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Discourses on Livy*. Oxford, 1997.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Yale, 1996.
- Curry, Andrew. "Political Morality?" *The Washington Post*, January 13, 1999, p. 1101
- Holler, Manford J. "Niccolò Machiavelli on Power," in *Niccolò Machiavelli*. Brill, 2011, pp. 27-47.
- Gramsci, *Prison notebooks*, Columbia University Press, 2011 (selected pages).
- Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, The University of Chicago Press, 2007 (selected pages).

Academic Misconduct

[The University Student Conduct Code](#) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before attempting an act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Reporting

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at [Help for Victims and Survivors](#). To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour confidential hotline at 541-346-7233 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-2204. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to [Callisto](#), a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university.

Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information at [How to Get Support](#). You can contact [Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance](#) through this link and at 541-346-3123, or the [Dean of Students Office](#) at 541-346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship

violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available at [Discrimination & Harassment](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration. Specific details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees can be found at [Employee Reporting Responsibilities](#).

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).