Course Description: Are human beings political animals? Can we create a just society? Who should rule and what are the legitimate uses and the limits of power? These questions are at the heart of debates about the nature of politics. Political theory seeks to answer these provocative questions and is often represented as a conversation about creating a good society that enables us to live well together. This course introduces you to the canonical conversation of political thought. We begin with the Socratic dialogues of Ancient Athens and progress to modern debates concerning democracy and diversity that give meaning to American citizenship. Our intellectual journey follows the philosophical evolution of ethical ideas and historical development of practices of civic responsibility. We examine the tension between individual rights and duty to the community. We ask how gender, class, and race shape personal identities and contest assumptions about who can exercise the rights of citizens. Students question the nature of politics through an analysis of competing definitions of justice, virtue, authority, and power. Class readings have been selected to engage you in this vital discussion focused on individual empowerment, community involvement, and political culture. Our learning objective as a class is to develop a critical understanding of political theory as an evolving discourse and to analyze democratic citizenship as a lived experience.

Course Requirements: Our course focuses on the discussion of dynamic ideas. Every student is responsible for all required readings and is expected to attend each class prepared to join in our discussion. Attendance will be taken during each class and students may miss up to 2 classes without an excused absence. Students with more than 2 unexcused absences will receive a lower class participation grade. Outlines for each lecture are posted on Blackboard and can serve as study guides. Final grades will be determined on the basis of combined letter grades from three essay examinations and your classroom participation throughout the semester.

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Entire Semester</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Midterm Examination</td>
<td>September 25th</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Midterm Examination</td>
<td>October 25th</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Final Examination</td>
<td>December 11th</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Exams consist of essay questions that ask you to consider the relationship between several theorists and compare and contrast their ideas. You will receive a copy of the essay questions to review a week prior to the exam. I encourage all students to draft an outline of each essay question. Know that I am happy to comment on an outline of your essays and offer feedback for improvement. Grades will be determined on the basis of the content and clarity of your argument. You will receive specific comments on your analysis and the quality of writing as part of my evaluation of your essay exam. No make-up exams will be given without prior approval.

I have included some structural guidelines for writing your best essay exam on the following page. Students needing additional assistance are encouraged to take advantage of staff of the English Resource Center and the Writing Web.
Course Readings: The following books are required for the class and are available at the UAB Bookstore, Snoozy’s and a variety of online retailers.
Cohen and Fermon, *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*
Sophocles, *Oedipus, the King*

Learning Community: Laptops are welcome for note taking in the classroom. Please be mindful of your classmates and refrain from web surfing (including visiting social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter) during lectures and discussions. All cell phones must be turned off or silenced.

UAB Academic Honor Code: The UAB Undergraduate Catalog reminds all of us of the ethical dimensions of academic achievement. The Academic Honor Code states that “The University of Alabama at Birmingham expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards.” Academic misconduct in the form of abetting, cheating, plagiarism, and misrepresentation will be reviewed and penalized according to the policies and procedures outlined in the Academic Honor Code.

Disability Support Services: If you are registered with Disability Support Services (DSS), please make an appointment with me to discuss necessary accommodations. If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please call 934-4205 or visit DSS at 516 Hill University Center. Students with disabilities must be registered with DSS and provide an accommodation request letter before receiving accommodations in this class.

Quick Guide to Essay Exams: Your grade is based on your performance in three essay examinations. For many of you, these will be the first essay exams you’ve ever written at UAB. To help you understand how to write a good essay exam (in addition to understanding the material presented in the lectures and readings), here are a few guidelines that you might find helpful.

A) Structure. A good essay is well structured. At a minimum, every essay should have an opening paragraph, introducing the idea and basic argument. Subsequent paragraphs should be devoted to detailing the idea and supporting your argument with information from the course materials – this serves to demonstrate that you both understand the topic which you are discussing, and can make a reasoned case for why your position is valid or true. Once you have completed your argument, it is always a good idea to recap your ideas and argument, revisiting them to again remind the reader of the original summary statement from the start of the essay.

B) Examination and Analysis. The body of your paper should focus on the examination and analysis of the essay question. Identify the authors you are discussing and provide a fair assessment of their contribution to the debate. Support your argument with textual evidence drawn from our required readings and insights gleaned from class discussions. Be sure to draw your own conclusions to form a compelling answer to the essay.

C) Outlines, Rough Drafts and Revisions. Refer to your class notes and lecture outlines as you begin to construct an outline for your essay. Once you have a working outline begin to compose a rough draft by building your argument on an analysis of the texts we have read and examined. Revise your draft by editing for content and clarity. The time you take to carefully revise your essay will improve your writing skills, enhance your understanding of the material, and make your argument stronger.
I want every student to succeed in this course to the best of their ability. Please attend my office hours, phone, or email if you have any questions about the course readings or the essay examinations. We’re going to have a great semester!

COURSE OUTLINE

Philosopher Kings and Democratic Citizens:
August 16, 2012 Welcome and Introductory Lecture
August 21, 2012 Sophocles, *Oedipus, the King*
August 23, 2012 Sophocles, *Oedipus, the King*
September 6, 2012 Plato, *The Republic* pp 84-106
September 13, 2012 Aristotle, *The Politics* pp. 107-123
September 18, 2012 Aristotle, *The Politics* pp. 107-123
September 25, 2012 Mid-Term Examination

Coercion and Consent:
October 11, 2012 Fall Break
October 18, 2012 Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* pp. 258-270
Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence* (in class)
October 25, 2012 Mid-Term Examination

Social Contracts and Democratic Revolutions:
October 30, 2012 Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Human Inequality* pp. 293-313
November 1, 2012 Rousseau, *Social Contract* pp. 280-292
November 6, 2012 Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* pp. 349-355
de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* pp. 356-361
November 22, 2012 Happy Thanksgiving!
November 29, 2012 de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* pp. 601-613
December 11, 2012 Discussion and Review
December 11, 2012 Comprehensive Final Examination (10:45-1:15)
Wendy Gunther-Canada, Ph.D. is Professor and Chair of the Department of Government. She is the author of numerous essays as well as *Rebel Writer: Mary Wollstonecraft and Enlightenment Politics*, and three editions of *Women, Politics, and American Society* with Nancy McGlen, Karen O’Connor, and Laura van Assendelft. Dr. Gunther-Canada has received the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Adaljiza Sosa-Riddell Award for Exemplary Mentoring of a Graduate Student, the Outstanding Woman Faculty Member Award, and the Frederick W. Conner Prize in the History of Ideas.