The Issues:
Do laws made by other people have authority for me? Does the State exist by nature, or is it a mere artifice? How, if at all, can people come to own material things? Are political leaders my servants, or my masters? What is exploitation? Can capitalism be morally justified? How free should society be?

Texts:
Plato *Apology Crito* (see My Courses)
Plutarch *On Sparta* (Penguin Classics)
Aristotle *Politics*
Niccolo Machiavelli *The Prince*
Thomas Hobbes *The Leviathan*
John Locke *Two Treatises of Government*
J.S. Mill *On Liberty*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau *The Social Contract*
Immanuel Kant *Perpetual Peace*
Karl Marx *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*
Steven Lukes *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat*
PS 11 Course Reader (includes Plato, Rawls, Nozick)
Tomasi *The Myth of Modern Liberalism* (TBDE)

Organization:
This course is divided into a series of week-long units, each devoted to the study of a classic text, and a central problem, in political philosophy. Our aim is not only to learn the particular theory developed in each of these texts. More, we aim to discover the deeper questions these famous authors were struggling with, and to confront those same questions ourselves. In regular class meetings, the lecturer will introduce the ideas of these writers and set out different ways of understanding them. But the heart of the course, and its most important feature, is the weekly Seminar. PS11 Seminars will take place during specially extended discussion sections each week.

The PS11 Seminar:
The Seminar is your chance to respond directly to the ideas you have read in the texts and the lectures you have heard during the week. Teaching Assistants will open the Seminar by asking a central question raised by that week’s author. It will then be left to the students as a group to work out and evaluate different strategies for answering that question. (Later in the course, students may be invited to propose their own seminar questions.)

The Seminar Essay:
After the Seminar, each student will write a 3 page (c.1,000 word) essay. Your aim in this essay is to formulate as clearly and succinctly as possible your own answer to the question posed in Seminar. You may draw on the text, the lectures, and the suggestions of members of your seminar group. Rather than writing a term paper, each student will bundle these essays together and submit them as the primary record of her/his progress in the course.

To Brown, perhaps. But, Calvin, please don’t enroll in PS 11! For your aim in writing the Seminar Essays will be to develop your own ideas, reveal poor reasoning on the part of others, and above all to exhibit intellectual clarity.

Examinations: There will be a final exam. It will be grueling.

Requirements:
**Attendance at every Seminar is strictly required.**
- Plato Essay
- Attendance at Constitution Day and Janus Lecture Series
- Seminar Essays Bundle #1
- Seminar Essays Bundle #2
- Seminar Essays Bundle #
- Final Exam (24-hour Take-home)
Words of Inspiration:

"That which thy fathers have bequeathed to thee, earn it anew if thou wouldst possess it."
Goethe

"It takes a good reader to make a good book."  Emerson

"I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken." Samuel Johnson

“Its sort of comical how you think that you’ve made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry when in fact, you’re wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room…from a pile of ‘stuff.’”
Meryl Streep as Miranda Priestly

Schedule:

I] Plato
   “The Apology,” “Crito,” Republic (CR)
   Seminar on Plato.
   Plato Seminar Q: “Is the just person a fool acting under an illusion? Socrates’ commitment to justice led to his death by public execution. Was Socrates a fool to think he must accept that fate?”

PTP’s Janus Lecture Series: Constitution Day Lecture

II] Plutarch: On Sparta
   On Sparta (Please read Life of Lycurgus; Sayings of Spartans; Sayings of Spartan Women; and Xenophon’s “Spartan Society,” and do at least 300 stomach crunches before breakfast).
   Seminar on Plutarch.
   Plutarch Seminar Q: “When a Spartan citizen was asked to explain the strange Spartan social system, he answered: ‘Freedom is what we reap from this way of life, my friend.’ Sparta was, no doubt, the home of the brave. Was it also the land of the free? Who experiences more freedom, students in ancient Sparta or students at Brown?”

III] Aristotle
   The Politics (focus on Books I, II, III, and VII).
   Seminar on Aristotle.
   Aristotle Seminar Q: “Aristotle says that the state exists by nature and that man is a political animal. What does Aristotle mean by these strange claims? Does the United States (or your own state) exist by nature? Are you a political animal?”
IV] **Machiavelli**  
*The Prince*  
Seminar on Machiavelli.  
Seminar Question on Machiavelli: TBD (Class’s choice?)

**PTP’s Janus Lecture Series**

V] **Thomas Hobbes**  
*Leviathan* (from Part I, read only chapters 13-15; focus on Part II).  
Seminar on Hobbes.  
Hobbes Seminar Question: “Is the Hobbesian sovereign the agent or the master of his people? Are the people now on Capital Hill your agents, or are they your masters?”

*Seminar Essays Bundle #1 (Sparta, Aristotle, Machiavelli, or Hobbes: Pick two of four)*

VI] **John Locke**  
*Second Treatise of Government* (please focus on Chapters I-IX)  
Seminar on Locke.

VII] **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**  
*The Social Contract*  
Seminar on Rousseau.

VIII] **Immanuel Kant**  
*Perpetual Peace*  
Seminar on Kant.

IX] **John Stuart Mill**  
*On Liberty*  
Seminar on Mill.

*Seminar Essays Bundle #2 (Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Mill: Pick two of four)*

X] **Karl Marx**  
*The Communist Manifesto; The Jewish Problem*  
Seminar on Marx.

XI] **John Rawls vs. Robert Nozick**  
*Justice as Fairness; Anarchy, State and Utopia (CR)*  
Seminar on Rawls vs. Nozick.

**PTP’s Janus Lecture Series**
Nov. 25: No Lecture (replaced by student attendance at Constitution Day and Janus Lecture Series)

Thanksgiving Break: No seminars this week, alas.

XII] John Tomasi

*The Myth of Modern Liberalism (ms.)*

Seminar on Tomasi book manuscript.

*Reading Period:* In preparation for the (grim) PS11 Final Exam, please read Steven Lukes *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat.*

*Seminar Essays Bundle #3 (Marx, Rawls/Nozick, Tomasi: Pick two of three).*