



SSC 402 – Major Political Thinkers: Machiavelli

Fall 2018/2019

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CLASS: Thursday, 10.30 – 13.15

Office hours – Thursday, 13.30 -14.30 + Skype upon appointment

Course Description

Niccolo Machiavelli (Florence, 1469-1527) is generally known as the father of Political Science. He was the first political thinker to analyse the birth, life and death of States only on the basis of facts and human behaviour, with no concession to utopia, or ideology, or theology. That is why Machiavelli's thought has remained modern throughout the centuries, and up until today has fascinated and attracted many politicians and rulers of very different ideological extraction.

This course will be based on the reading of Machiavelli's masterpiece, *The Prince*, and his crucial play, *La Mandragola*, and on selected readings from *The Discourses on the First Decade by Titus Livy*. The aim of this course is to help the students to obtain a full understanding of Machiavelli's culture and political thought, using a direct, critical approach to primary sources.

Particular attention will be paid to Machiavelli's cultural formation which was based on the Classics, and to the Florentine and Italian historical context in which he lived.

The interest in Machiavelli throughout the centuries will be considered, and special attention will be paid to his influence on the major modern political philosopher.

CSU GE category: D5

Required Books/ Readings

The Portable Machiavelli, Penguin Books, (15 Euro approx.). Available on Amazon and **in the library.**

Please note that this is an anthology of Machiavelli's production; all the books by Machiavelli

are available also online.

http://www.letteraturaitaliana.net/pdf/Volume_4/t324.pdf (Il principe, in Italian)

<https://www.bartleby.com/36/1/prince.pdf> (*The prince*, in English)

2) Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, (10 Euro approx.). Available on Amazon and **in the library**.

Additional readings and web resources may be given during the semester.

General Course Requirements

- 1) Active participation in the class and regular reading of assigned texts;
- 2) One mid-term test, made up by multiple choice questions and a brief essay to write in class;
- 3) One oral presentation (topic to be described in class);
- 4) One final exam, made up by multiple choice questions and a brief essay to write in class.

Students must complete ALL requirements for passing the course.

You are responsible for the weekly readings, the information given to you in class, on handouts **and via email**. Part of your grade will be determined by regular attendance, participation in class discussions and active engagement in all activities of this course. ***Make sure to check your email on a regular basis for updates and additional information.***

Class Site Visits

Casa Machiavelli, San Casciano (Firenze), Thursday, December 6.

Approx. cost: 20 Euro including lunch, museum and bus.

Exact time departure and return to be announced.

PLEASE NOTE: It is possible that CSU will cover all costs for this trip. To be announced

Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Friday, January, 11.

No cost.

Visits to museums and other institutions and sites are included in this course and you are required to attend all of them.

Learning Objectives

- Students will study the biography of Machiavelli and the political challenges of Renaissance;
- Students will learn the historical origins of political science;
- Student will read and analyze Machiavelli's production;
- Students will learn the difference between the stereotype of Machiavelli (e. g. the end justifies the means) and his contradictory political message (historical accuracy).

Learning Outcomes

- At the end of the semester students will be able to identify Machiavelli's contribution to the modern approach to political science;
- They will be able to give presentations about topics of political philosophy;
- When given a political text, they will be able to identify the major implications that the writer is presenting.

Grades and Exams

Your grade will be determined by the following assignments:

- Midterm 35 %
- Final 40 %
- Class participation 10%
- Class presentation 15%

100-94	A
93-90	A-
89-88	B+
87-83	B
82-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-73	C
72-69	C-
68-67	D+
66-63	D
62-60	D-
59 and below	F

The + and - symbols will be used for grading (except for A+). Specific information about the presentation, exams and other projects will be given to you during the semester.

A Student performance has been outstanding and indicates an exceptional degree of academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements.

B Student performance has been at a high level and indicates solid academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements.

C Student performance has been adequate and indicates satisfactory academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements.

D Student performance has been less than adequate and indicates deficiencies in meeting the learning outcomes and/or course requirements.

F Student performance has been unacceptable and indicates a failure to meet the learning outcomes and/or course requirements.

Class Code of Conduct

Activities unrelated to the course (including private conversations, emailing, text messaging, reading, web surfing, etc.) are not permitted during class time. Please turn off or put all electronic devices on silent mode prior to the beginning of the class.

Academic Dishonesty Will Not Be Tolerated.

Any form of plagiarism or cheating may result in a failing final grade in the course and might be reported to IP and your campus. You are better off spending your time studying for the class. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the student handbook and catalog of your campus and also ask me and/ or the Resident Director for more information.

"3-Hour" Attendance policy

A) Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed during the semester but more than one unexcused absence will lower your grade as follows (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies): TWO unexcused absences, lowers by 1.5 letter grade (i. e., B to C-); THREE unexcused absences, lowers by 3 letter grades (i. e., A to D). More than THREE unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.

B) In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding five minutes will be considered an absence.

C) Dates of mid-term and final exams can not be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about there exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates.

Missing the midterm or the final exam will mean failure of the course.

D) During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructor. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

E) Use of the computer is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by the professor.

F) Eating is not allowed in class.

Important: Exams

You must attend all exams and quizzes as scheduled. Make-up exams are given only for valid reasons. Please check your academic calendar **BEFORE** you book trips, flights and hotels.

Copyright and Privacy Laws

No portion of the texts, films, videos, and other material used in this course can be reproduced in any format including scanning, electronic downloading or sharing of files.

In addition, no portion of class lectures, discussions, and activities can be reproduced and used in any format, including electronic, without the written consent of the instructor and/or guest speakers.

Changes - Important

Information contained in this syllabus, including the class calendar, other than that mandated by the University, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Class Calendar

November, 8:

- Outlook of the course;
- The political situation in Italy between 15th and 16th centuries

November, 15:

- Machiavelli's biography and legacy;

November, 22: No class (Thanksgiving);

November, 29:

- The role of classic antiquity and of political experience in Machiavelli's production;
- Video "Medici, godfather of Renaissance".

December, 6:

- **Class site visit: Albergaccio, Sant'Andrea in Percussina, Casa Machiavelli. Details TBA**
- Introducing the Prince: overview
- *The Prince*: State-building and State-keeping (chapters 1-9);

December, 13:

- *The Prince*: the question of security (chapters 10-14);
- *The Prince*: defining "political virtue" – The ideal principedom – (chapters 15-18).

December, 20:

- **MID TERM: 10.30 – 11.45**
- Movie La Mandragola (to be confirmed)

Winter break: Dec. 21 – Jan. 6

January, 10:

- *The Prince*: defining "political virtue" – The ideal prince – (chapters 18-24).
- *The Prince*: the role of *Fortuna* in human affairs (chapter 25);
- *The Prince*: a new prince for Italy (chapter 26);

January, 11: Friday

- **Class site visit: Palazzo Vecchio (details to be announced)**

January, 17: no class (due to the class visit of Jan. 11)

January, 24:

- *The Discourses*: the ideal democracy
- Roman republic and Machiavelli ideal government (references: *Book One*, chapters 2-4, 10-12 and 58; *Book Two*, chapter 2; *Book Three*, chapters 21 and 41).

January, 31:

- The "minor works": *The Mandrake root*, *Florentine histories*, *The art of war*.
- Students' presentations.

February, 7:

- Revision of the contents of the course.
- Students' presentations (if necessary)

February, 11 – 14: **FINAL EXAM** (date to be announced).