Political leaders exercise enormous power. The decisions of political leaders have momentous consequences for the lives of ordinary people. But political leaders can only wield this kind of power because citizens are willing to obey their commands. Furthermore, we can evaluate the actions of political leaders and the citizens that obey them from a moral perspective. Some political leaders make morally bad decisions and sometimes it is wrong to obey people who have political power. Given that (1) the decisions of political leaders have important consequences for people’s lives and (2) their decisions and actions can be morally better or worse, it important to evaluate the behavior and decisions of political leaders and the citizens that obey them in a reflective and rigorous way.

In this course, we will study political ethics: we will examine the moral responsibilities of political leaders as well as the rights and obligations of ordinary citizens. The course is organized around the following moral questions:

i. Why should we have political leaders in the first place? What justifies political power?

ii. Who should lead? Should political power be democratically distributed? Or should an elite group rule?

iii. How should political leaders behave? Are the ethical standards that apply to political leaders different from the ethical standards that apply to ordinary citizens?

iv. What are the moral obligations of followers? Do ordinary citizens have obligations to obey unjust laws? How should citizens exercise civic virtue?

v. How should political leaders and ordinary citizens behave during war?

We will try to answer these questions or, at least, we will try to get a grip on how to go about answering them.

General Course Expectations

1. You should arrive at class fully prepared to discuss the readings. This means that you will spend some time thinking about the readings and come to class with some questions or critical points prepared. The readings for this class will sometimes be very difficult. It is not enough to skim the readings. You should read them carefully and take notes on them in order to understand them.

2. You should attend every class session and come prepared to discuss the readings.
3. **Do not use your laptop, ipad, or phone during class.**

4. I can only offer make up exams in cases of extreme duress like documented medical/personal emergencies and/or religious observance.

**Email Policy:** I will respond to all emails within 24 hours of receiving them, but I will generally not respond to emails sent to me after 5pm until the following day. I am happy to give you feedback on your rough drafts, but I will not read and comment on draft papers if you send them to me just before they are due. If you want me to give you feedback on your work, you need to send me your rough drafts at least 48 hours (and preferably earlier) before the deadline.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Response Papers: 10% of final grade**
   a. You need to turn in a 1-page response paper on Thursday of every week unless I indicate otherwise on the syllabus. The response paper briefly summarizes a central argument, position, or theme in one of the readings and offers some critical comments on this argument, position, or theme. The purpose of this assignment is to get you thinking critically about the readings. Each response paper is graded on a "pass-fail" basis. I will not give you extensive comments on your response papers unless you explicitly ask for them.
   b. Turn in a copy of your response paper in-class on due dates. I will not accept emailed copies.
   c. The maximum length of your response papers is 500 words.

2. **Short Paper: 15%**
   a. There will be one short paper that is approximately 1200-1700 words long. I will give you suggested prompts for this paper several weeks before it is due. But you are free to develop your own prompt as long as you consult with me first.
   b. Please email me your essay at hidalgoj@gmail.com by **5pm on the day that the essay is due.**
   c. Chicago style citations required.
   d. If you turn in your paper late, I will immediately drop it by 1/3 of a grade. I will then continue to drop your grade by 1/3 for every two days that pass.

3. **Long Paper: 25%**
   a. There is one long paper. This paper will be about 2000-2500 words long.
   b. You need to come up with your own prompt for this paper. You will submit a prompt, thesis statement, an outline of your major argument, and two additional references that you will use, and I will either approve your prompt or return it to you with a request
for revision. Your essay must engage with at least one substantive reading in the course.

c. Please email me your essay at hidalgoj@gmail.com by 5pm on the day that the essay is due. The same lateness policies regarding the short paper apply to the long paper as well.

d. Chicago style citations required.

4. Midterm Examination: 15%
   a. The midterm exam will involve several short answer questions about the reading. The midterm exam will take place on Tuesday, October 8th.

5. Final Examination: 20%
   a. The final exam will consist in several short answer questions about the reading. The final exam will take place on Thursday, December 5th.

6. Class Attendance and Participation: 15%
   a. Class attendance and participation are mandatory. You must do the readings and come to class prepared to discuss these readings.
   b. Students will be penalized by two percentage points from their final grade for each unexcused absence beyond one absence.
   c. In this class we will discuss several sensitive topics, and you may feel uncomfortable participating in those discussions. If you find that you did not participate in a particular discussion you can send me an email up to 24 hours after class. In the email, write 200-300 words about your thoughts on the discussion and you can receive participation credit for that day. You do not need to explain to me why you did not participate in the discussion.
   d. Everyone is expected to be respectful and polite, bearing in mind that other students may have different backgrounds and experiences. Personal attacks on particular students will not be tolerated.

All grades are entered as numbers that are equal to the following grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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<tr>
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<td>90.00-93.32</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.67-89.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83.33-86.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.00-83.32</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>76.67-79.99</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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Required and Recommended Texts:

- All of the other readings are available on blackboard.

**Week 1: Introduction**

Tuesday, August 27th: The Problem of Authority

Thursday, August 29th: Leadership and Moral Reasoning

Part 1: What Are the Moral Purposes of Political Leadership?

**Week 2: The Absolutist State**

Tuesday, September 3rd: The State of Nature

Thursday, September 5th: The Absolutist State
- **Response Paper Due.**

**Week 3: Anarchism and the Constitutional State**

Tuesday, September 10th: Anarchism
- Michael Huemer, “The Problem of Authority”

Thursday, September 12th: The Constitutional State
- **Response Paper Due.**
- **Paper Topics.**
Part II: Who Should Lead?

Week 4: Democratic Leadership

Tuesday, September 17th: Why Democracy?
- Aristotle, Politics, pp. 82-85.
- Plato, Protagoras, excerpt.
- Elizabeth Anderson, “Democracy,”

Thursday, September 19th: Democratic Leadership
- **Response Paper Due.**
- Review on Writing Philosophical Essays
- Elizabeth Anderson, “Fair Opportunity in Education” (focus on pages 595-614, skim the rest).

Week 5: Elite Rule

Tuesday, September 24th: Voter Irrationality

Thursday, September 26th: For Elite Rule
- **Response Paper Due.**
- Jason Brennan, “The Right to a Competent Electorate”

Part III: How Should Political Leaders Act?

Week 6: Political Realism

Monday, 30th:
- **First Paper Due.**

Tuesday, October 1st: The Prince

Thursday, October 3rd: Torture
- Alan Dershowitz, “The Case for Torturing the Ticking Bomb Terrorist”
- David Luban, “Liberalism, Torture, and the Ticking Bomb”
- Uwe Steinhoff, “The Case for Dirty Harry and Against Alan Dershowtiz”

Week 7: Midterm

Tuesday, October 8th:
• **Midterm**

Thursday, October 10\textsuperscript{th}: NO CLASS

**Week 8: Political Ethics**

Tuesday, October 15\textsuperscript{th}: NO CLASS

Thursday, October 17\textsuperscript{th}: Deception, Secrecy, and Whistleblowing
  • Sissela Bok, “Lies for the Public Good”
  • John Cassidy, “Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero”
  • Rahul Sagar, “Who Decides What’s Secret: Obama or Snowden?”
  • **Response Paper Due.**

Part IV: What Are the Obligations of Followers?

**Week 9: Political Obligation**

Tuesday, October 22\textsuperscript{nd}: For Political Obligation
  • John Locke, *Two Treatises*, chapter VII (pp. 52-65).

Thursday, October 24\textsuperscript{th}: Against Political Obligation
  • **Response Paper Due.**
  • Michael Huemer, “The Traditional Social Contract Theory” and “What If There Is No Authority?”

**Week 10: Civic Virtue**

Tuesday, October 29\textsuperscript{th}:
  • **Paper Topic Due.**
  • Jason Brennan, “Polluting the Polls”
  • James Duane, “Jury Nullification”

Thursday, October 31\textsuperscript{st}: NO CLASS

Part V: War and Leadership

**Week 11: Just War Theory**

Tuesday, November 4\textsuperscript{th}: Just War Theory
  • Brian Orend, “Just War Theory” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, section 2, available at:
    • [http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/#2](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/#2)
Thursday, November 6th: Iraq
- **Response Paper Due.**
- Fernando Teson, “Ending Tyranny in Iraq”
- Nardin, “Humanitarian Imperialism”

**Week 12: The Responsibilities of Political Leaders**

Tuesday, November 12th: Supreme Emergency and the Responsibility of Political Leaders

Thursday, November 14th: The Fog of War
- **Response Paper Due**
- Watch: *The Fog of War*
- Larry May, “War Crimes During and After War”

**Week 13: The Responsibilities of Combatants**

Tuesday, November 19th: For the Moral Equality of Combatants

Thursday, November 21st: Against the Moral Equality of Combatants
- **Response Paper Due.**
- Jeff McMahan, “The Ethics of Killing in War” *Ethics*.

**Week 14: Political Ethics and War**

Tuesday, November 26th: Targeted Killing
- **Response Paper Due.**

Thursday, November 28th: NO CLASS

**Week 15: Targeted Killing and Final**

Tuesday, December 3rd: Drones
- Readings to be assigned.

Thursday, December 5th: Final
- **Final**
Long Paper Due: December 10\textsuperscript{th} at 5pm.
**Awarding of Credit**

To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

[http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html)

**Disability Accommodations**

Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.

[http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html](http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/disability-services/policies.html)

**Honor System**

The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”

[http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/honor/](http://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/honor/)

**Religious Observance**

Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.

[http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)