GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS – FALL 2016

Course: Machiavelli and the Romans (Pols 345)
Credits: 3 credits
Instructor: Dr Bernard Gbikpi, PhD (gbikpi@gonzaga.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment
Schedule: Tuesday 3:35 – 6:30 pm

Prerequisites: None

Course Description
The course offers a thorough reading of The Prince and of excerpts from the Discourses on the Ten First Books of Titus Livius, as well as a reading of scholarly articles about these books and the main topics and issues they contain.

The course includes a visit to Machiavelli’s then property and place of exile at San Andrea in Percussina where he wrote The Prince -15 kms from south Florence.

Course Objectives
This course intends to introduce the students to Machiavelli’s political thought in The Prince and the Discourses and to Machiavelli’s legacy to contemporary political thought and political science. The course will also familiarize students with Machiavelli’s historical context in Florence during the early Renaissance.

Learning Objectives
Given an interpretation of Machiavelli’s The Prince and the Discourses, or an interpretation of a specific issue in those books, students will be able to evaluate its soundness by using their own analysis of Machiavelli’s texts. Students will also be able to evaluate the relevance and the applicability of Machiavelli’s concepts and theories to our 21st century political actuality and political thought.

Teaching Method
Each session consists in two parts: a) a discussion on a group of chapters from The Prince (in the first part of the semester) and the Discourses (in the second half of the semester); b) the presentation and discussion by the students of a commentary article bearing on the chapters/topics of the day.

Teaching Commitment
I aim at obtaining serious and joyous interactive discussions in class on the basis of everybody’s actual knowledge of the reading of the day. In my experience, such readings and discussions are an effective pedagogical tool for learning and practicing political thought, its methods, its concepts, and Machiavelli’s political thought in particular. Not the least, when successful, each class becomes an agreeable time and nice record for everybody. On my behalf it requires well prepared courses and thorough comments of all the students’ written pieces. On the students behalf it requires the reading of the assigned texts, their written review and their active discussion.

Decorum
Cell-phones and e-mail boxes must be off; however, web browsers may remain switched on to the extent that they may serve the class’ learning purposes.
ATTENDANCE POLICY
Students are presumed to have sufficient maturity to recognize their responsibility for regular class attendance. Gonzaga University’s standard policy on absences stipulates that the maximum allowable absence is two class hours (100 minutes) for each class credit. My course being a three credit course and being scheduled to meet during 3 hours for each class, the maximum allowable absence is two classes in the semester. The grade given for exceeding absences is a “V”, which has the same effect as “F” (Fail) and is counted in the GPA. This outcome can be appealed to the Dean. Please, I need you to give me the precise reason for any of these two absences. For any absence that is not due to illness or extraordinary event the participation grade for the missed class will be 0.

COURSE GRADING
Weekly readings’ outlines of Machiavelli’s texts count for 40% of the total grade.
Review papers and presentations of commentary articles counts for 45%
The final exam contributes 15% of the total grade. It consists in an in-class essay.
Steadiness in your involvement in all aspects of the course and all over the semester is the only A strategy.

ORAL PARTICIPATION
Oral participation consists in participating to the discussion. It basically consists in “voicing” the issues and arguments the reading has triggered in you and to react to each other’s argument.

THE WEEKLY OUTLINES
Outlines of chapters from The Prince and the Discourses are a thorough restatement of those chapters and a thoughtful reaction to them. There is no required length for the outline as it depends on the readings that are outlined. And there is no special requirement for the reaction besides being reflective and besides their ability to launch and nourish the discussion.
Outlines of the background readings consist in a restatement of their argument and a thoughtful reaction to it.
Outlines are due to me at the beginning of the class.

THE REVIEW PAPER
The review paper is a thoughtful account of the assigned piece of writing you have read. The point of the review is to analytically restate the argument(s) and the contents of the reading, to discuss it, and to propose a research question and bibliographical sources for further research. Your review paper should have the following structure:
1) Report the complete bibliographical reference of the piece you are reviewing: author(s), year of publication, title of the article, name of the journal, volume number, issue number, page numbers, and the author(s)’s professional position.
2) The issue and main argument(s): a. What is the issue discussed in the writing? b. Formulate the argument (or what is the author trying to convince us of?) into a few sentences.
3) How does the author lead the argument? or what the demonstration consists in? That section of your review includes two parts: a) a description in one paragraph the structure of the article; (the article includes n sections: an introduction (pp.); section 1 entitled (pp.); section 2 entitled (pp.); etc… b. an account of each section’s content. If the article is not divided into sections, identify by yourself sections and entitle them. The scope of this exercise is to follow and restate the author’s reasoning step by step.
4) We aim to make a critical assessment of the argument in two parts that are strengths and weaknesses. Indicative questions toward such assessment are: Does the argument convince us? Is only part of it convincing? Why? Is it cogent/logical? Do we think it helps us understanding something fundamental about the issue at stake? Is there any particular assumption that is important for the argument that we think should be strengthened? Are the empirical facts reported by the author relevant, accurate? Are they any alternative or counter-arguments mentioned by the author her/himself? Does the author use particular words or concepts or other authors that are
particularly important for his/her argument/demonstration? How does s/he use them? Is s/he consistent in her/his use of them?

5) **Further research:** Write down a research question that you are genuinely curious about and that stems from the article’s argument. A research question should reflect an underlying tension and should force to weigh evidence and compare different opinions. State your thesis that is what kind of argument you hope to make through your research question. Identify and indicate at least two bibliographical sources that are likely to address your question. Say why you think the sources in question are apposite. Such sources must, preferably, be found among those reported by the article under review for this is one main sign that your research question copes with the author’s argument. Fully report their bibliographical references.

**NB:** Specific questions for writing the assessment and/or the research question may also be assigned by the instructor.

*A template of a review paper will be made available on Blackboard.*

**Review paper grading**

**Full point (FP):** the work well addresses each point of the review.

¾ of the point (3/4 pt): some point of the review is addressed wrongly, superficially or not at all.

**Half point (HP):** many points of the review are addressed wrongly, superficially or not at all.

¼ of the point (1/4 pt): there are more points of the review addressed wrongly, superficially or not at all than points that are well addressed.

**0 point:** The work was not done

**FINAL EXAM**

It consists in two parts. The first is a take-home proper review paper of an assigned journal article on Machiavelli’s *The Prince* or *Discourses*. The second part is an in-class essay that elaborates upon the argument provided in the reviewed assigned journal article. The essay should be structured like the review paper but with your argument, that is: a title of yours; the issue and argument of your essay; an outline of it; the unfolding of your argument along entitled sections; a conclusion that reassesses your point and that provides bibliographical clues for further reflection. It should include a bibliography.

**Essay grading**

The essay will be evaluated along the clarity of its argument, the clarity of its structure, the consistency of its follow-up, its engagement with the literature of the field, and the perspectives it opens for further reflection.

**Final Grades Conversion**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92.5 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.0 - 92.4</td>
<td>A -</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>87.5 – 89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>82.5 – 87.4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.0 – 82.4</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>75.5 – 79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>72.5 – 77.4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.0 – 72.4</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>67.5 – 69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>0.00 – 59.9</td>
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<td>Exceeding absences</td>
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<td>Failing</td>
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**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student.
Academic dishonesty is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person’s work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing such an editing and revision service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts; plagiarism, defined as claiming intellectual property on somebody else's work, in other words as cultural theft. Written assignments will be submitted to the plagiarism detection procedures of TurnItIn.com., activated on Blackboard. Students who are academically dishonest will receive “0”, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor. A plagiarized assignment/paper, research project, etc will be graded 0 (zero) and sent to the Main Campus accompanied by a report.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**
Documented learning disabilities or other medically certified problems that need special accommodation for any of the student's expected academic performances will be treated with the due attention.

**REQUIRED BOOKS**  
- Other required readings are available on Blackboard and listed here below in the Course Outline and schedule section.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**  

**Most Recent Publications**  

**Historical Context**  

**Biographies**
- Viroli Maurizio, *Niccolò’s Smile*, New York, Hill and Wand, 2000

**Scholarly Studies**
- Patricia Vilches and Gerald Seaman, eds., *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2007 (9789004158771)

- **On line academic IR resources:**
  Machiavelli • The Prince • The Common Sense of Politics (full documentary)
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdFaeCPKTKs&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdFaeCPKTKs&feature=related)

- **Bibliographic Databases**
  Academic Search Complete
  JSTOR
**COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE**

NB: Some readings may be changed

**September 13, 2016**
- Introduction
- *Historical and political background - Machiavelli’s Life - Machiavelli’ Humanism - Fortuna and Virtù – Film on Florence in Renaissance*

The Various Interpretations of *The Prince*

**September 20, 2016**
- Reading and discussing Machiavelli: *Letter to Francesco Vettori, 10 December 1513* (126-29) - *The Dedicatory Letter: Niccolò Macchiavelli to His Magnificence Lorenzo de’ Medici*

**September 27, 2016**
- Reading and discussing *The Prince*: Chapters I to VI

**October 04, 2016**
- Reading and discussing *The Prince*: Chapters VII to XI

**October 11, 2016**
- Reading and discussing *The Prince*: Chapters XII-XVIII

**October 18, 2016**
- Reading and discussing *The Prince*: Chapters XIX-XXVI

**October 25, 2016**
- Session possibly at Machiavelli’s property at San Andrea in Percussina --15 kms from south Florence-- where he wrote *The Prince*—on Machiavelli and the people
- Introduction to the *Discourses*
- Reading and discussing *The Discourses*: Dedicatory letter - Introduction

**November 08, 2016**
- Reading and discussing *The Discourses*: Book I chapters 1 to 10 –focus on 2 and 6
November 15, 2016
- Reading and discussing *The Discourses*: Book I chapters 11 to 15 and 27

November 29, 2016

December 06, 2016
- Reading and discussing *The Discourses*: Book II Introduction and chapters 1-5
- Reading and Discussing *The Discourses*: Book III Chapters 7-9

December 13, 2016
- Final exam

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