

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY – INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM IN FLORENCE**  
**Fall Semester 2012/2013**

**SSC 402, MAJOR POLITICAL THINKERS: MACHIAVELLI -SYLLABUS**

Prof. ALICE MARTINI [alice.martini@gmail.com](mailto:alice.martini@gmail.com)

**The class will meet:** Monday 9.30 - 10.50 / Wednesday 9.30 - 10.50

**Office hours:** After class.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Niccolò 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.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1) One mid-term test and a final exam. Each will consist of a single essay to write in class.
- 2) Active participation in the class and regular readings of assigned texts.

**Roll will be called at all classes.**

**Mid-term exam on Dec. 19. Final exam Feb. 11 – 14: to be announced**

- 3) **Class site visits** – Various site visits will be organised for this class (Palazzo Vecchio, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, il Bargello, Duomo, etc.) Some entry fees may be required. To be announced.

**EVALUATIONS:**

35% for the mid-term, 35% for the final exam and 30% for active participation in class.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**

1) ***The Man:***

- Niccolò Machiavelli student of Classics and government official in Renaissance Florence.

2) ***The Political Scientist:***

- *The Prince:*

- a) State-building and State-keeping (chapters 1-9);
- b) the question of security (chapters 10-14);

- c) defining "political virtue" (chapters 15-23);
- d) about fortune's role in human affairs (chapter 25);
- e) a new prince for Italy (chapters 24 and 26);

- *The Discourses*:

- a) State and people;
- b) democracy and conflict;
- c) politics and religion;
- d) freedom and defence of the mother-country.

(Book One, chapters 2-4, 10-12 and 58; Book Two, chapter 2; Book Three, chapters 21 and 41)

### 3) *The Historian and The Playwright*:

- the *History of Florence*;
- the *Mandragola*.

### 4) *The Myth* :

- Machiavelli and Western political thought and politicians up until today.

## ATTENDANCE AND OTHER CLASS POLICIES

A) Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies) as follows: 3 unexcused absences, lowers one letter grade; 4 unexcused absences, lowers two letter grades; 5 unexcused absences, lowers 3 letter grades. More than **five 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 ten minutes will be considered an absence.

C) Dates of mid-term and final exams **cannot** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. 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 instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

E) Use of laptop computers in class is not permitted, unless previously approved by the professor.

F) Eating is NOT allowed in class.

G) Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on **silent mode** during class.

## EXAMINATION SCHEDULE:

a) Mid-term examination: 2012, December, 19

b) Final Examination: February, 11 – 14, 2013 (to be announced)

## TEXTBOOKS:

1. *The Portable Machiavelli*, Penguin Books;
2. Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press
3. Other readings will be assigned during class.