

PS 111B Early Modern Political Theory Midterm Paper Prompts

Winter 2023

Deadline: Sunday, 12 February by 1159P

Paper should be submitted through Canvas. Those who wish to receive detailed comments should bring a hard copy to lecture on Monday 13 February.

Adherence to the requirements of academic integrity, authenticity, and honesty as outlined in the UCLA Student Code is expected. Any violations of the academic code of conduct must be reported.

For details on the evaluation criteria, please refer to the Grading Rubric posted on Canvas. The Grading Rubric may also provide some ideas for how to expand one's analysis.

Respond to one topic and discuss at least two thinkers from the first half of the course (Machiavelli, Luther, Calvin, Montaigne). Papers should be approximately 1750–2000 words in length.

1. "The gap between how people actually behave and how they ought to behave is so great that anyone who ignores everyday reality in order to live up to an ideal will soon discover he has been taught how to destroy himself..."

Explain this advice from Machiavelli to the Prince. Elaborate a response that includes another thinker on the validity of the distinction between reality and ideals in politics and political practice.

2. Does a ruler need to be virtuous? Support your argument with at least two of our thinkers.
3. What are the ends of government? Discuss the responses of at least two of the authors we have studied in supporting your argument.
4. What should the relationship be between politics and other areas of life (i.e. morality, religion, knowledge) according to two or more of the authors we have studied?