“I was sitting on the toilet when your messenger arrived, and just at that moment I was mulling over the absurdities of this world.”

- Niccolò Machiavelli, in a letter to Francesco Guicciardini, 17 May 1521

Fall Semester 2013
MW 14:00-15:15
Social Science Building

Professor Paul Dover
Department of History & Philosophy
Office: Social Science Building 4108
Office Hours: MW 9-11, 12:30-13:45 and by appointment
770-423-6728
pdover@kennesaw.edu (please use the e-mail on D2L for all correspondence regarding the course)

Course Description for Course Catalog: An investigation of the life, thought and influence of the 16th-century Florentine secretary and humanist Niccolò Machiavelli. We will examine Machiavelli's roles as bureaucrat, Renaissance humanist, political scientist, historian and playwright. Of central concern in the course will be Machiavelli’s political philosophy and the way in which it was shaped by his reading of Roman history and his varied experiences as a secretary and ambassador. Texts include The Discourses on Livy, The Prince, Florentine Histories, The Art of War, and The Mandrake Root. The course will also examine early responses to Machiavelli, both by contemporaries such as Francesco Guicciardini, and by early modern political theorists such as Botero, Richelieu, Hobbes, and Rousseau.

Overview: The 500th anniversary of Niccolò Machiavelli’s writing of The Prince is an apt time to reflect on the enigma of Florence’s most famous chancery secretary. Staunch supporter of republican government or apologist for tyranny? Prescriber of evil or merely describer of
reality? Cold-hearted politician or sensitive, comic playwright? Cynic or idealist? Such paradoxes have followed Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) around for the past five centuries. They are at the core of his life, his thought, and his legacy. That they have continued to exercise the minds of interpreters without pause ever since his death is an indication of how Machiavelli’s thought has continuously spoken to the human condition.

There is much in Machiavelli’s thought that is timeless, to be sure. This course, however, seeks to reconnect the Florentine with his Renaissance milieu to provide perspective on the historical Machiavelli. This will require an understanding of what social and cultural forces were at work in his world, of the people and events he encountered during his life, and of what he himself was reading. Machiavelli’s thought is rooted in experience (esperientia) and in his reading of history (historia) – to him practical politics must be informed by both past and present. In this, he very much represented the Renaissance spirit.

The primary vehicle by which we will meet Machiavelli in this course is his writing. You will find that his corpus is rich and varied and extends well beyond just The Prince, his most famous (and infamous) work. I believe that to understand and appreciate Machiavelli as a thinker and as a historical personage, it is necessary to read beyond his most well-known treatise. Thus we will also encounter Machiavelli as historian, military theorist, novelist, and prose dramatist. In so doing, while I promise no resolution of the Machiavellian paradoxes, I hope you will perceive a more complete, more nuanced historical figure.

The last third of this class will examine the reception of Machiavelli among early modern writers on politics. We will gauge the nature and extent of Machiavelli’s influence, and how it spawned what we might call a ‘Machiavellianism’ in early modern political theory. In so doing we will seek to define the precise contours of such a term. We will see that from an early date the true legacy of Machiavelli’s thought was contested ground, as it remains in today’s world.

**Course objectives:**

- Exposure to some of the most provocative, influential and controversial texts in Western thought.
- To understand and appreciate the historical circumstances under which Machiavelli produced his writings.
- To trace the genealogy of Machiavelli’s influence in the early modern period
- To gain valuable practice in the exegesis of early modern texts
- To improve one’s written and oral rhetorical abilities through regular and scrutinized argumentation

**Class Format:**

Classes will consist almost entirely seminar-style discussion, with very little in the way of formal lecture. Students will on occasion be given opportunities to lead class discussions.

*Nota bene:* Machiavelli was a citizen of republican Florence and a devoted student of Renaissance humanism – in both of these capacities, it was essential that he display the rhetorical capacities championed by classical rhetors such as Cicero and Quintilian. Part of being an educated person and a citizen of the polis was the willingness and ability to share your wisdom and insights with others, and to convince them of the rectitude of your
positions. I will conduct this class according to the same spirit. I thus expect you to share your ideas in speech as well as on paper, and will operate under the assumption that a good student will be willing and able to do so.

**Required Texts:**

The following texts will be available for purchase at the KSU bookstore:

NB: You must read these translations and editions of the texts:


The following readings will be available on Desire2Learn (indicated by “D2L” below)

- Thomas Aquinas, *De regno ad regem Cypri* (“On Kingship to the King of Cyprus”)
- Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*
- Giovanni Botero, *Reason of State,* extracts
- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* extracts
- Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Duties,* extracts

**Required Work**

NB: All written work must be submitted at the corresponding drop-box set up on Desire2Learn, as well as in hard copy. A paper will be considered submitted when both of these things have been done. Late work will be penalized 1 letter grade for each class-day that it is late (i.e. a paper due on Monday that is turned in on Wednesday will be marked off a letter grade). I do not accept work that is more than one week late. Also note that you must complete all required assignments in order to pass this course.

- Regular attendance and good humor. Attendance is essential for success in this course. I permit 5 absences over the course of the semester; each absence beyond 5 results in 1 letter grade being deducted from your final grade. Should you miss class, you remain responsible for all handouts, notes and announcements. I will take class roll 15 minutes into class; if you are more than 15 minutes later, you will be considered absent.
• Class preparation and participation (15%), including occasional leadership of class discussions. It is essential that you complete the assigned reading each day and I have endeavored to keep the reading assigned daily to 60 pages or less. You will receive a grade for class participation.

• ‘Occasional papers’ (5% each – 25% total) – brief thought papers of ca. 2 pages on the assigned reading. There will be 7 occasions to write these, and you must write one on at least 5 of these occasions. If you write more than 5, I will drop the lowest grades beyond the fifth paper.

• A paper on *The Prince* (15%) in which you act as an editor and write a 3-4-page preface to the work.

• A paper in which you write a letter to Machiavelli, taking as your guide the personal letters that appear in *The Essential Writings of Machiavelli* and Connell’s edition of *The Prince*. (15%)

• A final exam (30%) which will ask you to compose essays based around the themes that are listed below – these are themes that we will be emphasizing repeatedly throughout the course of the semester. This exam will require that you refer to texts by Machiavelli, as well as those that preceded and followed him.
  o Fortune
  o Human Nature
  o Virtue
  o Liberty
  o War
  o Gender
  o The Law
  o The ‘People’
  o The ‘State’
  o Order

**Ethical considerations:** I take instances of academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism very seriously – proof of such activity will result in a failing grade for the semester and a referral to the Office of Student Affairs. The bottom line about cheating and plagiarism is this: \textit{do not do it.} It is not worth it - you can seriously damage your reputation among the faculty, your academic standing at this and other universities and your viability in the professional world. Please read the discussion of academic integrity that follows this syllabus - it includes relevant definitions and discussions of applicable penalties. Ignorance of the guidelines does not excuse violations.

Research has indicated that 40-60\% of American college students reported cheating on examinations in college. Over half of the students who reported cheating in college were repeat offenders who used a variety of nefarious techniques to achieve their objective. While we assume the best of all students, we are also well aware of these realities.

Please read the statement on Academic Honesty in the Kennesaw State University Undergraduate Catalog on pages 243-4. Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating.
Unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

I have questions about the integrity of your work, I will ask to meet with you. If outstanding questions remain, I will adhere to the policies above. I reiterate: the penalty for cheating and/or plagiarism in this course is a failing grade for the semester. I will report all incidents of plagiarism to the Office of Student Affairs, and the incident will become part of your official record.

Electronic equipment in class: You are free to use laptops during class, provided that you do not disturb the instructor or your fellow students. If you are a ‘loud typist’ (you know who you are), please refrain from using a laptop in class. Don’t surf the internet or e-mail your friends in class – if this happens, I reserve the right to ban laptops from the classroom. I have no objection to the use of recording devices in class – just please let me know if you intend to use them.

Student Deportment: I want my classroom environment to be rooted in a spirit of mutual respect. In striving to create a scholarly, respectful and efficient classroom environment for my students, I cannot and will not tolerate rude and obnoxious behavior such as social chatting, use of cell phones for texting or social networking, reading of extraneous material such as newspapers, sleeping, and other antisocial activities. Please do not continue in this course if you intend to do any of these. Turn all cell phones off at the beginning of class. Should your phone ring or should you choose to text in class, I will ask you to leave for the day. Please use the restroom before class – unless you have a medical condition that demands it, do not leave the classroom to use the facilities during class.

Class schedule

INTRODUCTION – MACHIAVELLI AND THE RENAISSANCE MILIEU

1. (M, 19 August) Florence in the Renaissance

2. (W, 21 August) The Humanist background

PART ONE – ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PRECURSORS

3. (M, 26 August) Ancient ideals of the polis
   Reading: Plato, The Republic, 3-15, 40-63, 112-129

4. (W, 28 August) Ancient ideals of the polis
   Reading: Plato, The Republic, 130-156, 189-226
M, 2 September – Labor Day, no class

5. (W, 4 September) Ancient ideals of the polis
Reading: Plato, *The Republic*, 275-334; Cicero, *On Duties*, selections (D2L)
*Occasional Paper I*

6. (M, 9 September) Mirrors of Princes
Reading: Thomas Aquinas, *De regno ad regem Cyprî* (“On Kingship to the King of Cyprus”), 1-51 (D2L)

7. (W, 11 September) Christian Kingship
Reading: Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, selections (D2L)

**PART TWO – MACHIAVELLI'S PRINCE**

8. (M, 16 September) Models and Circumstances
Reading: Machiavelli, *The Life of Castruccio Castracani* (EWM, 403-431)
*Occasional Paper 2*

9. (W, 18 September) Writing the Prince
Reading: Connell, “Introduction”; Correspondence of Machiavelli and Francesco Vettori (Connell, pp. 129-140)

10. (M, 23 September) *The Prince*, Chapters 1-7
Reading: *The Prince*, Chapters 1-7 (Connell, 39-64)

11. (W, 25 September) *The Prince*, Chapters 8-18
Reading: *The Prince*, Chapters 8-18 (Connell, 64-96)
*Occasional Paper 3*

12. (M, 30 September) *The Prince*, Chapters 19-23
Reading: *The Prince*, Chapters 19-23 (Connell, 96-115)

13. (W, 2 October) *The Prince*, Chapters 24-26
Reading: *The Prince*, Chapters 24-26 (Connell, 115-123); Early Prefaces to *The Prince* (Connell, 145-152); Innocent Gentillet, “Discourses against Machiavelli” (Connell, 166-169)

**PART THREE – MACHIAVELLI'S REPUBLIC**

14. (M, 7 October) Machiavelli and Livy
Reading: Livy, *History of Rome*, Book I
*Preface to *The Prince* due*

15. (W, 9 October) Machiavelli and Livy
Reading: Livy, *History of Rome*, Book II

16. (M, 14 October) *Discourses on Livy*
Reading: Discourses, Dedication & Book I, Preface & Chapters 1-8 (EWM, 103-139)

17. (W, 16 October) Discourses on Livy
Reading: Discourses, Book I, Chapters 9-18 (EWM, 140-168)
*Occasional Paper 4*

18. (M, 21 October) Discourses on Livy
Reading: Discourses, Book I, Chapters 24-58 (EWM, 169-219)

19. (W, 23 October) Discourses on Livy
Reading: Discourses, Book II, Preface & Chapters 1-27 (EWM, 221-251)

20. (M, 28 October) Discourses on Livy
Reading: Discourses, Book III, Chapters 1-6 (EWM, 253-287)

PART FOUR: HISTORIAN AND DRAMATIST

21. (W, 30 October) Renaissance historiography
Reading: From the Florentine Histories (EWM, 315-345)
*Occasional Paper 5*

22. (M, 4 November) War
Reading: From The Art of War (EWM, 289-313)

23. (W, 6 November) Belfagor
Reading: Belfagor (EWM, 393-401)

24. (M, 11 November) The Mandrake
Reading: The Mandrake (EWM, 433-481)
*Letter to Machiavelli due*

PART FIVE – MACHIAVELLI’S READERS

25. (W, 13 November) Giovanni Botero, Reason of State, extracts (D2L)

26. (M, 18 November) The Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu
Reading: Political Testament, Part 1

27. (W, 20 November) The Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu
Reading: Political Testament, Part 2
*Occasional Paper 6*

28. (M, 25 November) Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, extracts (D2L)

W, 27 November: Thanksgiving Break, no class

29. (M, 2 December) Rousseau, Social Contract
Reading: The Social Contract, Books 1-2 (1-63)
30. (W, 4 December) Rousseau, *Social Contract*
Reading: *The Social Contract*, Books 3-4 (64-168)
*Occasional Paper 7*

Final Exam: W, 11 December, 14:00