Machiavelli in Context

Part I

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William R. Cook was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, and attended public schools there. He is a 1966 graduate of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana (*cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa). He received Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Lehman fellowships to study medieval history from Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1971.

In 1970 Dr. Cook was appointed Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Geneseo, the honors college of SUNY. He has taught there for 35 years and holds the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor of History. At Geneseo, Dr. Cook has taught courses in medieval and ancient history, the Renaissance and Reformation periods, and the Bible and Christian thought. Recently, he has taught a course on Alexis de Tocqueville, as well as freshman seminars that focus on several aspects of African American history and American politics. In 1992 Dr. Cook was named CASE Professor of the Year for New York State. He received the first-ever CARA Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Medieval Studies from the Medieval Academy of America in 2003. He was recently named the alternate for the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, receiving a prize of $15,000, plus a substantial award to his department.

After publishing several articles on Hussite theology and monastic thought, Dr. Cook has, for the last 30 years, focused much of his research on St. Francis of Assisi. Since 1989 he has published three books about Francis and the ways he was represented in paintings in Italy. Dr. Cook has also contributed to the *Cambridge Companion to Giotto* and is the editor of and a contributor to *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, published by Brill in Leiden, The Netherlands.

Professor Cook spends part of each year doing research and teaching in Italy. From his base in Siena, he works frequently in Florence as well as Assisi. He has taken students from SUNY Geneseo to Italy on eight occasions and conducts study tours for the public.

In recent years, Dr. Cook has been a lecturer and site visit leader for the Young Presidents' Organization, a group of young CEOs from around the world. He has participated in their programs in Florence, Prague, Istanbul, and Dublin. In 2005 he was invited by the Friends of Florence, a group of philanthropists dedicated to preserving works of art in Tuscany, to make presentations for the group's meeting in Florence.

Dr. Cook has directed 10 Seminars for School Teachers for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) since 1983; six have had St. Francis as their subject and have been conducted in Siena and Assisi, Italy. In 2003 he directed an NEH seminar for college teachers in Italy entitled "St. Francis and the Thirteenth Century." This seminar will be repeated in the summer of 2006.

In addition to his research in Italy, Professor Cook has studied the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. This interest came about primarily after his unsuccessful run in 1998 for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has authored two volumes of local history and writes a weekly column for his local newspaper. He was a frequent contributor to the editorial pages of the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* in 2004–2005.

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Scope:

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) is a name that triggers powerful responses, even from people who have never read a word of his writings. The adjective *Machiavellian*, found in English as early as the Shakespearean era, conjures up the image of an amoral (at best) political leader, wheeling and dealing and lying to achieve his ends—and often sinister ends at that. The historical figure Niccolò Machiavelli certainly would not recognize that interpretation or caricature of what he wrote and believed.

Everyone who has seriously studied the works of Machiavelli agrees that he was a dedicated republican, that is, someone who believed in the superiority of a republican form of government, defined as a mixed constitution with elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Machiavelli's own career in government service was during a republican revival in his hometown of Florence following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. Yet most people today know Machiavelli *only* as the author of *The Prince*, a work he wrote immediately after he went into a semivoluntary exile following the return of the Medici to power in Florence in 1512. In that short work, Machiavelli implores the Medici to exercise strong and, if need be, ruthless leadership in Italy and to expel the "barbarians" (foreign troops). This counsel hardly sounds like the exhortation of a devoted republican. However, once we recover the *context* of the writing of *The Prince* and analyze it, along with a longer work started about the same time, his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*, we will see clearly that *The Prince* can be read as a book designed to guide leaders in the creation—for Machiavelli, the restoration—of republican government in Italy.

Before exploring the corpus of Machiavelli's writings, we will need to examine three distinct types of background. First, we shall consider Florence and its political history before and during Machiavelli's lifetime. Second, we will look at the developing culture in Machiavelli's time, which we usually call the Renaissance, focusing on how writers and political leaders made use of ancient political thought. Third, we will examine Machiavelli's life story. In doing so, we will focus on his education, his service to the Florentine Republic, and his years in exile on his estate a few miles south of Florence and how each of those periods of his life affected the writings he has left for posterity. When possible, we will glance at Machiavelli's personal letters to grasp how he reacted to the world around him.

Only after laying these foundations can we profitably consider Machiavelli's most important writings. Ideally, we would survey each of his surviving books, even including his plays. However, because Machiavelli's principal legacy is in his political thought, we shall focus our attention on three works that will get us to the heart of what this man believed about how human societies should be organized and governed.

First, we will look at *The Prince*. After attempting to reconstruct the reasons that Machiavelli wrote this little book, I shall systematically examine its contents, focusing not so much on its technical advice but on the broad political analysis that Machiavelli provides. Is this a manual for a ruthless prince—we might say dictator—or a work suggesting the necessity for decisive action in an anarchic and chaotic Italy as a prelude to the establishment of a republican form of government?

We shall next undertake a careful analysis of what many scholars consider Machiavelli's most thoughtful and important contribution to political thought, his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*. This long work is much more than a commentary on Livy's (64 B.C.–A.D. 17) early history of Rome. Often, Machiavelli juxtaposes ancient and modern examples, demonstrating that history cannot be repeated, but its lessons must be adapted to new circumstances. Although a thorough knowledge of the Roman Republic and its most important historian is useful, I shall provide just enough of that background to make Machiavelli's meatiest work concerning republican government intelligible and useful.

Somewhat briefly, we will look at Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*, written under Medici patronage but hardly uncritical of that illustrious family. We will use this book to bring together some of the elements of Machiavelli's thought that we found in sketchier form in his earlier works.

Finally, we will turn to an examination of the reception and spread of Machiavelli's works. First, we will consider how Machiavelli's works were disseminated and received in his own century. This will lead to a wider consideration of how Machiavelli the republican became known primarily for his *Prince* and how the adjective rooted in his name became a synonym for craftiness and duplicity. We shall also see that Machiavelli's republican

thought influenced the development of institutions and values both in Europe and in America. When all is said and done, we must ask whether the work of Niccolò Machiavelli has contributed to the creation and spread of participatory government in the world, or instead, if it has provided a "how-to" manual for those who would concentrate power in their own hands.

Lecture One
Who Is Machiavelli? Why Does He Matter?

Scope: In addressing the main concerns of the entire course, I will begin by approaching the lecture title questions in two ways. First, I will briefly place Machiavelli in the context of the history of Western political thought. Second, I will address the question of the "real" Machiavelli. Although many see Machiavelli as responsible for justifying tyrannical and underhanded rule, others regard him as one of the greatest and most important theorists to argue for the superiority of a republican government.

I will also address Machiavelli's modernity. He strikes most people as one of the founders of modern thought and has even been referred to as "the first modern man." I will introduce this idea here, but to address it thoroughly, we will need to examine the world of Renaissance Italy, as well as Machiavelli's writings.

Outline

I. I approach Machiavelli and his writings in two ways, much as Machiavelli approached ancient history.
- **A.** Machiavelli is a key figure in understanding the Renaissance, especially with regard to political thought.
- **B.** Machiavelli is an important commentator on how politics works and what republics are.
- **C.** I am both a scholar of the Middle Ages and Renaissance and someone active in politics, having been a major party candidate for Congress in 1998.

II. For many people today, the adjective *Machiavellian* denotes or, at least, connotes someone who is dishonest and devious, someone for whom the end justifies the means, someone who believes in iron-fisted rule.
- **A.** This understanding of *Machiavellian* is hardly new, given that the word *Machiavel* enters the English language as a pejorative term in the 16th century.
- **B.** Such a reputation is based almost entirely on a reading or, perhaps, even a misreading of Machiavelli's most widely read book, *The Prince*.

III. However, there are several ways to read *The Prince*, taking into account the purpose for which it was written.
- **A.** The book was written rather hastily in 1513 for the purpose of showing the Medici family that Machiavelli had a formula for success and that he would be valuable to those who were ruling at the moment.
- **B.** Given the chaotic state of Italy in 1513, Machiavelli may have thought that having a strong man take charge in Italy was a first step in establishing peace and order.
- **C.** There are those, especially in the 19th century during the Risorgimento and in the 20th during the time Mussolini ran Italy, who see Machiavelli essentially as an Italian nationalist.

IV. Furthermore, it is wrong to equate Machiavelli's thought with what he wrote in *The Prince*.
- **A.** Machiavelli wrote several important works.
  1. Many regard the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* to be his most important work.
  2. His *Florentine Histories*, commissioned by the Giulio de'Medici, is a study of his native land (the Republic of Florence) from its origins to 1492 (when Machiavelli was 23 years old).
  3. These two works, as well as *The Prince*, will be the focus of this course.
- **B.** Machiavelli also wrote numerous other works, including *The Art of War*, a biography of the Italian military leader Castruccio Castracani, and three plays.
- **C.** We have hundreds of Machiavelli's letters.
  1. They tell us a good deal about Machiavelli the person.
  2. They often give us additional insights into his political thought.
  3. They show us a richer context for his works.

V. The course will begin by providing a good deal of political and intellectual context for Machiavelli and his works.

- **A.** First, we will look at the history of Florence, concentrating on the events just before and during Machiavelli's life.
- **B.** Next, we will examine the intellectual tradition of Humanism, of which Machiavelli is a part.
- **C.** Finally, I will provide a biographical sketch of Machiavelli.

VI. It is obvious that Machiavelli matters to those who are interested in the history of the Renaissance or the history of political thought, but Machiavelli also matters for those who want to think and act intelligently about politics in our own time.

- **A.** Machiavelli is often referred to as "the first modern man."
- **B.** He is widely thought of as glorifying amorality or immorality.
- **C.** Machiavelli should be thought of as a republican thinker, best expressed in the *Discourses*.
  1. Although we often think of the United States as a democracy, we need also to consider the republican nature of the American Constitution.
  2. We often praise our republican Constitution for its separation of powers and its system of checks and balances.
  3. Many writers about the American experience stress the need for people to act for the common good.
  4. It is often said that different political skills are needed at different times, even if the goals of the state do not change.
  5. In these and many other issues that republicans discuss and debate, Machiavelli has interesting and valuable insights.

VII. This introductory portion of the course will be followed by an analysis of three major works of Machiavelli:

- **A.** *The Prince*.
- **B.** *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*.
- **C.** *Florentine Histories*.

VIII. The course will end with a look at how Machiavelli's writings have been viewed from the time of his death in 1527 until the present.

Recommended Readings:

Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli*, chapter 5, pp. 148–174.

Questions to Consider:

1. When you use the term *Machiavellian*, what do you mean by it?
2. When reading a book, how important is it to know the historical context from which the book comes?
3. What might it mean when we call someone "the first modern man," and what is a reasonable definition of *modernity*?

Lecture Two
Machiavelli's Florence

Scope: When people stroll around Florence even a bit, they are introduced to such Florentines as Brunelleschi, Donatello, and the Medici. Stepping into the church of Santa Croce, they see the tombs of Michelangelo, Dante (actually he is not in that tomb), Galileo, and Machiavelli. It is impossible not to be overwhelmed by the great Florentine geniuses who shaped Western thought.

What sort of place was Florence in the period we call the Renaissance? It was an oligarchical republic, and for much of the period after 1434, it was dominated by one family—the Medici. Florence was also a prosperous city, famous for its cloth and banking industries. It was an independent "nation" and, therefore, was constantly trying to gain advantage over its Italian neighbors, as well as deal with the great European monarchies.

Outline

I. Like almost all Italian cities, Florence was founded during ancient times by Romans.
- **A.** There was a debate during the Renaissance as to whether it was founded in the time of the republic or the empire.
- **B.** There were even claims of Florence's Etruscan origins.
- **C.** It was not a particularly important Roman town.
- **D.** In late antiquity, Florence, like most Roman cities, became the seat of a Christian bishop.

II. In the early Middle Ages, Florence, again like most Roman towns, was reduced in population and subject to attacks, for example, by the Ostrogoth Totila in the 6th century.

III. When population began to increase in Europe in the 11th century, the coastal cities, such as Pisa, Genoa, and Amalfi, began to grow and to develop trade and civic institutions before Florence and other cities in the interior of the peninsula.

IV. In the 12th and 13th centuries, Florence essentially became an independent political entity, often categorized as a city-state.
- **A.** Civic institutions developed and took over some functions that had traditionally been in the hands of the bishop.
- **B.** Florence became a city that manufactured cloth, and the Arno River gave merchants access to the Mediterranean.
- **C.** Florence's population grew rapidly in the 13th and early 14th centuries, necessitating an expansion of the city's walls.
- **D.** Although the civil government was in the hands of a rather small elite at the beginning, by the middle of the 13th century, the middle class (lesser merchants primarily, known as the *popolo*) began to assert itself and develop its own institutions.
- **E.** Florence's social and political divisions lined up with factions throughout Italy that supported the pope (Guelfs) and Holy Roman Emperor (Ghibellines).
  - **1.** Florence was a Guelf city.
  - **2.** Twice in the 13th century, the Ghibellines took over the rule of Florence for a few years.
  - **3.** When the Guelfs ultimately won out permanently, they split c. 1300 into White and Black factions, so named because a woman in one of the factions was named Bianca, "white" in Italian.
    - **a.** We have good sources in the form of chronicles that inform us about these factional disputes.
    - **b.** Dante, Florence's greatest poet, was involved in the White/Black struggle and was exiled from Florence in 1301.

V. The 14th century saw important developments in Florence, in terms of internal politics, foreign relations, and culture.
- **A.** Florence expanded its territory and sought to gain control of Pisa and other cities in Tuscany.

B. Although Florence was normally allied with the pope, there were exceptions, especially because, for most of the century, the papacy was centered in Avignon.

C. Florence became the leading banking city of Italy and Europe, but there were significant bank failures in the 1340s.

D. In 1342, Florence brought in a strong man to rule, a Frenchman named Walter of Brienne, duke of Athens, but soon realized the mistake and expelled him.

E. The Black Death caused the death of perhaps half of Florence's population in 1348, eventually killing two-thirds or more of the population by 1427, and attacks of the bubonic plague continued through the 15th and 16th centuries.

F. There was social unrest in the later 14th century, leading to violence in the years 1378–1381, with the temporary victory of wool workers.

G. A more restricted government was established in 1381.

VI. The 15th century in Florence was dominated by the Medici family.

A. Although briefly exiled in 1433, Cosimo de'Medici returned to Florence and, though a private citizen, took control of the city in 1434.

B. For 30 years, Cosimo held firm power, largely by controlling the bags from which names of most public officials were chosen.

C. Although Cosimo was well loved and was lavish in his patronage in Florence, the city was nevertheless a republic more in name than in fact.

D. Cosimo was succeeded by his ill son Piero for five years (1464–1469) before Piero's son Lorenzo took charge of Florence.

E. Machiavelli was born in 1469, the year that Lorenzo became the leader of Florence.

F. Although Lorenzo was well loved, there was opposition to the Medici, and it became violent with the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478, in which Lorenzo barely escaped assassination, and his brother, Giuliano, was murdered in the cathedral.

G. Shortly after Lorenzo's death in 1492, the French invaded Italy.

1. Lorenzo's son Piero did not deal well with the French.

2. Piero was driven out of Florence.

VII. In 1494 Florence reinstituted a republic.

A. It was backed by a dynamic preacher, Girolamo Savonarola.

B. In 1498 Savonarola was executed in the main square of Florence.

C. A few days later, Machiavelli took an important post in the republic.

D. The leader of the republic at the time was Piero Soderini.

E. In 1512 the Medici regained control of Florence.

1. Machiavelli lost his job with the end of the republic.

2. After a brief arrest, Machiavelli went into a voluntary exile on the family estate just south of Florence.

3. It was there that he wrote *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.

4. Machiavelli eventually became reconciled to Medici rule but never again held a major post in the government.

F. In 1527 the Medici were again sent packing, and a new republic was established.

1. Machiavelli hoped to get his old job back but did not.

2. Within a few months, Machiavelli was dead.

Recommended Readings:

Articles by Nicolai Rubenstein, Elena Fasan Guarini, and Giovanni Silvano, in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, et al., eds., pp. 3–70.

Questions to Consider:

1. Given the history of Florence, how can we distinguish between medieval and Renaissance Florence?
2. How might centuries of political instability and change influence Machiavelli and his conception of a just state?
3. How important is the Medici family in Florence during the life of Niccolò Machiavelli?

Lecture Three
Classical Thought in Renaissance Florence

Scope: The word *Humanism* often accompanies the term *Renaissance*, and to understand Machiavelli, we will have to know what this cultural revival and educational program consisted of. From the very word *Renaissance*, we conclude that there was a rebirth of the ancient classics. Although much of the treasury of Greek literature was rediscovered during the Renaissance, the Latin classics had been read and used throughout the Middle Ages. It is these Latin works, especially the writings of the historian Livy, that Machiavelli was primarily attracted to.

I will argue that the Renaissance can best be understood as an educational movement that approached and found value in the classics in new ways. Thus, Machiavelli cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of the principal tenets of Renaissance Humanist thought and practice.

Outline

I. The word *Renaissance*, which is associated with Florentine culture in the 15th and 16th centuries, means "rebirth," specifically the rebirth of classical antiquity.

- **A.** The Latin classics were generally known in the Middle Ages.
  - **1.** Often, snippets appeared in anthologies, but many complete works were known.
  - **2.** Generally, the works of classical, pagan Latin writers were regarded as useful—though not sufficient—for seeking God.
  - **3.** Dante, writing c. 1300, clearly was a deep and sophisticated reader of Virgil.
- **B.** Many of the Greek classics were lost to the West during the Middle Ages.
  - **1.** A few works or parts of works were known in Latin translation throughout the Middle Ages.
  - **2.** The knowledge of Greek was never entirely lost in the West, but those who knew the language were few.
  - **3.** In the 12th century, virtually all the writings of Aristotle and works of Greek science were translated into Latin, often through Arabic.

II. The term most associated with *Renaissance* is *Humanism*.

- **A.** This word was not used during the period but is a later invention.
- **B.** It is correct, however, to speak of a new interest in and use of the humanities.
- **C.** Traditionally, Petrarch (d. 1374) has been regarded as the first real Humanist.
- **D.** Recently, scholars have pushed back the foundations of Humanism into the 13th century.
  - **1.** There was a renewed interest in and use for Latin eloquence, found in such classical writers as Cicero.
  - **2.** The first Humanists, or "proto-Humanists," were not primarily Florentines.
  - **3.** In fact, Petrarch has recently been described as a third-generation Humanist.
- **E.** The great writer Hans Baron believed that he could trace the triumph of Humanism in Florence to the beginning of the 15th century, though some scholars have challenged both his basic argument and his specificity.
- **F.** Just about every major scholar would agree that the great age of Humanist thought in Florence is the 15th and early 16th centuries.

III. Humanism involves both the rediscovery of texts that had been lost in the West, primarily works of the ancient Greeks, and new reading and use of texts that medieval thinkers had studied and written about.

- **A.** As mentioned earlier, classical texts in the Middle Ages were largely (although not entirely) used for what was ultimately a theological end.
  - **1.** We find in Augustine's *Confessions* (397) a claim that reading Cicero and some Platonist writings were important events in his eventually finding the Christian God.
  - **2.** In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas used Aristotelian logic and content for much of his moral thought and much of his categorization of ethical thought.
- **B.** Even conceding that Petrarch was not the first Humanist, we can nevertheless find in his writings new uses for the classics.

1. He wrote a letter to Cicero (d. 43 B.C.).
2. He was inspired to climb a mountain, Mont Venteux in France, to see if he could imitate an experience that Livy described in his history of Rome.

C. At the beginning of the 15th century, the renewed interest in and new approach to the texts of the ancients became central to the writers and political leaders of Florence.
1. Rome was a republic, and Florence was a republic; hence, the wisdom of the former was seen to be applicable to the latter.
2. In part, classical rhetoric was important in Florence both within the city and in its relationships with other political entities.
3. The content was also regarded as valuable in both politics and more generally "the good life."

D. It is important to understand that such uses entailed a new way of reading the texts of the past.
1. Instead of being seen primarily as works that could guide people to heaven, they were now being viewed as texts that were valuable for teaching people how to live good and happy lives on Earth.
2. Hence, there developed the idea of a more autonomous realm of ethics in the world.

E. This renewed interest in the classics also involved a search for more texts.
1. Searches of monastic libraries turned up some new Latin works that had been largely unread and unknown in the Middle Ages.
2. A great interest was to find and make use of the works of the ancient Greeks.
   a. This move led to a renewed interest in the Greek language, and after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, more Greek scholars and books came to Italy.
   b. Many Greek works, for example, Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War* and Plato's dialogues, were translated into Latin.
   c. By the end of the 15th century, the use of the printing press made such works more readily available to those without great wealth.

F. Although there is no rigid division, there is a change in emphasis in the use of the classics about the middle of the 15th century.
1. In the earlier period, we speak of Civic Humanism, of the application of these new texts to political and social life.
2. In the second half of the century, there was a more philosophical and contemplative approach to the classics, symbolized by the creation of a Platonic Academy in Florence.
3. Although Machiavelli was born in 1469, he is more of a Civic Humanist and relied on Latin classics first and foremost and on Latin translations of some Greek classics because he did not read Greek.

Recommended Readings:
Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination*, chapter 11, pp. 191–217.

Questions to Consider:
1. To what extent is the Renaissance about the literal sense of that term—the rediscovery of lost classics?
2. How might the Florentines see themselves as similar to ancient Greek and Roman societies, hence finding the writings of those civilizations applicable in their present?
3. To what extent is it possible to apply ancient books to a present that ultimately is quite different from ancient societies, and how does one make the necessary adjustment to make such texts useful?

Lecture Four
The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli

Scope: Machiavelli was born the year that Lorenzo de'Medici became the leader of Florence (1469) and died the year the Medici were exiled from Florence for the second time (1527). In the republican interlude between the Medici domination (1494–1512), Machiavelli led an active life as a part of Florence's government. His most important writings were produced in the years after the Medici reestablished their rulership of Florence.

However, in this lecture we shall be concerned with more than Machiavelli's career. I will present what we know about Machiavelli the man and why these personal elements are important when we analyze Machiavelli the thinker. Maybe we can come to some conclusion about why, in the most well-known portrait of Machiavelli, he has a smile as mysterious—though not as alluring—as another Florentine, Mona Lisa.

Outline

I. Niccolò Machiavelli was a member of a less distinguished branch of an old family of Florence.
- **A.** In the year of his birth, 1469, Lorenzo de'Medici became the de facto ruler of Florence and ruled until Machiavelli was 23 years old.
- **B.** We do not know much about Machiavelli's early life, though it is significant that his father obtained a printed copy of Livy's history of Rome in return for compiling the index.
- **C.** Machiavelli received a good education in Latin and the classics, and throughout his life, he studied and deeply admired the classics.
- **D.** Among "modern" writers, his clear preference was for his fellow Florentine Dante.
- **E.** We do not know if he saw the violent aftermath of the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478, but he must have heard many stories, because this event is mentioned often in his writings.

II. The Medici fell in 1494, and Florence returned to a republican form of government.
- **A.** Machiavelli experienced the humiliation of the entry of the king of France into Florence.
- **B.** It is clear from Machiavelli's writings that he listened to the sermons of Savonarola and admired him in some ways, but he was never a follower of the great preacher.
- **C.** Just a few days after Savonarola's execution in 1498, Machiavelli received his appointment as secretary of the Second Chancery, which dealt with the territories of the Florentine Republic and foreign affairs.

III. From 1498 until 1512, Machiavelli served the government of Florence.
- **A.** Machiavelli kept the government informed about military matters.
- **B.** He soon began to be part of Florentine delegations to other Italian states.
  1. These included missions to Cesare Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander VI.
  2. He was present when Cesare Borgia's power crumbled after the death of his father, Alexander VI.
- **C.** Beginning in 1500, Machiavelli also participated in diplomatic missions beyond the Alps and met with both King Louis XII of France and the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian.
- **D.** During these years, Machiavelli married, although for the rest of his life, he had a series of sexual liaisons with prostitutes and mistresses.
- **E.** We have reports and other works that Machiavelli composed during his years in office.
- **F.** From these years, and until the end of his life, Machiavelli wrote letters that have survived and give insights into his life and thought.
- **G.** Machiavelli saw the problems of any nation relying on mercenary troops and advocated for a citizen army for Florence.
  1. He realized that in better days, Florence had had a citizen army.
  2. He recruited a citizen army that had some successes, as well as serious defects.

3. He received a second position in government that focused on the military.

H. A disastrous defeat of the Florentines in 1512, resulting in 4,000 deaths at the nearby city of Prato, led to the end of the Florentine Republic.

IV. With the return of the Medici in 1512, Machiavelli lost his job and left Florence.

A. He was arrested and even briefly tortured.

B. Although he could have stayed in Florence, he would have been without any political power or voice.

1. There was a family farm—the home was called Albergaccio—just south of Florence at Sant' Andrea in Percussina.
2. Machiavelli chose to move there and live in a kind of voluntary retirement, although he traveled frequently to Florence.

C. In the country, he did much business connected with the farm.

D. He also read and studied.

E. His life at Sant' Andrea is described in his most famous letter, written to a friend in Rome.

F. It was at his home in the country that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* in 1513 and the *Discourses* over the course of the next several years.

G. He became involved with a circle of Humanists in Florence, which met in the gardens of a palazzo belonging to Bernardo Rucellai, and he wrote three plays, the most famous of which is *La Mandragola* (*The Mandrake*).

H. He composed a life of the 14th-century *condottiere* (military leader) from Lucca, Castruccio Castracani, a Humanist portrait of a great prince.

1. This work served perhaps as an audition to Cardinal Giulio de'Medici.
2. The cardinal, later elected as Pope Clement VII, commissioned Machiavelli to write a history of Florence.

I. While writing this history, Machiavelli published *The Art of War*, his only political work to be published in his lifetime.

V. Machiavelli's last year was spent trying to return to political office and influence.

A. Machiavelli was given a job concerning Florence's defense in 1526.

B. The sack of Rome in 1527—a Medici was pope—led to the downfall of the Medici in Florence and the reestablishment of a republic.

C. Machiavelli hoped to get his old job again, but he was ignored, perhaps because he had been too cozy with the Medici.

D. Machiavelli died in June of 1527 and was buried in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, where his body remains today.

Recommended Readings:

Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*.

Maurizio Viroli, *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Although Machiavelli wrote his most important works after his active career in politics was over, why is it vital for readers to know that he was an official of the Florentine Republic?
2. In what ways was the year 1512 pivotal in the life of Machiavelli?
3. Could Machiavelli have written the sorts of books he wrote if he had remained a "player" in Florentine politics?

Lecture Five

Why Did Machiavelli Write *The Prince*?

Scope: We know a great deal about the circumstances in which Machiavelli wrote what has become his most famous work, *The Prince*. Although much of that knowledge comes from *The Prince* itself, we also have letters that Machiavelli wrote from his country estate, where he composed that powerful little book.

In studying *The Prince*, we also come to realize that, although Machiavelli owes a great deal to classical writers from whom he borrowed examples and ideas, he is quite original in his thoughts and theories, disagreeing with both Aristotle and Cicero.

Outline

I. When Machiavelli "retired" to his farm in Sant' Andrea in Percussina, he kept abreast of politics and longed to return an active political life.

- **A.** He engaged in farm work, but he also continued to study history.
- **B.** This fact is clearest from a letter he wrote to his friend Francesco Vettori in Rome.

II. In 1513, during his first months in the country, Machiavelli composed *The Prince* and sent it to Vettori to show to the Medici.

- **A.** A traditional argument is that *The Prince* is something of a work of flattery and, indirectly, a job application to the Medici.
- **B.** It is important to note that the basic form of *The Prince* is an example of a popular genre of treatises of advice to princes, sometimes referred to as *mirrors of princes*.
- **C.** Recently, Princeton professor Maurizio Viroli suggested that *The Prince*, far from being a work of flattery, is deeply critical of traditional Medici ways of governing and, thus, suggests that the returning Medici must govern differently to be successful.

III. Machiavelli is deeply indebted to many classical writers for ideas and examples in *The Prince*.

- **A.** Machiavelli also provides many examples from his own time, some of which he directly experienced in his capacity as an official of the Florentine Republic.
- **B.** Typically of Humanist writers, he cites no examples from the period we call the Middle Ages.
  - **1.** We thus see, in Machiavelli, a view of a brilliant ancient culture, followed by a long period of insignificance, followed by a time in which there is a partial restoration of classical values.
  - **2.** Machiavelli is interested in the role of the Church as a political power in Italy, but he is apparently totally disinterested in theology and religious arguments concerning political power and arrangements.

IV. Machiavelli's *The Prince* is stunningly original and is neither a repetition of any classical writer nor a synthesis of classical works.

- **A.** Machiavelli disagrees with the great Greek political philosopher Aristotle.
  - **1.** For Aristotle, the state is founded on friendship and trust, while for Machiavelli, it is based on the fear of the prince and a system of coercion.
  - **2.** Aristotle sees the study of politics as an empirical science but seeks to find what ought to be, while Machiavelli sees politics as the science of what is.
- **B.** One can read *The Prince* as a systematic refutation of the political views of Cicero, regarded by Humanists as the greatest of all the Roman sages.
  - **1.** Cicero argued that political leaders must exercise the standard virtues, such as honesty and magnanimity.
  - **2.** Cicero believed that rulers must be loved and that fear is insufficient to sustain power.
  - **3.** Machiavelli argues that a prince must be prepared to act immorally—lying and deceiving and exercising cruelty.
  - **4.** Machiavelli recognizes the value to the prince of his subjects' fear of him.

5. Machiavelli believes that a prince's first priority is the maintenance of the state and that a prince must be flexible—even immoral, cruel, and deceptive—in the means he uses.
6. Machiavelli is arguing for a distinction between personal and political morality.
    a. What makes a man a saint or a good father or husband will often be disastrous when applied by a prince in political matters.
    b. There was a movement during the Renaissance to suggest an autonomous morality in the world, but Machiavelli carries this idea beyond his Humanist predecessors.
    c. Because of this, Machiavelli has been referred to as "the first modern man," although that idea is probably not very useful for us in understanding the totality of his thought.

Recommended Readings:

Maurizio Viroli, "Introduction," in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, pp. vii–xxxix.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can we determine why Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* and what he hoped to gain from writing it?
2. Given how "realistic" and hard-nosed *The Prince* is, how do we fit that with the fact that Machiavelli wrote it while engaged in a rather solitary study of ancient authors?
3. What is the essence of Machiavelli's new political morality?

Lecture Six

The Prince, 1–5—Republics Old and New

Scope: If we are going to understand *The Prince*, we need to take seriously its author's words. Hence, in this and the following five lectures, we will be "text crawling."

First, we will need to consider the original and revised dedications of the book—both to members of the Medici family. We will also consider how this work can be seen as an attempt to win the favor of the Medici so that Machiavelli could return to Florence and be of service to his beloved city.

The first few chapters are often passed over rather quickly, for they are something of a catalogue of types of principalities and ways that they acquire new territory.

Chapter 4 is Machiavelli's first extended use of examples from classical antiquity to illuminate his discussion. He also makes use of the examples of the Ottoman Empire and France in his own time. We will discuss this chapter both for Machiavelli's appeal to the past and the focus of *The Prince* on the present.

Outline

I. The dedication of *The Prince* in the earliest printed copies that exist is to Lorenzo de'Medici, Duke of Urbino (not, of course, the Lorenzo de'Medici who had ruled Florence while Machiavelli was growing up and had died in 1494 but, rather, to his grandson).

- **A.** When Machiavelli finished *The Prince* in 1513, he dedicated it to Giuliano de'Medici, Duke of Nemours, but the dedication was changed after the duke died in 1516.
- **B.** He refers to *The Prince* as a little gift.
- **C.** Machiavelli states his dedication to and knowledge of classical antiquity.
- **D.** He stresses the value of his political experience.
- **E.** He points out how he has suffered unjustly at the hands of Fortune.

II. The first chapters of *The Prince* are often glossed over.

- **A.** They appear to be a catalogue of types of governments or, at least, of principalities.
- **B.** They do not appear to contain what most people regard as the essence of Machiavelli's thought.
- **C.** These early chapters are vitally important, however, because they provide a typology of principalities that Machiavelli discusses in *The Prince*.

III. Machiavelli starts with the most basic distinctions.

- **A.** All governments are either republics or principalities.
- **B.** This book will treat only principalities, because Machiavelli tells us that he has written elsewhere of republics.
  - **1.** Some see this statement as evidence that Machiavelli began *The Discourses* while he was writing *The Prince*.
  - **2.** Others argue that this statement about his other writing concerning republics was added several years after *The Prince* was written.
- **C.** He states that all principalities are either hereditary or new.

IV. Hereditary principalities are easy to govern for those who inherit them.

- **A.** To be a successful ruler is a matter of not breaking old customs.
- **B.** Princes of unremarkable ability should be able to rule hereditary principalities successfully.
- **C.** Machiavelli's example is the Duke of Ferrara, who withstood attacks by Venice and the papacy.

V. Before continuing, I would like to pose an important question: How do we make Machiavelli relevant today?

- **A.** We need to study his works carefully. We cannot pull his words out of context.

B. Although we may not find an exact parallel to situations that Machiavelli is describing, we can find broader applications in the modern world, for everyone from government office holders to executives and other leaders.

VI. Machiavelli now turns to a prince taking and ruling new territories; because they break with established tradition, such territories are not easily ruled.

A. It is easy for a conquering prince to find allies, because there are always people eager to change masters.

B. However, a prince ruling in a new territory always offends those in the territory he conquered and dashes the hopes of those who initially supported him.

C. A prince needs the support of the inhabitants, who are much less fickle and demanding than noble allies.

VII. It matters whether a new territory is similar in language and customs to that of a conquering prince.

A. If customs and language are similar, it is sufficient for a new prince to eliminate the old ruling family.

B. If customs and language are different, one good thing for a new prince to do is to live there.

1. This is what the Ottoman Turks did in the Balkans.

2. People want access to their new ruler.

3. A prince can spot trouble if he is in his new territory.

C. The best way to secure a new territory of different customs and language is to send colonies there.

1. This move is inexpensive.

2. Only those who are dispossessed are injured, and they are, by definition, weak and scattered.

D. A prince who is in unfamiliar territory needs to make alliances with *less powerful* neighbors.

VIII. The Romans provide a good model for a conquering prince, especially when they entered Greece.

A. The Romans were able to diagnose problems when they were easy to cure.

B. Those who wait for problems to become obvious before finding them are often not able to fix the problems.

IX. The negative example is the king of France, Louis XII, in Machiavelli's own day.

A. Louis committed five specific errors when he invaded Italy.

B. Most serious among the errors was the fact that Louis reduced the power of Venice, although it was Venice that had invited the French into Italy.

X. Machiavelli does history "backwards" in his discussion of why Alexander the Great's empire did not rebel from Alexander's successors following his death.

A. To explain this phenomenon, Machiavelli looks at two modern political situations.

1. Principalities ruled by a prince and nobles with an independent power base are easy to conquer but hard to retain. The modern example of this situation is France.

2. Principalities ruled by a prince and his ministers are hard to conquer but easy to keep once they are defeated. The modern example of this situation is the Ottoman Empire.

B. The Persian Empire, which Alexander conquered, was like that of the Ottomans and, hence, was hard for Alexander to capture but easy for his followers to retain.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, chapters 1–5.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is Machiavelli's purpose in presenting a taxonomy of principalities?

2. How does Machiavelli so easily blend ancient and modern examples of an issue he is considering?

3. Why does Machiavelli zoom in on new principalities and how to rule them?

Lecture Seven

The Prince, 6–7—*Virtù* and *Fortuna*

Scope: We first look at two terms that Machiavelli uses often, *virtù* ("virtue") and *Fortuna* ("fortune") and what they mean when he uses them. We then approach chapter 6, which concerns new principalities conquered through the prince's own skill. In it, Machiavelli will cite such diverse figures as Moses; Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome; Theseus, the legendary Athenian; and even Girolamo Savonarola, the Dominican friar who dominated Florentine politics immediately following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494.

Chapter 7, which deals with territories acquired by fortune or by the arms of others, is one of the most famous in *The Prince*. Here, Machiavelli introduces his readers to Cesare Borgia, often referred to as Machiavelli's hero or role model for a modern prince. Machiavelli, while an ambassador for the Florentine Republic, had met Borgia, and certainly he admired many of Borgia's "Machiavellian" traits.

Outline

I. Let us define a couple of words that Machiavelli uses often, *virtù* and *Fortuna*—words whose English equivalents do not always do them justice.

- **A.** The Italian word *virtù* is hard to translate and requires some explanation.
  - **1.** The word comes from the word for "man" in Latin. Hence, it came to mean "manliness."
  - **2.** Machiavelli believes that *virtù* is also the way to practice statecraft successfully. That is, one needs to be somewhat aggressive, even cruel—*manly*, exhibiting and practicing *virtù*—in order to maintain power in most situations and keep the state stable.
  - **3.** Machiavelli uses the word in a variety of ways, sometimes with more traditional meaning and sometimes with this newer sense.
- **B.** Machiavelli recognizes that the concept of *Fortuna* is quite different in classical and medieval texts and tries to reestablish the classical notion.
  - **1.** In the classical world, Fortune was said to be a woman and could, to some extent, be controlled or its effects influenced.
  - **2.** In the Christianization of the concept of Fortune in the Middle Ages, it came to be associated with fate and was considered totally out of human control. Dante used the image of the wheel of fortune over which we have no control, implying that Fortune spins the wheel and determines the good and bad with regard to material possessions.
  - **3.** Machiavelli returns to a more classical definition of Fortune, feeling that some things are out of our control but maintaining that we can be prepared for Fortune and her effects.

II. In chapter 6, Machiavelli exhorts his readers to study history in order to see what *virtù* is, especially the deeds of great men, and to see how people have dealt with *Fortuna*.

- **A.** Machiavelli lists several great conquerors, including Moses, Theseus, and Romulus, and argues that Fortune gave them only the opportunity to create new principalities; it did not make them succeed.
- **B.** One of the most difficult tasks these new princes had was to establish new political institutions.
  - **1.** Those who prospered under the old institutions would always oppose those who create new ones.
  - **2.** Those who did not prosper under the old institutions would still be lukewarm about the new.

III. Machiavelli draws one of his most important conclusions when discussing princes who succeed because of their own virtue.

- **A.** The new prince must be able to use force.
- **B.** Armed prophets succeed while unarmed prophets fail.
  - **1.** The most recent example of an unarmed prophet was Girolamo Savonarola in Florence.
  - **2.** A good ancient example of an armed prophet who succeeded was Hiero of Syracuse (3rd century B.C.).

IV. In chapter 7, Machiavelli presents and analyzes the story of Cesare Borgia (also known as Duke Valentine), son of Pope Alexander VI.

- **A.** Alexander VI sought a territory for his son to rule within the lands controlled by the Church.
  - **1.** Alexander obtained French troops for Cesare's use.
  - **2.** Cesare became a new prince, successful in conquering the Romagna, but he found himself in a difficult situation because he had relied on troops not his own.
- **B.** Cesare Borgia eventually lost what he gained and died a defeated man, despite the fact that he did just about everything right.
- **C.** Cesare won the Romagna by Fortune, then used treachery and deception (*virtù*) to establish control.
- **D.** Cesare realized, however, that the French troops were not sufficient for him to maintain power, and he recognized that he needed to build his own army.
- **E.** He won favor with the Romagnols by establishing order and security.
  - **1.** He employed a cruel man, Ramiro d'Orco, and gave him full authority to establish law and order in the Romagna.
  - **2.** Ramiro did what he was told to do but inevitably was seen by many as cruel and ruthless.
  - **3.** Cesare had him executed and his body displayed publicly to show the Romagnols that the cruelty of Ramiro was not Cesare's doing.
- **F.** Cesare had plans to expand his rule into Tuscany and other parts of Italy.
- **G.** In order to carry out his plans, Cesare worked hard to control the College of Cardinals and, hence, the papal election when his father died.
  - **1.** Cesare did not have enough cardinals under his control to choose the next pope, but he had enough to veto anyone unacceptable to him.
  - **2.** His father, Pope Alexander VI, died unexpectedly while Cesare himself was ill.
  - **3.** Cesare allowed the election of the mean-spirited Julius II. This move was Cesare's only mistake.
  - **4.** As a result, Cesare lost all that he had conquered.
- **H.** Despite all of Cesare's skill and brilliance, the one mistake he made was fatal.
- **I.** Still, Machiavelli believed that Cesare should be imitated in his ability to reduce dependence on others' troops and establish his rule in the Romagna.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, chapters 6–7.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does Machiavelli mean by the word *virtue* (*virtù*), and how do we deal with this concept given that the word really has no English equivalent?
2. In what ways does Cesare Borgia manifest *virtù*? What was the role *Fortuna* played in Cesare Borgia's life?
3. Can we argue that Cesare Borgia displayed *virtù* in his sometimes violent governance of the Romagna?

Lecture Eight

The Prince, 8–12—The Prince and Power

Scope: Machiavelli's ninth chapter of *The Prince* examines civil principalities, leading to a discussion of the prince's relationship with the citizens he governs. Some might be surprised by Machiavelli's claim that it is more important for a prince to have the people than to have the nobility on his side.

In chapter 11, Machiavelli takes up the particularly Italian issue of ecclesiastical principalities. After all, the popes claimed direct temporal rule over a large part of central Italy. In this context, Machiavelli makes some interesting remarks about the relationship of the Church to contemporary politics.

Machiavelli creates a brief catalogue of the types of soldiers that princes make use of and makes the claim that there can be no good laws without good armies. Hence, it is essential to have the right kind of army.

Outline

I. Machiavelli next takes up the matter of princes who acquire their territories through wickedness.

- **A.** He provides one ancient example, Agathocles of Syracuse, and a recent example, Oliverotto of Fermo.
- **B.** Both of these men achieved power by wholesale killing of important people.
  - **1.** Machiavelli believed that one may acquire power but not glory by killing one's fellow citizens.
  - **2.** He points out that cruelty can be well or badly used.
    - **a.** It is well used if it is done all at once and out of necessity.
    - **b.** Cruelties that increase over time are doomed to failure.
- **C.** Although Machiavelli qualifies his comments about cruelty, he recognizes that an evil, such as slaughter of fellow citizens, can indeed be well used.

II. In chapter 9, Machiavelli discusses civil principalities, that is, those obtained through the consent of citizens.

- **A.** This can be done in one of two ways:
  - **1.** Through the people.
  - **2.** Through the nobility.
- **B.** It is more difficult to retain a principality obtained through the nobility, for they believe themselves to be the prince's equal.
- **C.** Common people are more easily satisfied than nobles, and thus, it is easier to retain a principality that they have given to the prince.
- **D.** Nobles want to oppress others, while the people simply do not want to be oppressed.
- **E.** Princes need the support of the people simply because there are so many of them.
- **F.** There is no fixed way of winning the people, because circumstances are different in each situation.

III. Machiavelli asks what the proper way of measuring a prince's power is.

- **A.** The question is whether a prince can stand on his own or needs the protection of others.
- **B.** In particular, a prince must fortify his city.
  - **1.** The best examples such fortified cities in Machiavelli's day are the independent cities of Germany.
  - **2.** They have walls, moats, and artillery.
  - **3.** They have provisions for a year, including the raw materials that will allow citizens to continue their employment.
  - **4.** It is almost impossible for these cities to be besieged successfully.

IV. In chapter 11, a discussion of ecclesiastical principalities, specifically the papacy, completes Machiavelli's "catalogue" of princely states.

- **A.** These are the easiest principalities to maintain because they are rooted in ancient religious institutions.
- **B.** Before the French invasion of Italy in 1494, there was a balance of power among the five major powers of Italy (Florence, Milan, Venice, Naples/Sicily, the papacy), brought about by the Peace of Lodi in 1454. This balance of power kept the papacy weak.

C. When this balance of power was destroyed, Popes Alexander VI (and his son Cesare Borgia) and Julius II were able to increase significantly the power of the papacy.

D. At the time that Machiavelli writes *The Prince*, Pope Leo X (Giovanni de'Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent) rules in Rome, and Machiavelli is hopeful that the papacy will reach new heights as a result of the pontiff's goodness and virtue.

V. Machiavelli then turns to a prolonged discussion of the types of troops that princes employ.

A. He observed that states need good laws and that where there are good armies, there are good laws.

B. There are three kinds of armies:

1. A prince's own troops.

2. Mercenaries.

3. Auxiliaries or troops borrowed from other states, as with the French troops that Pope Alexander VI provided to his son, Cesare Borgia.

VI. First, Machiavelli discusses mercenaries, stating that they are worthless.

A. In wartime, the enemies plunder a prince's territory, and in peacetime, his mercenaries plunder his territory.

B. Good mercenary captains are untrustworthy, and bad captains have no value.

C. Carthage in ancient times and Milan in modern times have been taken over by their mercenaries.

D. Florence has been fortunate that its mercenaries have not done more damage to that city.

E. Venice is a good case study because it was successful militarily only as long as it used its own citizens in war.

F. Machiavelli concludes that mercenary captains have led Italy into servitude.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, chapters 8–12.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does it mean to say that cruelty can be well used, pondering Hamlet's famous comment that sometimes one has to be cruel to be kind?

2. What can we deduce about Machiavelli's views of commoners and nobility?

3. Is Machiavelli right when he insists that only a prince's own troops have any value to him?

Lecture Nine

The Prince, 13–16—The Art of Being a Prince

Scope: Chapter 13 contains Machiavelli's denunciation of the common practice of his day for Italian city-states to rely on auxiliary soldiers. In his discussion in the following chapter of how a prince prepares himself for war, Machiavelli stresses practical exercises of both mind and body and the necessity of studying history.

Machiavelli also lays out part of what is new in his political thought by pointing out that human weakness lessens the value of those in the past who have written of ideal, imaginary republics. Such works will not get a prince very far, for often he must act in less-than-ideal ways in order to be an effective ruler. Machiavelli also contrasts having a particular virtuous quality, such as generosity, and appearing to have it. Which is more vital for a ruler?

Outline

I. In chapter 13, Machiavelli argues that auxiliary troops are also worthless.

- **A.** If they lose, a prince is destroyed; if they win, the prince becomes their prisoner.
- **B.** Machiavelli prefers modern to ancient examples, citing the fact that Pope Julius II, Florence, and the Byzantine Empire put themselves in the hands of auxiliary troops.
- **C.** While mercenaries are dangerous because of their cowardice, auxiliaries are most dangerous when they fight well.
- **D.** Cesare Borgia (Duke Valentine) conquered the Romagna with auxiliaries, then used mercenaries but saw their danger and eliminated them, finally turning to his own men.
- **E.** The first sign of the Roman Empire's destruction was when the Romans hired the Goths to guard the frontier.

II. In chapter 14, Machiavelli writes that war is the principal art of a prince, and it must ever be on his mind.

- **A.** A prince stays in shape for war through exercise and study.
  - **1.** Hunting is a good activity for princes.
  - **2.** A prince should get to know his land well and think constantly about how he would deal with a military situation in the mountains, hills, valleys, bodies of water, and so forth.
  - **3.** The most important subject of study is history.
    - **a.** A prince should study successful princes of the past and understand why they succeeded.
    - **b.** Many great princes have imitated those who went before them; for example, Julius Caesar imitated Alexander the Great.
- **B.** It is vital that princes prepare for war during times of peace and tranquility.

III. Machiavelli begins chapter 15 with a reflection on writers of the past who have imagined perfect states, no doubt referring to Plato and Cicero, among others.

- **A.** People so lack in perfection that anyone following one of those writers about imaginary states will certainly fail.
- **B.** A prince must learn how and when not to be good.
- **C.** It is acceptable for a prince to have a reputation for those vices without which he could not preserve his state.
- **D.** Apparent virtues often lead to ruin, while apparent vices lead to success.

IV. Machiavelli considers the differences between being generous and being perceived as being generous.

- **A.** Those who win a reputation for generosity will usually fail because of what they have done to gain that reputation.
  - **1.** Sumptuous behavior will win a reputation for generosity but will be too costly.
  - **2.** Such behavior will ultimately require more revenue, hence higher taxes, leading to the prince being hated by the people.

B. It is those who are seen to be miserly who have accomplished great deeds.
   1. Pope Julius II and the kings of France and Spain are reputed to be miserly, but they have been successful.
   2. A reputation for being miserly actually makes it easier for a prince to rule successfully.

V. When a prince spends his money and that of his people, he should be tightfisted, but he should be generous when spending the money of others.

Recommended Readings:
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, chapters 13–16.

Questions to Consider:
1. How can a prince study war in times of peace, and why is it necessary to do so?
2. Do theoretical works of politics, for example, Plato's *Republic*, have any value for those who rule?
3. Is being a successful prince all about creating illusions and covering up reality (perhaps today we would say "spinning")?

Lecture Ten

The Prince, 17–21—The Lion and the Fox

Scope: Should a prince be loved or feared if indeed he cannot be both? Traditional thinkers would have chosen the former, while Machiavelli argues that the right answer is the latter. Similarly, Machiavelli asks if it is necessary or wise for a prince always to keep his word.

In chapter 19, the longest of *The Prince*, Machiavelli draws on an extraordinary range of historical and modern examples in exploring how princes can avoid being hated. In doing so, he offers subtle lessons about how a prince today should use the past without imitating it literally. The lesson Machiavelli teaches here has applications for anyone who wants to learn from, but not be beholden to, the past.

Outline

I. A prince should be thought merciful, but it is important to be clear about what is cruel and what is merciful.
- **A.** Cesare Borgia was cruel, but his actions brought order to the Romagna.
- **B.** Machiavelli contrasts Borgia's actions with the "mercy" that Florence exercised that allowed the neighboring city of Pistoia to be destroyed in bitter and violent internal factional disturbances.
- **C.** Was not Borgia really merciful and Florence really cruel?

II. Machiavelli asks whether it is better to be feared or to be loved.
- **A.** Of course, it is best to be both.
- **B.** However, it is better to be feared than loved.
  - **1.** The reason is rooted in human nature; people are fickle and deceptive.
  - **2.** Men will more likely attack someone loved but not feared than vice versa.
- **C.** Princes should avoid being hated.
  - **1.** Princes should not take property from those governed.
  - **2.** Nor should they do violence to the women of those governed.
- **D.** One of Machiavelli's most evocative examples from antiquity is his discussion of Hannibal's cruelty.
  - **1.** Historians praise Hannibal for keeping his army loyal and disciplined in a foreign land for many years.
  - **2.** People criticize Hannibal for his inhuman cruelty.
  - **3.** They fail to realize that Hannibal kept order in his army precisely *because* of his inhuman cruelty.

III. In chapter 18, Machiavelli argues that a prince must be like both a lion and a fox.
- **A.** A lion falls into traps, and a fox cannot escape a wolf.
- **B.** A prince should not keep his word when it will do him harm.
- **C.** Although it is important to appear to be honest, princes often have to deceive.
- **D.** In this discussion, Machiavelli tells his readers that results must be kept in mind when evaluating a prince.
- **E.** Often, this passage is translated as "the ends justify the means," but that is not quite accurate.

IV. One of the prince's greatest fears is a conspiracy against him.
- **A.** Machiavelli will deal much more thoroughly with conspiracies in his *Florentine Histories* (see Lecture Twenty-Two).
- **B.** Here, however, he states that conspiracies are difficult to carry out because of the fact that more than one person is involved.
- **C.** The best way for a prince not to fall prey to conspiracies is to have the people on his side.

V. In chapter 19, Machiavelli examines institutions and practices of France and the Roman Empire.
- **A.** He likes the French Parlement, a judicial body that restrains the nobles.
- **B.** Because the French king does not control the Parlement, he can avoid being hated by the nobles.

C. Machiavelli looks at several Roman emperors of the late 2nd and 3rd centuries, explaining why some succeeded while others failed.
  1. He praises Septimius Severus for playing well the roles of lion and fox.
  2. The other emperors he discusses did not succeed, often because of their cruelty.

D. Machiavelli recognizes that rulers in his time have somewhat different problems than those ancient emperors and explains how one can and cannot borrow directly from the past.

E. Machiavelli pronounces that in his time, it is more important for princes to satisfy the people rather than their soldiers, but he says that the Ottoman emperor is an exception to this rule.

VI. Machiavelli takes up military tactics a prince needs to employ.

A. Generally, princes leave their subjects armed or arm them themselves.

B. The exception is when a prince annexes an adjacent territory; then, he should disarm all but his supporters.

C. Machiavelli examines the traditional Florentine tactic of holding Pisa by means of fortresses and Pistoia by means of factions.
  1. This strategy may have been good policy when there was a balance of power in Italy from 1454 to 1494.
  2. It is a bad tactic in the present.

D. On the matter of building fortresses, Machiavelli argues that it depends on the situation.
  1. A prince should build fortresses if he fears his own people more than foreigners.
  2. The best fortress consists of not being hated by the people.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, chapters 17–21.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is being feared really safer than being loved?

2. How are the skills of the lion and the fox complementary rather than contradictory?

3. What are ways that princes can win the esteem and admiration of those whom they govern?

Lecture Eleven

The Prince, 21–26—Fortune and Foreigners

Scope: Machiavelli explains how a prince must gain the esteem of his people. He then addresses several important issues regarding a prince's court. One concerns advisors and how princes use them. Another is the problem of flattery. I will discuss how Machiavelli treats these two matters.

Finally, Machiavelli focuses once again on contemporary Italy and its problems, most of which were, in a sense, self-inflicted. He asks if these problems are simply caused by Fortune. Although Machiavelli recognizes the role of Fortune, he also counsels how to mitigate her control over human affairs.

Since 1494, Italy has seen invading armies from north of the Alps. In the last chapter of *The Prince*, Machiavelli famously presents a passionate exhortation for Italy to be freed from "the barbarians." This passage was often cited during the age of Italian unification in the 19th century and made Machiavelli, along with Dante, the prophet of a united Italian state.

Outline

I. Princes need the esteem of their people.
- **A.** The king of Spain showed himself to be extraordinary by expelling the Muslims and attacking Italy.
- **B.** It is better for a prince to be a true friend or a true enemy than to remain neutral.
- **C.** A prince needs to take risks.
- **D.** A prince should honor great men and sponsor spectacles.
- **E.** Princes need to recognize the importance of community and local organizations, such as guilds and neighborhoods.

II. Princes are judged by the men who serve them.
- **A.** Machiavelli praises Pandolfo Petrucci of Siena, who was well regarded for having such a good minister.
- **B.** A man who puts his own interests first will not make a good minister.
- **C.** A prince should make his chief ministers rich so that they think they cannot do as well without the prince.

III. Flattery is a serious problem at courts.
- **A.** The prince should tell his ministers that he wants to hear the truth.
- **B.** However, the prince needs to make clear that this is true only of those men and only when he asks for it, which should be often.
- **C.** A prince should ask frequent questions about everything and be a good listener.

IV. Machiavelli examines princes who have lost their states and asks why.
- **A.** Some had the people turn against them.
- **B.** Others did not know how to control the nobles.
- **C.** When a prince who has ruled for a long time loses his state, the loss is due to his errors and not to Fortune.

V. An oft-discussed question is the role of Fortune in worldly affairs, and Machiavelli makes this the final topic in *The Prince*.
- **A.** Machiavelli thinks that Fortune is about half responsible for matters of state.
  - **1.** Fortune is like a river that overflows and destroys.
  - **2.** The river cannot really be controlled.
  - **3.** However, if one takes advance precautions, one can lessen the damage the river causes.
- **B.** Given that Fortune is a woman, it is generally better to be bold than cautious when dealing with her.
- **C.** What matters most for success is for a prince to adapt himself to the circumstances.
  - **1.** In some situations, it is best to be cautious, while in others, one must be bold to succeed.

2. He adds, however, that it is almost impossible for one kind of prince to act counter to his own character.
3. An example is Pope Julius II, whose impetuous character was exactly what was needed while he was pope.
4. Had Julius lived at a time requiring caution, he would not have been successful.

VI. Machiavelli concludes *The Prince* with an exhortation to the Medici to drive foreigners out of Italy.

A. Italy had suffered a number of foreign armies on its soil beginning in 1494, but the situation at the time *The Prince* was written saw circumstances favorable to expelling them.

B. Machiavelli probably had seen Cesare Borgia as a potential liberator of Italy.

C. Given that members of the Medici family rule two of the five major states in Italy (Florence and the papacy), they should become the leaders of Italy's liberation.
1. Machiavelli sees signs in nature to indicate the success the Medici will have.
2. These signs parallel those in Egypt at the time of the Exodus of the Hebrews.
3. Machiavelli urges the Medici to create an army of their own rather than to rely on mercenaries.
   a. The Spanish soldiers cannot defeat cavalry.
   b. The Swiss infantry is not invincible.

D. Machiavelli ends with patriotic fervor and quotes a passage from Petrarch that says that ancient valor is not dead in Italy.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter Bondanella, chapters 21–26.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why is the wise choice and proper use of advisors centrally important to a prince's success?
2. To what extent do we control our situations, and to what extent are we products of matters we cannot control?
3. Is Machiavelli the great Italian nationalist he was made out to be during the Risorgimento in the 19th century?

Lecture Twelve
Livy, the Roman Republic, and Machiavelli

Scope: Although we have examined the influence of Humanist thought and ancient history on Machiavelli, it is necessary to return to this theme more precisely as we turn to his most carefully thought-out and longest book on political thought, *The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*.

In order for us to understand what Machiavelli is doing and why he so honors the Roman Republic, we will need to step back a bit and describe that period of history, as well as provide a broad view of how Livy understood Rome's republican past.

I will then examine the extent to which Machiavelli's *Discourses* is a commentary on ancient history and whether his reading of Livy is primarily an entrée into the world of Florentine and Italian politics during Machiavelli's own lifetime.

Outline

I. We now turn to Machiavelli's *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*.
- **A.** Machiavelli's *Discourses* is his most thoughtful and considered work.
- **B.** The length of this work, however, plus the fact that it is a series of discourses on a book that very few people read today, means that often, readers do not get the full impact of what Machiavelli has to say.

II. Livy was a historian who lived from about 64 B.C. to A.D. 17.
- **A.** Livy was read during the Middle Ages, and Dante praises him as "the poet who does not err."
- **B.** In the Renaissance, Livy was seen as particularly important to republican Florence because he wrote the most complete history of Rome's republican period.
- **C.** He was from what is now the city of Padua in the north of Italy.
- **D.** After writing the history of early Rome, he came to Rome and became an acquaintance of the Emperor Augustus.
- **E.** He never held office.
- **F.** Based on mistakes he makes about military matters, historians have concluded that Livy was never a soldier.

III. Livy wrote 142 books (more accurately scrolls) of the history of Rome, beginning with its legendary foundations.
- **A.** Of the 142 books, only 35 still exist.
- **B.** In today's terms, Livy's history was about 9,000 modern pages long.
- **C.** We have brief summaries of the missing books, with a couple of exceptions.
- **D.** From the amount of writing Livy did, we can conclude that he did not do independent historical research but relied on earlier histories of Rome.

IV. What survives of Livy's works are two major pieces of his original.
- **A.** The first surviving section, which is what Machiavelli writes about, consists of the first 10 books.
  1. Book I is the largely legendary history of Rome from its founding in about 753 B.C. until the end of the kings and the establishment of the republic (traditionally dated 509 B.C.).
  2. Books II–V carry the story from the republic's beginnings to the capture of Rome by the Gauls (traditionally 390 B.C.).
  3. The next five books tell the story of Rome's conquest of Italy, ending about 293 B.C. (Note: The territory comprising the modern nation of Italy did not all come under Roman rule until several centuries later.)
- **B.** The other piece of Livy's history that survives begins with the Second Punic War (against Hannibal) and continues through Rome's conquest of much of the Greek-speaking world.

V. The first 10 books, especially the first five, contain most of the best-known stories of the ancient Roman Republic.

A. Romulus founds Rome and kills his brother Remus.

B. The first Brutus puts an end to the Roman monarchy when he kills Tarquin the Proud.

C. Heroic Roman tales are included in Livy's early history, such as those of Cincinnatus, the Roman farmer being called to leave his plow and go out and lead Rome to victory, and Horatius, standing by himself to defend a bridge until it could be destroyed and Rome saved from the Etruscans.

VI. Livy has often been criticized in modern times for his history.

A. Because he does not do what we would call archival research, even when that was possible, modern historians tend to see him as unoriginal.

B. The city of Rome itself is really the hero of his history, and there is a sense that its success was providential.

C. In tune with the times and with earlier Roman historians, such as Sallust, Livy is a moralist who sees history as a way to present virtue and vice and their consequences.

VII. Machiavelli clearly loved not only Livy's writing but also the story that Livy tells, for the Roman Republic lasted about 500 years and grew from a small town to the dominant force in the Mediterranean during the republican period.

A. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli shows his knowledge of and interest in the early history of Rome.

B. Like Livy, Machiavelli is not so much rummaging around the past for its own sake, but he is interested in drawing contemporary lessons.

C. Machiavelli makes use of many examples from his own time, as well as from all of classical antiquity in the *Discourses*.

VIII. Before looking at the *Discourses*, in which Machiavelli makes clear his republican sympathies, it is worthwhile remembering the classical definition of a republic.

A. This definition is rooted in Aristotle's thought but received its classic form in the writing of a 2nd-century-B.C. Greek historian, Polybius, writing in Rome.

B. A republic is a mixed constitution, consisting of elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

C. One of the greatest advantages of this mixed form of government was stability, something Machiavelli longed for in his turbulent Florence and Italy.

Recommended Readings:

Article by Quentin Skinner, in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, et al., eds., pp. 121–141.

T. J. Luce, "Introduction," in Livy's *The Rise of Rome* (Books I–V), translated by T. J. Luce, pp. ix–xxvii.

Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, "Introduction," in Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, pp. vii–xxii.

Questions to Consider:

1. Who is Livy and why did his writings matter so much to Machiavelli?

2. What are the stories that you know from the early Roman Republic? Romulus and Remus? The rape of Lucretia and the establishment of the republic? Cincinnatus at the plow? Horatius at the bridge?

3. Recognizing that the commonly heard "a republic is a representative democracy" is an insufficient definition, how should we think of *republic* when reading Livy and Machiavelli?

Timeline

509 B.C.	Traditional date for the founding of the Roman Republic.
c. 64 B.C.–A.D. 17	Life of Livy.
27 B.C.	The date most commonly given for the end of the Roman Republic.
A.D. 1434	Cosimo de'Medici returns from exile and begins to rule in Florence.
1454–1494	Peace of Lodi.
1464	Death of Cosimo de'Medici.
1469	Death of Piero de'Medici and accession to power of Lorenzo de'Medici; birth of Niccolò Machiavelli.
1478	Pazzi conspiracy.
1492	Death of Lorenzo de'Medici.
1494	Expulsion of the Medici from Florence; establishment of the Florentine Republic; time of growing influence of Girolamo Savonarola.
1498	Execution of Savonarola; Machiavelli appointed secretary of the Second Chancery of the Florentine Republic.
1500	Machiavelli meets Louis XII during a diplomatic mission to France.
1502–1503	Machiavelli undertakes a diplomatic mission to Cesare Borgia and is with him at the time of the death of Cesare's father, Pope Alexander VI.
1506–1507	Machiavelli journeys on a diplomatic mission to the Emperor Maximilian.
1507	Machiavelli named as chancellor of a group of officials charged with raising a militia in Florence.
1512	The Medici return as rulers of Florence; Machiavelli is dismissed from his offices.
1513	Machiavelli is arrested and tortured but soon receives a pardon and moves to his family's estate at Sant' Andrea in Percussina. He writes *The Prince*.
1513–1517	Machiavelli writes the *Discourses* and, while doing so, also composes *The Art of War*.
1518–1519	Machiavelli writes his first and best-known play, *The Mandrake Root*.
1520	Machiavelli completes his life of Castruccio Castracani and is commissioned by Giulio de'Medici to write a history of Florence.
1521	Publication of Machiavelli's *Art of War*.
1526	Machiavelli finishes his *Florentine Histories*.
1527	Medici expelled from Florence. Machiavelli dies.
1531	Publication of Machiavelli's *Discourses*.
1532	Publication of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.
1559	Machiavelli's books placed on the Index of Prohibited Books.
1640	First English translation of *The Prince* published.

Glossary

Art of War: The only political work of Machiavelli published during his lifetime.

Auxiliaries: Foreign troops borrowed from an ally. Machiavelli believed that auxiliaries were worthless.

Ciompi Rebellion: An uprising by workers in the woolen industry in Florence in 1378. Despite temporary success, the rebellion was thoroughly put down by 1381.

Council of Florence: An ecumenical council of the Roman Church meeting in 1439 that temporarily patched the split between the Roman and Orthodox Churches.

Decemvirs: A group of 10 men appointed in the early Roman Republic to create laws.

Dictator: An occasional office in the Roman Republic. A dictator would be elected for a short period of time to supersede the regularly elected officials in matters of war. Cincinnatus and Fabius Maximus were famous dictators.

Florence: An independent city-state located in Tuscany. It had at least the façade of a republican government during the late Middle Ages and into the 15th century. From 1434 to 1494, the Medici family ruled. Florence returned to a republican form of government in 1494, but the Medici returned to power in 1512. After a brief republican government beginning in 1527, the Medici became hereditary rulers and eventually grand dukes of Tuscany.

Florentine Republic: Could refer to the government of Florence before 1434 but usually refers to the government of Florence between 1494 and 1512. Machiavelli was an official of the Florentine Republic from 1498 until its fall in 1512.

Fortuna: An Italian word often translated as "Fortune." In the classical world, Fortune was said to be a woman and could, to some extent, be controlled or her effects influenced. In the Christianization of the concept of Fortune in the Middle Ages, it came to be associated with fate and was considered totally out of human control. Machiavelli returns to a more classical definition of Fortune, believing that some things are out of our control but maintaining that we can be prepared for Fortune and her effects.

Guelfs and Ghibellines: Two political factions present in Italian cities in the later Middle Ages. The Guelfs generally favored papal power, while the Ghibellines supported the Holy Roman Emperor. Florence was a predominantly Guelf city, although there were two short periods of Ghibelline rule in the 13th century. Around 1300, the Guelfs split into White and Black factions, so called because a woman in one of the factions was named Bianca, "white" in Italian.

Humanism: The dominant educational program in Renaissance Florence. Humanists studied the classics and modeled their thought and writings on exemplars from classical antiquity.

Lucca: City in Tuscany that retained its independence from Florence. Home of Castruccio Castracani.

Machiavellian, Machiavel: Adjectives created within a century of Machiavelli's death, usually meaning someone who is ruthless and will use any means to achieve his ends.

(*La*) *Mandragola* (*Mandrake Root*): Machiavelli's most famous play.

Mercenaries: Foreign hired troops, usually a body of men with a commander (*condottiere*). Machiavelli thought they were worthless.

Mixed constitution: A form of government consisting of elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

Pazzi conspiracy: An unsuccessful plot to put an end to Medici rule in Florence in 1478. Lorenzo de'Medici escaped, although his brother Giuliano was killed.

Pisa: City in Tuscany that was a traditional enemy of Florence. Florence captured the city in 1408 but had difficulty controlling it.

Pistoia: A Tuscan city near Florence that was part of the Florentine city-state but was often difficult for Florence to control.

Renaissance: Term used to describe cultural, intellectual, and artistic changes beginning in Italy in the 14th century and centered in Florence in the 15th century. Refers specifically to the revival of, interest in, and imitation of Greek and Roman classics.

Republic: A form of government defined as a mixed government with elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Florence prided itself on its republican heritage, although it only roughly approximated the classic definition of a republic.

Risorgimento: The movement in the 19th century that led to the unification of Italy. Machiavelli was regarded as a "prophet" of Italian unity by leaders of the Risorgimento.

Romagna: An area of north central Italy that came under the rule of Cesare Borgia.

Sant' Andrea in Percussina: Village about 11 kilometers south of Florence. It was here that Machiavelli lived after leaving Florence in 1513. While in Sant' Andrea, he wrote *The Prince* and his *Discourses on Livy*.

Siena: Independent republic south of Florence and a traditional rival of Florence.

Venice: A republic in the northeastern part of the Italian peninsula. It was often regarded as a model for a republic because of its success and longevity. Machiavelli was not as enthusiastic about Venice as a model as many of his fellow Florentines were.

Virtù: An Italian word often translated as "virtue" but whose meaning is not exactly what modern people mean when they use the word. It suggests strong and manly action (*vir* = man in Latin) and does not necessarily connote "ethical."

Biographical Notes

Alexander VI (1431–1503): A pope whose name was Rodrigo Borgia. He spent much of his reign establishing a territory for his son Cesare and finding a husband for his daughter Lucrezia.

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.): Greek philosopher who wrote a great deal about politics and the idea of a mixed constitution.

Borgia, Cesare (1475–1507): Son of Pope Alexander VI. He ruled much of the Romagna but fell from power when his father died and Julius II became pope. He was something of a hero for Machiavelli.

Brutus (fl. 510 B.C.): The Roman most responsible for the expulsion of the last king and the establishment of the republic in 509 B.C. The Brutus who assassinated Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. claimed to be the direct descendant of this Brutus.

Castracani, Castruccio (1281–1328): Military leader from Lucca. Machiavelli wrote a biography of him as a prelude to writing his *Florentine Histories*.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106–43 B.C.): Statesman, orator, and writer in the late Roman Republic. In his famous book *On Duties* (*De officiis*), he outlines the qualities of a good leader. Machiavelli challenges his widely held beliefs.

Clement VII (1478–1534): Born Giulio de'Medici, son of Giuliano de'Medici, who was killed in 1478 during the Pazzi conspiracy. Elected pope in 1523. He commissioned Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*.

Fabius Maximus (d. 203 B.C.): Elected dictator of Rome after Hannibal defeated Rome in the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C.E. He was famous for his plan not to attack Hannibal directly; thus, he is sometimes known as Fabius the Delayer.

Gracchi: Refers to the brothers Tiberius (d. 133 B.C.) and Gaius (d. 121 B.C.) Gracchus, both of whom sought to establish agrarian laws calling for major land reform in the second half of the 2nd century B.C.E.

Hannibal (247–182 B.C.): The Carthaginian general who conducted the Second Punic War against Rome.

Harrington, James (1611–1677): Most important English political writer to incorporate elements of Machiavelli's republican philosophy into his and, hence, into English political thought. His principal work is called *Oceana*.

Julius II (1443–1513): The pope who succeeded, after the very brief reign of Pius III, Alexander VI. Julius was quite a military figure; he commissioned Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Leo X (1475–1521): Elected pope in 1513. He was born Giovanni de'Medici, the son of Lorenzo de'Medici. Machiavelli held out great hope that having the papacy and Florence ruled by the same family would lead to the expulsion of foreign armies from Italy.

Livy (c. 64 B.C.–A.D. 17): His complete name was Titus Livius. Livy wrote a long history of Rome, only parts of which survive. The first 10 books deal with the history of the Roman Republic before about 386 B.C. Machiavelli's *Discourses* are an extended commentary on those 10 books.

Machiavelli, Niccolò (1469–1527): Florentine official and author. Author of *The Prince*, *Discourses on Livy*, *Florentine Histories*, and other works.

Medici: Florentine family that dominated political matters there after 1434. The Medici were expelled in 1494, returned in 1512, expelled again in 1527, and permanently returned in 1530. They ruled Florence during most of the Renaissance.

Medici, Cosimo de' (1389–1464): De facto ruler of Florence from 1434–1464. He did not hold office but controlled who did. He was much venerated and known as the "father" of his country.

Medici, Giuliano de' (1453–1478): Brother of Lorenzo de'Medici who was assassinated in 1478 during the Pazzi conspiracy. He was also the father of Pope Clement VII.

Medici, Lorenzo de' (1449–1492): Grandson of Cosimo and ruler of Florence from 1469–1492. He escaped an assassination attempt during the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478. Lorenzo was known as a great patron of the arts and is often referred to as "the Magnificent." His son Giovanni became Pope Leo X.

Numa Pompilius: According to legend, succeeded Romulus as king of Rome and established religious customs.

Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 B.C.): A Greek who wrote an important history of Rome. He best articulated the idea of Rome as a republic having a mixed constitution.

Romulus: Legendary founder of Rome in the 8th century B.C.

Savonarola, Girolamo (1452–1498): A Dominican friar born in Ferrara who became the most important political figure in Florence following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. He claimed to be a prophet and tried to carry out a moral cleansing of Florence. Machiavelli famously referred to him as an "unarmed prophet." In 1498, Savonarola was executed in Florence.

Soderini, Piero (1452–1522): Held the chief office (Gonfaloniere of Justice) in the Florentine Republic from 1502 to 1512. Machiavelli worked in the government while Soderini was in charge. Though Machiavelli recognized Soderini's competence, he criticized him for being too passive.

Tarquin (the Proud): The last king of Rome, expelled in 509 B.C.

Vettori, Francesco (1474–1539): Friend and correspondent of Machiavelli. He was serving as Florence's ambassador to the papacy when Machiavelli was composing *The Prince* in 1513, and he is the recipient of the famous letter in which Machiavelli describes life in Sant' Andrea in Percussina.

Bibliography

Works of Niccolò Machiavelli:

The Art of War. Translated by Christopher Lynch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. This volume is not only a translation but also contains a lengthy interpretative essay and a glossary.

Discourses on Livy. Translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. This is a complete and readable translation of Machiavelli's greatest work. It contains a useful introduction plus a bibliography and notes. It is the translation used in this course.

Florentine Histories. Translated by Laura Banfield and Harvey Mansfield. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. This volume is a complete translation and has a brief but helpful introduction. This is the translation used in this course.

Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence. Edited and translated by James Atkinson and David Sices. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996. This is the only complete collection in English of Machiavelli's correspondence, and it gives an important window into his life and thought.

The Portable Machiavelli. Edited and translated by Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa. New York: Penguin, 1979. Here is a convenient anthology of Machiavelli's writings, including selections from the *Discourses*, *The History of Florence*, and *The Art of War*. It contains *The Prince* in its entirety plus several letters, including the famous one of 1513 to his friend Vettori, and one of Machiavelli's plays, *The Mandrake Root*.

The Prince. Translated by Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. This is an outstanding and lively translation. The introduction is by the famous Machiavelli scholar Maurizio Viroli. There are almost countless translations of this classic. In this course, the Bondanella translation is used.

Works Useful to the Study of Niccolò Machiavelli:

Bock, Gisela, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, et al., eds. *Machiavelli and Republicanism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. This is a wonderful collection of essays by many of the leading authorities on Machiavelli, including Quentin Skinner, Nicolai Rubenstein, John Najemy, and Maurizio Viroli. Most of the essays are about Machiavelli and his works, but one section focuses on Machiavelli's influence in the 17th and 18th centuries.

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———. *Renaissance Florence*. Huntington, NY: Krieger, 1975, reprint with additional materials. This work is Brucker's general history of Florence during the Renaissance and carries the story to the end of the republic, shortly after Machiavelli's death.

Cicero. *On Obligations.* Translated by P. G. Walsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. It is useful for students of Machiavelli to read this work because it was so influential in the political thought of the Renaissance. Machiavelli boldly rejected most of Cicero's arguments about the moral basis of rulership.

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———. *The History of Florence.* Translated by Mario Domandi. New York: Harper, 1970. This is Guicciardini's account of Florence from the death of Cosimo de'Medici and includes history that Machiavelli wrote about and events that Machiavelli took part in as an official of the Florentine Republic.

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Hulliung, Mark. *Citizen Machiavelli*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. This work argues that Machiavelli took issue with Humanist thought.

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Levy, Michael. *Florence: A Portrait*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996. With an excellent text and lavish illustrations, this is both a serious history of the city of Florence and almost a coffee-table book.

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———. *The Rise of Rome: Books 1–5*. Translated by T. J. Luce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. This is a somewhat newer translation of the first five books of Livy than the one listed above.

———. *Rome and Italy.* Translated by Betty Radice. New York: Penguin, 1982. This is a translation of Books VI–X of Livy.

Mansfield, Harvey. *Machiavelli's New Modes: A Study of the* Discourses on Livy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. Here is an extraordinary book-by-book, passage-by-passage commentary on Machiavelli's most significant work.

———. *Machiavelli's Virtue*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. This book is an interesting look at Machiavelli as a thinker. Mansfield is sympathetic to Machiavelli. There are two chapters devoted to Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*, which Mansfield also translated (see above).

Martines, Lauro. *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Martines has provided a fascinating account of the conspiracy against the Medici in 1478 that Machiavelli used as his major example of the dangers of conspiracies.

———. *Power and Imagination*. New York: Knopf, 1979. This is arguably the best one-volume look at Italy in the age of the Renaissance. It not only deals with political history but is also an astute introduction to Renaissance culture; its chapter on Humanism is the best brief treatment of the subject in English.

———. *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390–1460*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963. This has become a standard work on early Humanism in Florence and contains sketches of the most important figures.

Masters, Roger. *Fortune Is a River: Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli's Magnificent Dream to Change the Course of Florentine History*. New York: Free Press, 1998. This book is a somewhat fanciful but certainly imaginative look at a plan to divert the Arno River so that it no longer flowed through rival Pisa. The title is taken from Machiavelli's discussion of Fortune in *The Prince*.

Najemy, John. *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori Letters of 1513–1515*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. These letters, which can be read in English (see *Machiavelli and His Friends*, above), are well analyzed by Najemy and provide important insights on Machiavelli while he was writing *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.

Pocock, J. G. A. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. This is something of a classic. It provides a thorough medieval and Renaissance context for Machiavelli as a republican political thinker, then traces the influence of his thought in England and America. The book is quite difficult to read without a considerable amount of background.

Ridolfi, Roberto. *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli.* Translated by Cecil Grayson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. Despite many new entries, this biography is still considered "the classic."

Rubinstein, Nicolai. *The Government of Florence under the Medici, 1434–1494*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966. This is a wonderful study of the political world into which Machiavelli was born and about which he wrote.

Skinner, Quentin. *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981 (reprint, 2000). Skinner's slim volume is a brilliant introduction to Machiavelli and his thought by a distinguished historian of political thought.

Strauss, Leo. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. Strauss has little good to say about Machiavelli and the legacy he left the Western world.

Viroli, Maurizio. *Machiavelli*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. This is a thoughtful study of Machiavelli's ideas and not a biography. It is part of a distinguished series, *Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought*.

———. *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2000. Here is Viroli's biography, well written and providing a positive assessment by a scholarly "fan" of Machiavelli.

Weinstein, Donald. *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. This book is an interesting study of Savonarola, who fascinated Machiavelli and about whom Machiavelli comments in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.

Wilcox, Donald. *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969. The title makes it clear that this is a useful book for understanding how Machiavelli's contemporaries understood and wrote about the past.

Internet Resources

"Livy." *Reed College.* http://academic.reed.edu/humanities/110Tech/Livy.html#Texts. This is a useful site for learning about Livy and finding part of his *History of Rome* in English. The site also has a bibliography and links to other related Web sites. This is a good place to find useful background before reading Machiavelli's *Discourses*.

Letter from Niccolo Machiavelli to Francesco Vettori. http://econ161.berkeley.edu/Politics/Vettori.html. The famous letter from Machiavelli to Francesco Vettori describing his life in the country is found here.

"Niccolò (di Bernardo) Machiavelli." *Brandeis University*. http://www.brandeis.edu/~teuber/machiavellibio.html. This Web site provides a basic biography and list of works.

"Discourses." *Constitution Society.* http://www.constitution.org/mac/disclivy.txt. This Web site reproduces the *Discourses* in English, although not in the most modern translation.

"The Prince." *Constitution Society.* http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm. Similar to the above Web site, this one provides an older translation of *The Prince*.

La Biblioteca di Babele. http://www.debibliotheca.com. Those who wish to test their Italian can look at several of Machiavelli's works in Italian by going to this Web site, clicking on Indice, then clicking on the letter M. Both the *Discourses* (*Discorsi Sopra la Prima Deca Di Tito Livio*) and *The Prince* (*Il Principe*) are here.

"Nicolo [sic] Machiavelli (1459–1527): The Prince, 1513." *Medieval Sourcebook*. http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/machiavelli-prince.html. This Web site contains *The Prince* and Machiavelli's life of Castruccio Castracani.

Machiavelli in Context

Part II

Professor William R. Cook

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William R. Cook was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, and attended public schools there. He is a 1966 graduate of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana (*cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa). He received Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Lehman fellowships to study medieval history from Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1971.

In 1970 Dr. Cook was appointed Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Geneseo, the honors college of SUNY. He has taught there for 35 years and holds the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor of History. At Geneseo, Dr. Cook has taught courses in medieval and ancient history, the Renaissance and Reformation periods, and the Bible and Christian thought. Recently, he has taught a course on Alexis de Tocqueville, as well as freshman seminars that focus on several aspects of African American history and American politics. In 1992 Dr. Cook was named CASE Professor of the Year for New York State. He received the first-ever CARA Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Medieval Studies from the Medieval Academy of America in 2003. He was recently named the alternate for the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, receiving a prize of $15,000, plus a substantial award to his department.

After publishing several articles on Hussite theology and monastic thought, Dr. Cook has, for the last 30 years, focused much of his research on St. Francis of Assisi. Since 1989 he has published three books about Francis and the ways he was represented in paintings in Italy. Dr. Cook has also contributed to the *Cambridge Companion to Giotto* and is the editor of and a contributor to *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, published by Brill in Leiden, The Netherlands.

Professor Cook spends part of each year doing research and teaching in Italy. From his base in Siena, he works frequently in Florence as well as Assisi. He has taken students from SUNY Geneseo to Italy on eight occasions and conducts study tours for the public.

In recent years, Dr. Cook has been a lecturer and site visit leader for the Young Presidents' Organization, a group of young CEOs from around the world. He has participated in their programs in Florence, Prague, Istanbul, and Dublin. In 2005 he was invited by the Friends of Florence, a group of philanthropists dedicated to preserving works of art in Tuscany, to make presentations for the group's meeting in Florence.

Dr. Cook has directed 10 Seminars for School Teachers for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) since 1983; six have had St. Francis as their subject and have been conducted in Siena and Assisi, Italy. In 2003 he directed an NEH seminar for college teachers in Italy entitled "St. Francis and the Thirteenth Century." This seminar will be repeated in the summer of 2006.

In addition to his research in Italy, Professor Cook has studied the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. This interest came about primarily after his unsuccessful run in 1998 for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has authored two volumes of local history and writes a weekly column for his local newspaper. He was a frequent contributor to the editorial pages of the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* in 2004–2005.

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Machiavelli in Context

Scope:

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) is a name that triggers powerful responses, even from people who have never read a word of his writings. The adjective *Machiavellian*, found in English as early as the Shakespearean era, conjures up the image of an amoral (at best) political leader, wheeling and dealing and lying to achieve his ends—and often sinister ends at that. The historical figure Niccolò Machiavelli certainly would not recognize that interpretation or caricature of what he wrote and believed.

Everyone who has seriously studied the works of Machiavelli agrees that he was a dedicated republican, that is, someone who believed in the superiority of a republican form of government, defined as a mixed constitution with elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Machiavelli's own career in government service was during a republican revival in his hometown of Florence following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. Yet most people today know Machiavelli *only* as the author of *The Prince*, a work he wrote immediately after he went into a semivoluntary exile following the return of the Medici to power in Florence in 1512. In that short work, Machiavelli implores the Medici to exercise strong and, if need be, ruthless leadership in Italy and to expel the "barbarians" (foreign troops). This counsel hardly sounds like the exhortation of a devoted republican. However, once we recover the *context* of the writing of *The Prince* and analyze it, along with a longer work started about the same time, his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*, we will see clearly that *The Prince* can be read as a book designed to guide leaders in the creation—for Machiavelli, the restoration—of republican government in Italy.

Before exploring the corpus of Machiavelli's writings, we will need to examine three distinct types of background. First, we shall consider Florence and its political history before and during Machiavelli's lifetime. Second, we will look at the developing culture in Machiavelli's time, which we usually call the Renaissance, focusing on how writers and political leaders made use of ancient political thought. Third, we will examine Machiavelli's life story. In doing so, we will focus on his education, his service to the Florentine Republic, and his years in exile on his estate a few miles south of Florence and how each of those periods of his life affected the writings he has left for posterity. When possible, we will glance at Machiavelli's personal letters to grasp how he reacted to the world around him.

Only after laying these foundations can we profitably consider Machiavelli's most important writings. Ideally, we would survey each of his surviving books, even including his plays. However, because Machiavelli's principal legacy is in his political thought, we shall focus our attention on three works that will get us to the heart of what this man believed about how human societies should be organized and governed.

First, we will look at *The Prince*. After attempting to reconstruct the reasons that Machiavelli wrote this little book, I shall systematically examine its contents, focusing not so much on its technical advice but on the broad political analysis that Machiavelli provides. Is this a manual for a ruthless prince—we might say dictator—or a work suggesting the necessity for decisive action in an anarchic and chaotic Italy as a prelude to the establishment of a republican form of government?

We shall next undertake a careful analysis of what many scholars consider Machiavelli's most thoughtful and important contribution to political thought, his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*. This long work is much more than a commentary on Livy's (64 B.C.–A.D. 17) early history of Rome. Often, Machiavelli juxtaposes ancient and modern examples, demonstrating that history cannot be repeated, but its lessons must be adapted to new circumstances. Although a thorough knowledge of the Roman Republic and its most important historian is useful, I shall provide just enough of that background to make Machiavelli's meatiest work concerning republican government intelligible and useful.

Somewhat briefly, we will look at Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*, written under Medici patronage but hardly uncritical of that illustrious family. We will use this book to bring together some of the elements of Machiavelli's thought that we found in sketchier form in his earlier works.

Finally, we will turn to an examination of the reception and spread of Machiavelli's works. First, we will consider how Machiavelli's works were disseminated and received in his own century. This will lead to a wider consideration of how Machiavelli the republican became known primarily for his *Prince* and how the adjective rooted in his name became a synonym for craftiness and duplicity. We shall also see that Machiavelli's republican

thought influenced the development of institutions and values both in Europe and in America. When all is said and done, we must ask whether the work of Niccolò Machiavelli has contributed to the creation and spread of participatory government in the world, or instead, if it has provided a "how-to" manual for those who would concentrate power in their own hands.

Lecture Thirteen

Discourses—Why Machiavelli Is a Republican

Scope: Machiavelli begins with a systematic look at republics, including an examination of the importance of geography to history. He then lays out the forms of government—a categorization that can be traced to Aristotle—and gives the classic definition of a republic. It is a form of government that combines elements of monarchy, aristocracy (i.e., government by the best), and democracy. Of the world's republics, Rome was the greatest.

Machiavelli, in opposition to received thought, argues that it was conflict between the traditional rulers (patricians) and the people (plebeians) that led to the full development of Rome's republican constitution. Hence, conflict is not in and of itself bad. Rather, conflict can be either destructive or positive in a nation. Although it was good for Rome, it was bad for Florence.

It is worthwhile to note that Machiavelli both employs classical thought and corrects it. The past may be a model, but it is never an exact model, nor is it one without flaws and errors.

Outline

I. In the letter of dedication, Machiavelli writes that the *Discourses* contains all he knows and all he has learned from both experience and study.

II. Machiavelli considers how people in his time view the "ancients."

- **A.** People spend a lot of money to obtain a fragment of an ancient statue.
- **B.** People admire ancient kingdoms and republics.
  - **1.** Unfortunately, people admire but do not imitate the ancients.
  - **2.** Many do not really understand what ancient historians say.
  - **3.** Some believe that imitation is impossible given that the particular circumstances are different from ancient times.

III. In parallel with *The Prince*, the body of the *Discourses* begins with a systematic look at republics.

- **A.** Some are formed when people who are scattered decide to live together because a certain place is convenient and defensible.
  - **1.** Athens is a good ancient example of this origin of cities.
  - **2.** Venice is a good modern example of this origin of cities.
- **B.** The second origin of cities is that they are built by foreigners.
  - **1.** Alexandria is a good ancient example of this type of city.
  - **2.** Florence is a good modern example of this type of city.
- **C.** Machiavelli also discusses the importance of geography in the founding and development of cities.

IV. Machiavelli lays out the basic forms of government (by one, few, or many).

- **A.** The good forms are monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, but none is stable.
- **B.** The bad versions are tyranny, government of the few (but not the best), and anarchy.
- **C.** The three good forms are short-lived, and the three bad forms are evil by nature.
- **D.** A republic is a mixed form of government, combining elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.
  - **1.** Machiavelli briefly praises the constitution of Sparta over that of Athens.
  - **2.** Rome is the greatest of republics.

V. The Roman Republic did not come into being all at once.

- **A.** With the expulsion of the last king, a new form of government was created, consisting of consuls and the Senate.
- **B.** Only later, with the creation of the tribunes, did Rome become the perfect republic.
- **C.** Machiavelli emphasizes here and will repeat later that this perfect constitution arose as a result of discord.

1. Too often people decry discord, but it was necessary for the establishment of a mixed constitution.
2. Laws that favor liberty are born of conflict.
3. Such conflict was good for Rome, but for a variety of reasons, conflict was destructive of Florence.

D. All cities must have ways in which the people can express their ambitions.
1. Desires of free people are not harmful to liberty.
2. People can grasp truth and recognize it.

VI. Machiavelli considers republics that place more power in the hands of the nobles.

A. Ancient Sparta and modern Venice are two examples.
1. Sparta did not allow foreigners access to government.
2. Venice did not arm the common people.
3. Rome did both of these things.

B. Machiavelli prefers the Roman model, although Sparta and Venice lasted longer as republics than Rome did.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse I, preface–chapter 6.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why are so many people in Machiavelli's time unable to make optimal use of such classics as Livy's *History of Rome*?
2. How can discord be a positive element in the development of a republic?
3. Why does Machiavelli prefer a republic that gives more power to the people and less to nobles?

Lecture Fourteen

Discourses—The Workings of a Good Republic

Scope: As Machiavelli looks at the Roman Republic, he sees that it emerged out of a monarchical state that he traces back to Romulus. Machiavelli does not think that a republic can simply spring up or be a creation of a committee. It takes a strong man who is unafraid to act boldly. To dramatize this point, he even praises Romulus for killing his brother Remus.

Machiavelli also has high praise for Rome's second king, Numa. It was he who established a moral structure by appealing to and manipulating religion. In fact, having a code to discipline individuals' conduct is perhaps more important than laws and institutions.

While looking back at this earliest period of Rome's history, Machiavelli also looks forward. He asks what will happen to a republic when its citizens become morally corrupted. He contrasts Numa's "good" way of using religion with the way the leaders of the Catholic Church use it in his day.

Outline

I. It is important that there be a way for people to vent their anger in a republic.
- **A.** There are recent examples of the negative consequences of the lack of such a safety valve in Florence.
- **B.** False accusations are more likely to arise where there is no legitimate way for people to vent their anger.
- **C.** Because false accusations are harmful, those guilty of making them must be severely punished.

II. Only someone acting alone can create a new republic or completely reform an old one.
- **A.** This is such a vital point to Machiavelli's argument that he excuses Romulus for killing his brother Remus.
- **B.** Machiavelli says that the result (the successful establishment of a new state) excuses Romulus for fratricide.
- **C.** This passage is one of the most memorable in the *Discourses* and is often cited as showing that, for Machiavelli, the end justifies the means.
- **D.** The killing of Remus was not for Romulus's good but for the common good.
- **E.** This discussion in the *Discourses* is often cited to show that *The Prince* is written with an ultimately republican outcome.
- **F.** Machiavelli sees Italy in his time as chaotic.
  - **1.** Italy needs to start over with a strong leader—a prince.
  - **2.** After the prince restores order, Italy can evolve into a republic.
- **G.** Machiavelli condemns as tyrants Julius Caesar and most of the Roman emperors, excepting the so-called Five Good Emperors.

III. The development of religion is so important to a republic that King Numa Pompilius, Romulus's successor, deserves great praise.
- **A.** Romulus could not do everything and did not create religious practices.
- **B.** Religion controls armies, gives courage to the people, and keeps people good while shaming the wicked.
- **C.** Numa pretended to have a relationship with a nymph and, hence, a source of revelation.
- **D.** Religion is an important precondition for the creation of good institutions.
- **E.** This is vital because, quoting Dante, Machiavelli argues that there will always be unworthy successors of kings.
- **F.** In Machiavelli's own time, Savonarola convinced people that he spoke with God.
- **G.** Machiavelli shows how in different times, people have used religion by creating and using oracles and miracles.
  - **1.** Machiavelli tells stories of how auguries involving chickens were manipulated by military commanders in Roman times.

2. It is always possible to manipulate oracles by providing interpretations.

H. In Machiavelli's time, the Roman Church has failed because its leaders are irreligious.
1. The pope sets evil examples by his conduct.
2. The Church is responsible for the fact that Italy is so divided politically.

IV. Freedom is difficult to preserve if it is obtained by accident.

A. People who have been corrupted cannot live freely.

B. When a state becomes free, it creates enemies rather than friends.
1. At the time of Brutus, the people of Rome as a whole were uncorrupted.
2. As long as Rome had serious enemies, her people remained free and vigilant.
3. Later, however, when Rome dominated the Mediterranean world and thus had no real enemies, the Roman people no longer had fear, and this led to their corruption.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse I, chapters 7–33.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do Machiavelli's remarks about what is needed to establish a republic help us to make sense of the purpose of *The Prince*?
2. What are the political roles that religion plays in a republic?
3. Does living in freedom require the virtue of citizens rather than simply a proper constitution?

Lecture Fifteen

Discourses—Lessons from Rome

Scope: Machiavelli examines several questions relating to the governance and reform of a republic. If someone in power makes an error, should he be punished for his mistake? Machiavelli fears that punishment discourages leaders from using their minds in creative ways. How should a leader deal with problems?

In his first discourse, Machiavelli also attempts to deal with severe crises that occur in republics. He praises the Roman office of dictator because it allowed someone to take charge in exceptional circumstances, but only for a very short while. On the other hand, the attempted agrarian reforms of the Gracchi (two brothers who lived in the 2nd century B.C.) were a disaster because they tried to reconstitute a distant past, causing the bitterness of factions that led to the destruction of the republic.

Machiavelli then makes a case for the freedom that comes with a knowledge of the past. He states something quite similar to what George Santayana wrote in the 20th century: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Outline

I. We continue our discussion with a look at why, after the death of Nero, the last descendant of Augustus, Rome could not regain its freedom.

- **A.** By then, the people were so corrupted that they could not reestablish a republic.
- **B.** If people are so corrupted, the only way to preserve a republic would be to shift to a constitution with a strong monarchical element.

II. It is important for a republic to deal properly with leaders who have made mistakes.

- **A.** A commander who errs from malice must be punished humanely.
- **B.** A commander who errs out of ignorance should be honored.
- **C.** These views are appropriate because a commander should be encouraged to have a free and ready mind.

III. Machiavelli asks whether it is better to put off dealing with a problem or to attack it.

- **A.** It is better to put off dealing with a problem that is terrifying the people.
- **B.** An example of the opposite choice and its effect is the exile of Cosimo de'Medici in 1433.
  - **1.** He had so much renown that people feared him in Florence and, thus, exiled him.
  - **2.** The resentment caused by his exile led to his return and his achieving great power in Florence.

IV. An interesting and valuable office in the Roman Republic was that of dictator.

- **A.** A dictator was selected for a short term in the republic to deal with a specific circumstance.
  - **1.** The office itself was beneficial to the republic.
  - **2.** It became dangerous only when the office was abused by prolonging its term.
- **B.** Republican government, because it is a mixed constitution, moves slowly.
  - **1.** There are occasions when particular circumstances must be dealt with immediately.
  - **2.** Although valuable, the existence of a dictator does teach people that sometimes it is permissible to "break the law" by putting one man in charge and setting aside the usual process.
  - **3.** Once leaders took dictatorial powers more generally and did not relinquish them, the republic suffered.

V. Similarly, the early republic suspended the traditional offices and, instead, appointed the *Decemvirs* to create laws.

- **A.** This group of men produced the famous body of Roman law, the Ten Tables.
- **B.** Many believed that their work was not finished after a year, and thus, they were given another year in office to finish the job.
  - **1.** The Decemvirs then began to hold on to their office by violence.
  - **2.** They were forced to relinquish their office, and the regular officials were once again appointed.

C. The lesson of both the dictators and the Decemvirs is that there can be good reasons for appointing extraordinary officials, but their terms of office must be a year or less because absolute authority corrupts quickly.

D. While the Romans gave extraordinary power to some of their own citizens, the Florentines vested authority in foreigners (offices of *podestà* and captain of the people), a decision with which Machiavelli did not agree.

VI. Machiavelli examines another watershed in the history of Rome—the attempt to enact agrarian laws, a reform associated with the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus.

A. The agrarian laws were an attempt to redistribute land by setting a maximum amount a man could own and by dividing newly conquered lands among the people.

1. The law was applied retroactively, a bad idea.

2. It caused hatred between the people, who would benefit, and the aristocracy, who would lose.

3. When the laws were not enacted, the people turned to Marius and the aristocracy to Sulla.

4. This is the origin of the civil wars that led to the end of the republic.

B. Although the Gracchi had noble intentions, it was a mistake to propose a law that would be applied retroactively.

VII. Machiavelli considers whether and how history repeats itself.

A. Similar situations occur in all societies.

B. Because that is so, one needs history in order to foresee the future.

C. Ignorance of the past leads to an essentially cyclical pattern of events.

D. The study of history is liberating in the sense that people can see what has worked and what has failed and, thus, they need not have the same results as previous civilizations.

VIII. Leaders should not disobey laws, especially ones that they established.

A. Machiavelli gives the example of the denial of a right to appeal by Appius Claudius.

B. A law that Savonarola had encouraged, guaranteeing the right to appeal in Florence, was violated by some of his followers.

1. This incident cost Savonarola a good deal of respect.

2. When Savonarola did not condemn what was done, he was perceived as ambitious and partisan.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse I, chapters 34–54.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are extraordinary offices important safety valves in a republic, or are they too easily manipulated and corrupted?

2. Are laws that try to recreate a time past always a bad idea?

3. Is history cyclical, and are there ways to break the cycle?

Lecture Sixteen

Discourses—A Principality or a Republic?

Scope: After contrasting a virtuous republic with a city without virtue, Machiavelli writes about his beliefs in signs and prophecies, a reminder to us that Machiavelli is both a man of his time and a "modern man."

In the last sections of his first discourse on Livy, Machiavelli makes the strong case for the superiority of a republican form of government. The people are more stable than princes, and although princes are better than the people in establishing republics, the people are superior to princes in maintaining them. He even criticizes what Livy seems to have said about the fickleness of crowds, pointing out that the great historian of Rome was referring only to an uncontrolled multitude. It is in these direct comparisons of princes and the people that Machiavelli's deeply held republicanism is powerfully demonstrated.

Outline

I. Machiavelli contrasts a virtuous republic, where equality exists, with one that has neither virtue nor equality.

- **A.** In Rome, citizens paid their taxes while no one was watching, a sign of virtue.
- **B.** Virtue can be preserved in two ways.
  - **1.** Citizens should not have a lot of contact with other nations that may be corrupt.
  - **2.** Citizens should not be allowed to live like nobles.
    - **a.** Nobles live on other people's revenues and do no work to make a living.
    - **b.** Nobles are particularly dangerous when they possess fortresses.
- **C.** Machiavelli notes that Florence, Lucca, and Siena preserved their liberty because there were very few nobles and none with castles; thus, equality exists there.
- **D.** Republican Venice seems to be the opposite because everyone in power is a noble, but such a title is more name than fact.

II. One of the elements of the *Discourses* that differs from our expectations of Machiavelli is his claim that all major events are foretold by signs or prophecies.

- **A.** He specifically mentions fortune tellers, revelations, and spectacular natural events that occur.
  - **1.** Savonarola foretold the coming of King Charles of France to Italy and said that there were soldiers fighting in the sky above Arezzo, too.
  - **2.** The top of the dome of the Florence cathedral was struck by lightning just before Lorenzo de'Medici died.
  - **3.** The Palazzo Vecchio was struck by lightning just before Piero Soderini was driven from office in 1512.
- **B.** These signs need to be interpreted by people with knowledge of the natural and the supernatural.
- **C.** Machiavelli speculates that it is possible that philosophers are right about the air being filled with "intelligences."
- **D.** This section of the *Discourses* is a good reminder to readers that although Machiavelli appears to be quite modern to many people today, in fact, his worldview was largely that of people of Renaissance Italy and quite different from that of political thinkers and realists today.

III. Machiavelli considers a central matter at the end of the first discourse—whether a prince or the people are more consistent.

- **A.** Interestingly, Machiavelli begins by pointing out that Livy refers to the people as being unreliable or inconstant.
  - **1.** Livy is not referring to the people when regulated by law.
  - **2.** Rather, Livy is describing the characteristics of an uncontrolled crowd.
  - **3.** However, even though he gives this positive interpretation of Livy, Machiavelli points out that it is arguments rather than even the authority of Livy that should have the final say.

B. Machiavelli unequivocally states that the people are more grateful, more stable, more prudent, and wiser judges than princes.

C. The people are also superior to princes in selecting magistrates.

D. Hence, governments of the people are better than governments of princes.

E. Nevertheless, princes are superior to the people in establishing civil society and its institutions and laws.

F. The people are better at maintaining those societies once established.

G. There is greater stability in times of danger in the people than in princes.

H. The people are more trustworthy than princes with regard to treaties.

I. This closing section of the first discourse shows as much as anything Machiavelli wrote that he was indeed a true believer in the superiority of a republican form of government.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse I, chapters 55–60.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can leaders of a republic cultivate and preserve the virtue that is needed for the republic's success?

2. Why are we shocked at Machiavelli's discussion of prophetic acts in nature?

3. Why does Machiavelli trust the people more than nobles?

Lecture Seventeen

Discourses—The Qualities of a Good Republic

Scope: Although Machiavelli dealt with the role of Fortune in *The Prince,* he takes up the issue again at the beginning of his second discourse. He considers claims that Rome was more lucky than skilled or virtuous in its stability and growth during several republican centuries.

Machiavelli then considers Rome's enemies and how their love of liberty is different from that of Christians of his day. Then, in his typical systematic way, he lists three ways to treat conquered people and contrasts how the Romans did this with how Italian cities like Florence acted in his own time.

Outline

I. In his preface to the second discourse, Machiavelli again reflects on the nature and value of history.
- **A.** There are people so in love with the past that they condemn the present.
  - **1.** These people also praise the times when they were younger and dismiss the world they presently live in.
  - **2.** They need to remember that we do not know everything about the past.
  - **3.** History is different from the arts because works survive exactly as they were when they were created.
- **B.** The world has always been more or less in the same state.
  - **1.** Ability has been distributed throughout history, from ancient Assyria to the present.
  - **2.** People in Italy need to recognize ability beyond the Alps, and people in Greece need to do the same thing regarding the Turks.
- **C.** Machiavelli wonders whether he has fallen into the trap he has just described because he praises the Roman Republic so lavishly.

II. Both Livy and Plutarch apparently think that Rome conquered its empire more by Fortune than by skill.
- **A.** Machiavelli believed that those two ancient writers were wrong.
- **B.** It was the abilities of the Roman army that were responsible for the growth of Rome's empire.
  - **1.** Rome never became involved in two great wars at the same time.
  - **2.** Rome always sought out friends in the territories it was trying to conquer.
- **C.** Machiavelli does not doubt that Fortune played a role in Rome's success, but he is consistent with what he said in *The Prince* about men and Fortune.

III. Machiavelli considers Rome's enemies and their love of liberty.
- **A.** He explains an incident in Corcyra during the Peloponnesian War that Thucydides wrote about.
- **B.** The reason that people do not love and value liberty as the ancients did is due to different ways of education and different religions.
  - **1.** Christianity turns its adherents away from worldly honor.
  - **2.** The ancients had bloody sacrifices that inspired awe.
  - **3.** Ancient religion honored men who attained worldly glory.
  - **4.** Christianity honors humble and contemplative men.
  - **5.** The principles of Christian teachings have made it more difficult for people to struggle for and preserve their liberty and equality, two cornerstones of a republic.

IV. Machiavelli analyzes how republican Rome was able to expand its territory.
- **A.** The city planned for a large population so that it would have an abundance of soldiers.
- **B.** There are three essential methods to employ for expanding a state's territory.
  - **1.** To become part of a confederation of states, as the Etruscans did in ancient times and the Swiss did in modern times.
  - **2.** To make alliances, as the Romans did.
  - **3.** To obtain subjects rather than allies, as the Spartans and Athenians did.
  - **4.** The Roman method was the best, the Athenian and Spartan way worthless.

5. The Romans were the first state to use the method of making alliances.

C. The Roman way is totally ignored in the present, most notably by Florence.

D. The method the Etruscans used is not too difficult to do today, but it is also ignored.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse II, preface–chapter 5.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the dangers of idealizing the past and idolizing great figures of the past?
2. What are the requisite circumstances for a republic to expand its territory?
3. Is Christianity the culprit in the decline of civic virtue and successful republics?

Lecture Eighteen
Discourses—A Republic at War

Scope: One of Machiavelli's most quoted lines is that "wealth is the sinews of war." This thought leads to a long discussion of the organization and practice of warfare in ancient Rome. He concludes that it is better to use fraud than force.

When Machiavelli gets fairly technical about certain tactics of war and defense, it is more important for us to see what general lessons we can draw from his analysis than to work through details of a kind of warfare no longer practiced in our time. When dealing with the use of artillery in the wars of his own time, he concludes that technological changes do not invalidate principles of warfare established in a different time.

Outline

I. Much of the second discourse deals with how the Romans made war in republican times.
- **A.** There are two basic causes of war:
  - **1.** The ambition of a prince or a republic.
  - **2.** The migration of an entire people into a new territory, caused by famine or war.
- **B.** Leaders often are mistaken about what is needed for success in war.
  - **1.** The popular opinion of Machiavelli's day was that money was the essential element for making war successfully.
  - **2.** If money was the key to success, Machiavelli argues, the Persian King Darius would have defeated Alexander the Great and Sparta would have lost to Athens in the Peloponnesian War.
  - **3.** Interestingly, Machiavelli cites an example that had taken place only days before he wrote about it.
    - **a.** In a war over Urbino, Florence and Pope Leo X would have defeated the nephew of the late Pope Julius II.
    - **b.** Scholars have taken advantage of this passage to date Machiavelli's progress in writing the *Discourses* in September 1517, when that event occurred.
  - **4.** Good soldiers are the most important element in successful warfare, although money is indeed important.
- **C.** If a state is well organized and well prepared for war, it should fight a defensive war.
- **D.** If a state is largely disarmed or disorganized, it should fight far away from home.
  - **1.** Machiavelli cites as an ancient example Hannibal fighting successfully in Italy but not at home.
  - **2.** For an example from the modern world, Machiavelli turns to the Luccan Castruccio Castracani (about whom Machiavelli wrote a book) fighting successfully against Florence.

II. Machiavelli asserts that fraud is more effective than force in a state becoming great, but he reminds us that a leader needs to be both a lion and a fox.

III. Machiavelli admired the battlefield organization of the Romans.
- **A.** They organized and arranged their troops so that they could regroup three times during a battle.
- **B.** Thus, the Romans had to be beaten three times.
- **C.** Again, Machiavelli laments that no modern commander has learned this lesson from antiquity.

IV. One of the interesting arguments Machiavelli takes up is whether the presence of modern artillery changes military tactics so much that ancient models are no longer relevant.
- **A.** This is not just a technical question but also is part of the larger issue of the use and application of lessons of the past in a different time period with differing conditions.
- **B.** Some have argued that the new technology of artillery has changed everything.
  - **1.** The Romans could not have achieved what they did had there been artillery.
  - **2.** The ability of individual soldiers is not as important in an age of firearms.
  - **3.** Battle tactics must be very different from what they were in ancient times.
- **C.** Machiavelli considers these criticisms of the use of ancient military tactics.

1. Artillery is generally much more useful to those attacking a walled city than to those who are defending it.
2. Soldiers must be more scattered in the present than in the past.
   a. This statement does not mean, however, that the skills of individual soldiers matter less.
   b. If individual soldiers perform less well than in the past, that is because of inferior military institutions and weak armies.
3. The notion that the presence of artillery will eliminate hand-to-hand combat is completely false.

V. Although Hannibal did not agree, foot soldiers are more valuable than cavalry.

A. Infantry can go places where mounted soldiers cannot.

B. Italian princes have been wrong to place too much attention on cavalry and to downplay the importance of foot soldiers.

C. Cavalry is needed for some sorts of warfare:
1. Reconnaissance.
2. Raiding and plundering the countryside.

D. The only way to defeat good infantry is with good infantry.

VI. Machiavelli refers readers to *The Prince* for an analysis of the dangers of using auxiliary and mercenary troops as opposed to one's own soldiers.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse II, chapters 6–21.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the most important qualities that a nation at war needs to have?
2. Is Machiavelli a conservative with regard to battle tactics, and if so, does this go against his general stance that it is important to act boldly?
3. Given changes in technology, are ancient military strategies still relevant?

Lecture Nineteen

Discourses—Can Republics Last?

Scope: Machiavelli again discusses Italy's invaders, beginning with the French in 1494. From his concern for war-torn Italy, he takes up several important issues that Livy dealt with in his *History of Rome*.

Machiavelli condemns indecisive leaders. He also takes up a somewhat technical discussion of fortresses and their value in defense. He states that nations make mistakes when they attack enemies who are divided because such an attack will unite those who were divided. He adds that exiles are untrustworthy and often mislead those who try to help them.

In the third discourse, Machiavelli worries about how nations, especially republics, and religions can survive in a dangerous and unpredictable world.

Outline

I. In a discussion about mistaken opinions, Machiavelli deals with how Italy can get rid of its invaders.

- **A.** The twin problem is the troops of the French king and of the Swiss.
- **B.** The pope (the Medici Leo X) should wait for either the French or the Swiss to conquer the other power, then use his own armies, along with the armies of the defeated power and those of his allies, to defeat the winner.
- **C.** Machiavelli is optimistic that the moment he was writing was indeed a time of great opportunity for exactly that to happen.

II. Machiavelli again shows his disdain for governments that are indecisive, in this case, in matters of war and peace.

- **A.** The Romans either rewarded or destroyed those whom they conquered.
  - **1.** They rewarded some conquered people with privileges and even citizenship.
  - **2.** Some they destroyed or sent colonies to.
  - **3.** The Romans never took a neutral position in these matters.
- **B.** In 1502, following a revolt of Arezzo and the Valdichiana, Florence made the mistake of employing a middle course after putting down the rebellion.

III. The use of fortresses is discussed.

- **A.** The Romans did not build fortresses as long as the republic was virtuous, although it retained some that it captured.
- **B.** If fortresses were largely useless in ancient times, they are more useless now because of the presence of artillery.
- **C.** Hence, fortresses are harmful in places that are occupied and useless at home.
- **D.** Good soldiers, not good fortresses, are the best defense.
- **E.** Fortresses have the effect of making those who rule more violent toward their subjects.

IV. It is unwise for a prince or republic to attack a divided enemy.

- **A.** When enemies of a divided Rome attacked it, they brought Rome once again to unity.
- **B.** Florence won Pistoia by providing small favors for whichever faction was weaker at the moment, and eventually, Pistoia turned itself over to Florence.
- **C.** For years, Florence was unsuccessful in winning Siena because Florentine action always caused the Sienese to come together against Florence.

V. Not avenging injuries to individuals or the public is foolish.

- **A.** Rome failed to punish certain of its ambassadors who had acted unfairly against the Gauls, and this lack of action led to such indignation that the Gauls captured the city of Rome.

B. A man named Pausanias was raped by Attalus and complained to Philip of Macedon. But when Philip made Attalus a governor, Pausanias turned his anger toward Philip and killed him.

VI. Nations should not try to buy friendship with money, nor should they disarm their own people.

A. The Romans neither acquired territory with money nor made peace with money.

B. In contrast, Florence paid off all of the rulers of the Romagna.

1. The foundation of Rome was its people.

2. In his own day, Machiavelli argues, nations will not understand this reality unless they steep themselves in ancient history.

VII. Machiavelli states that it is risky to trust exiles.

A. They believe things that are false and are willing to use guile.

B. If they are able to return home, even with assistance, they will often abandon the person who helped them. They have their own agenda and care only about getting back to home.

VIII. The Romans gave their commanders a great deal of power when they were in the field, but contemporary Florentines in the government try to micromanage war.

IX. Machiavelli begins the third discourse by discussing the conditions under which republics and religions have long lives.

A. Republics need to renew themselves often through their own institutions.

1. Every successful republic has had some good qualities, and it must try to reestablish that early prestige and growth.

2. When the Gauls took Rome, it gave the Romans the opportunity to renew their institutions and almost start afresh.

B. In republics, such renewal can take place through a great individual or through good laws and institutions.

1. It was the censors and tribunes who performed that function in Rome.

2. Such renewals should occur often—at least every 10 years.

3. In the years of Medici rule in Florence (1434–1494), it was said that the state needed to be taken back every five years.

C. In Christianity, it was the renewal of St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226), St. Dominic de Guzmán (d. 1221), and their orders that saved the Church from ruin.

1. They lived in poverty in imitation of Christ.

2. They preached and heard confessions.

3. They argued that if priests lived sinfully, it was the people's role to be obedient to them, but God would judge them.

4. It is only because of these men and their movements that the Church exists in Machiavelli's day.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse II, chapter 22–Discourse III, chapter 1.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does Machiavelli have viable ideas for ridding Italy of the "barbarians"?

2. Why does Machiavelli reject the commonsense notion that one should attack an enemy that is wracked with internal divisions?

3. What sorts of things can a republic do to renew and revitalize itself?

Lecture Twenty

Discourses—Conspiracies and Other Dangers

Scope: After using some famous historical examples to emphasize the importance of taking action against opposition when a change of government occurs, Machiavelli writes at great length about the nature of conspiracies. Although they are dangerous, they are quite difficult to execute successfully. He uses ancient examples but is particularly interested in the Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici in 1478.

Although Machiavelli respected the leader of the Florentine Republic, Piero Soderini, he realizes that different qualities are needed in leaders in different historical circumstances. Hence, while some cautious leaders like Soderini are successful sometimes, it was Soderini's timidity at a time when boldness was needed that led to the fall of the republic.

In the final sections of his *Discourses*, Machiavelli returns to and reiterates several of the central themes of the book—for example, the need for a well-trained army and the collective wisdom of the people.

At the end, Machiavelli points out that customs have a great power in societies and that changes are made only with some difficulty. Continuity, however, is more the product of education than of a conservative aristocracy.

Outline

I. Machiavelli considers famous events that occurred at the end of the Roman monarchy and the beginning of the republic.

- **A.** When there is a major change in government, it is necessary for a memorable action to be taken against those who oppose the new order.
  - **1.** Brutus, who was most responsible for the expulsion of the last king, Tarquin the Proud, condemned his sons to death and was present at their execution.
  - **2.** In Florence, the Gonfaloniere of Justice, Machiavelli's "boss," Piero Soderini, thought that patience and goodness were sufficient to stop the return of the Medici.
    - **a.** Soderini failed to understand that wickedness is not subdued by time.
    - **b.** He needed to be like Brutus.
- **B.** The fact that King Tarquin's son raped Lucretia is not why he was expelled.
  - **1.** Tarquin had, in fact, behaved tyrannically.
  - **2.** Had Tarquin not been a tyrant and his son had raped Lucretia, Brutus would have appealed to the king for justice rather than to the Roman people.
  - **3.** When kings fail to obey laws and customs, they have begun to lose their states.

II. The longest chapter in all the *Discourses* concerns conspiracies.

- **A.** Conspiracies have many different causes.
  - **1.** The principal cause is that of the leader being hated by the people.
  - **2.** Desire to free one's city from a tyrant is another, the great example being Brutus and Cassius against Julius Caesar.
  - **3.** Sometimes hatred can occur from giving out too many favors or too few, an example being the plot against the Roman Emperor Commodus.
- **B.** Conspiracies are very dangerous undertakings for the conspirators and can be discovered at several different stages.
  - **1.** Several people are involved, and it is almost impossible for all to keep a secret, an example being the conspiracy led by the Pazzi to murder Lorenzo and Giuliano de'Medici in 1478.
  - **2.** If more than three or four are part of the conspiracy, it can be discovered, because all of their stories will not be in agreement.
  - **3.** At the time of the conspiracy, there are several dangers.
    - **a.** The plan will have to be changed at the last minute.
    - **b.** Conspirators' courage may fail.
    - **c.** There will be a mistake in the conspiracy's execution.

4. The Pazzi conspiracy is a good illustration of these problems.
    a. Plans had to be changed because Giuliano de'Medici was not going to be present at the meal where the murders were to take place.
    b. When the plot shifted to the murders taking place in the cathedral, one conspirator refused to carry out his part in that sacred place.
    c. One of the conspirators gave himself away too soon by shouting as he moved close to Lorenzo.
5. It is dangerous to leave people alive who will try to avenge the actions of the conspirators.

III. Successful leaders change with the times.

A. Fabius Maximus (known as Fabius the Delayer) was by nature cautious, and that was necessary for him to fight successfully against Hannibal in Italy.

B. However, Fabius wrongly tried to oppose Scipio's aggressive actions against Carthage.

C. Had Fabius been a king, his caution in Africa could have lost the war for Rome.

D. In a republic, different citizens with different skills are chosen to fit the needs of the times.

E. Hence, a republic has a longer life than a principality.

F. Piero Soderini failed as the leader of the Republic of Florence in 1512 because he could not change from being a man of patience and humility.

G. Similarly, cities and nations fail when they do not modify their institutions and their practices over time.

IV. Machiavelli then reviews some of his central themes.

A. He challenges Livy's belief that great commanders are more important than great soldiers, using stories that Livy himself tells.

B. He reflects again on the collapse of the Roman Republic and attributes it directly to the struggles over the agrarian laws and to the lengthening of military commands. He had discussed both these issues separately earlier in the *Discourses*.

C. He argues that citizens need to be kept poor in a successful republic but that poverty or social status should not prevent them from holding any honor. He cites the role of the dictator Cincinnatus.

D. He states that the Romans were never humiliated by a defeat or became arrogant when they prospered.

E. Machiavelli asks what makes a cohesive fighting force.
1. The soldiers need to know one another.
2. They need to have been raised in the same place and in the same religion.
3. Hence, the best army consists of a state's own citizens.

V. Machiavelli believes that there are certain attributes of people that do not change with time.

A. He cites continuity between ancient Gaul and modern France.

B. He argues that the nature of this continuity is tradition and education rather than blood.

Recommended Readings:
Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Discourse III, chapters 2–49.

Questions to Consider:
1. In looking at American history, can we agree with Machiavelli that bold and dramatic events are necessary at the time of the establishment of a republic?
2. Why are conspiracies so risky?
3. Can leaders change with the times, or are leaders only successful when their best qualities match the needs of a particular moment in time?

Lecture Twenty-One
Florentine Histories—The Growth of Florence

Scope: My main purpose in discussing Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories* is to demonstrate that many of the ideas he put forth in *The Prince* and *Discourses* are developed and applied in his most important work of history. Machiavelli writes his history as a commission from the Medici. However, he is not afraid to criticize Medici rule of Florence between 1434 and 1494. I will not attempt to be as methodical here as I was with the two works of Machiavelli discussed in previous lectures.

After a glimpse of how Machiavelli approaches the writing of history, I will turn to specific sections that have importance for the understanding of Machiavelli as a political thinker. At the beginning of Book III of the *Florentine Histories*, for example, Machiavelli takes up a theme from the *Discourses*: While division in the Roman Republic was a good thing, Florence has suffered from the evils of division.

Outline

I. Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories* is an important work in which we see elaborations and examples of themes he introduced in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.

- **A.** The *Florentine Histories* was commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de'Medici in 1520.
- **B.** By the time Machiavelli finished this work, Giulio had been enthroned as Pope Clement VII.
- **C.** In two lectures, I can only suggest the scope and richness of this work.
- **D.** In many ways, this is a work deeply rooted in the historical tradition of antiquity and its Humanist revival in the 15th century.
  - **1.** Machiavelli employs many elements of ancient historical writing, for example, the creation of speeches.
  - **2.** Machiavelli is not hesitant to disagree with ancient or Florentine historians.
  - **3.** He insists that other historians overvalue morality when praising or blaming historical figures.
  - **4.** He values and praises successful outcomes more than his contemporaries do.
- **E.** This is a political history, and it almost ignores cultural, intellectual, and social history.
  - **1.** The Black Death is dealt with in a few lines.
  - **2.** Artists, such as Giotto and Brunelleschi, are mentioned only in passing.

II. Book I is a general history of Italy, beginning with the collapse of the Roman Empire in the west in the 5th century.

- **A.** One of the great themes, which Machiavelli articulates at the beginning, is that historians have misunderstood the importance of discord in states and have universally condemned discord as an evil.
  - **1.** It is not until the beginning of Book III that Machiavelli explains that discord worked well for Rome but crippled Florence.
  - **2.** Division in Florence ended with exile and death and resulted in a weaker military in Florence.
- **B.** The material that Machiavelli presents was already known to his contemporaries.
  - **1.** Machiavelli did not do archival or original research.
  - **2.** Certainly, scholars today have "corrected" some of Machiavelli's facts and given different explanations for changes that occurred.
- **C.** He narrates the well-known period of history when Italy was dominated by struggles between the Guelfs (supporters of the papacy) and Ghibellines (supporters of the Holy Roman Empire).
- **D.** One of his apparent digressions describes the origin of Venice.
  - **1.** Venice is quite different from the other major Italian political entities of Machiavelli's time because it is a "new" city—it was never an ancient Roman city.
  - **2.** Venice claimed that it had been founded as a republic at the end of the Roman Empire and had always remained so.
  - **3.** When the Medici were expelled in 1494, many Florentines wanted to take Venice as a great republican model, although Machiavelli was not in agreement.

III. In Book II, Machiavelli begins the more focused history of Florence, beginning with its origins in Roman times.

- **A.** There was debate in Florence about whether the city was founded in republican or imperial times, and Machiavelli comes down on the side of the latter.
- **B.** He brings the story to the year 1215 in just a few pages.
- **C.** Following medieval chroniclers, Machiavelli traces the history of serious division in Florence to an incident in 1215.
- **D.** With great detail, he tells the story of Florence in the age of the Guelf-Ghibelline struggles.
  - **1.** This history is best known today from all the references to this era in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.
  - **2.** Much of what Machiavelli writes is what we would today call institutional history.
  - **3.** He places great importance on a new constitutional arrangement of 1293, which barred nobles from holding certain offices.
- **E.** The period of the dictatorship of the Duke of Athens in 1342 is the setting for Machiavelli's first speech.

IV. Book III carries the story of Florence into the early years of the 15th century.

- **A.** In a speech given by an anonymous Florentine, Machiavelli expresses several of his most important ideas.
  - **1.** The speaker urges Florentines to put away their private interests for the good of Florence.
  - **2.** Florence wrongly surrendered its freedom to outsiders, such as the Duke of Athens.
  - **3.** What Fortune has cast upon Florence can be overcome with genuine wisdom.
- **B.** Most of Book III tells the story of a rebellion of wool workers in Florence in 1378 known as the revolt of the Ciompi.
  - **1.** In a speech by one of the rebels, the speaker argues for essential human equality.
  - **2.** Although there was a great deal of violence and the creation of new institutions, the success of the Ciompi was temporary.
- **C.** After describing two wars of Florence that ended in the deaths of the Duke of Milan and the King of Naples, Machiavelli observes that death has been Florence's best friend.

V. Book IV tells the story of the rise of the Medici, who began to rule Florence in 1434.

- **A.** The leaders of Florence in the early 15th century tried to stop the Medici from gaining power, but they made some mistakes:
  - **1.** They became insolent because of their success and longevity.
  - **2.** They were blamed instead of Cosimo for an unsuccessful and unpopular war against Lucca.
- **B.** Cosimo was exiled, but those responsible did not "finish the job."
- **C.** When Cosimo returned to Florence in 1434, he was widely hailed as *Pater Patriae*, father of the fatherland.

Recommended Readings:

Harvey Mansfield, "Introduction," in Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*, translated by Laura Banfield and Harvey Mansfield, pp. vii–xv.

Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, translated by Laura Banfield and Harvey Mansfield, preface and Books I–IV.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it important to read Machiavelli's chief historical work since he uses historical examples throughout both *The Prince* and his *Discourses*?
2. Given that modern historians have corrected a fair amount of Machiavelli's narrative, is the value or greatness of his *Florentine Histories* lessened?
3. Is the fact that Machiavelli defines history almost entirely in political terms a serious failure on his part to understand how societies work?

Lecture Twenty-Two
Florentine Histories—The Age of the Medici

Scope: Machiavelli considers the purposes and nature of war in his *Florentine Histories*. This is perhaps a natural thing to do because Florence was almost always at war, and Machiavelli more thoroughly documents those wars than he does the development of political institutions and the narration of internal political struggles. He also speaks admiringly of Cosimo de'Medici.

The principal focus of this lecture, however, will be the famous attempt to overthrow Medici rule by assassinating Lorenzo de'Medici and his brother Giuliano, the so-called Pazzi conspiracy of 1478. Machiavelli wrote about conspiracies and the dangers intrinsic to them. For Machiavelli, the Pazzi conspiracy becomes a case study that not only illuminates the particular issue of conspiracies but also shows us more generally how we learn from history.

Outline

I. Books V and VI deal primarily with Florence's foreign relations and wars.

A. In his introduction to Book V, Machiavelli explains that change inevitably occurs constantly.
1. Virtue (i.e., *virtù*) leads to quiet, but that very quiet often leads to a certain comfort level and eventually to ruin.
2. Ruin leads to order through rescue by a strong man (a prince) and virtue and good fortune.
3. This is the cycle of Florentine history.
4. Intellectual achievements and philosophy follow times dominated by military men and issues, when order was restored.
5. Modern history may be as valuable as ancient history because it provides negative examples, while ancient history provides positive ones.

B. Cosimo de'Medici maintained authority in large part by controlling whose names went into the bags from which were extracted the names of those who served in many offices.

C. Machiavelli briefly recalls the Council of Florence, during which the Catholic and Orthodox Churches were temporarily reunited.
1. It is clear that Machiavelli is interested in the politics of this event rather than the doctrines that were debated.
2. He understands the Greeks "yielding" to the Latin Church as a matter of politics. (The Greeks needed Latin military aid to help them stop the Turks.)

D. Machiavelli analyzes the Battle of Anghiari.
1. It was fought between Florence and the duke of Milan.
2. The victory was more important for Florence than the defeat was for Milan.
3. Although this battle became famous among Florentines, only one man was killed in the battle.

E. Rather caustically, Machiavelli points out that after a victory in ancient times, the winner filled its coffers with spoils, while in modern times, victories were neither enriching nor final.

F. One of the great achievements of Cosimo de'Medici was the Peace of Lodi in 1454, which brought some stability among the five major states in Italy (Venice, Milan, Florence, Naples, and the Papal States), although the King of Naples was unhappy with its provisions.

G. Machiavelli praises Pope Pius II, a Sienese, because he put aside his private passions and acted in what he perceived to be the good of Christendom.

II. Book VII flashes back to present the life of Cosimo de'Medici but then returns to a discussion of war and foreign affairs, with some domestic matters mixed in.

A. Machiavelli realizes that some may criticize him for providing too much background to specifically Florentine matters; however, he reminds his readers that what follows would be less well understood without that background.

B. Machiavelli describes the end of Cosimo's life and sums up his achievements:

1. Cosimo not only had more money and authority than any other Florentine but also more generosity and more wisdom.
2. He not only built magnificent new buildings (San Lorenzo, San Marco) but also added to many others.
3. He not only built magnificent palaces in and around Florence but also a hospital for poor and sick pilgrims in Jerusalem.
4. He acted with modesty and behaved like a Florentine citizen.

C. In reviewing all of Cosimo's life, we are reminded that he faced several difficult and dangerous situations.
1. As a young man, he had to flee the Council of Constance in disguise.
2. He was not well educated but had natural wisdom.
3. He sponsored great learning in Florence.
4. Cosimo was both loved and feared in Florence.
5. Machiavelli does not want to be thought a flatterer, but he finds it necessary to praise such a great man.

D. In describing Pope Sixtus IV, Machiavelli refers to him as a vile man. However, it was his virtue (*virtù*) that secured for him the office of Minister General of the Franciscan Order and, later, of cardinal.

III. The final section of the *Florentine Histories* carries the story of Florence to the death of Cosimo's grandson, often known as Lorenzo the Magnificent, in 1492.

A. The story that Machiavelli focuses on is the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, in which Lorenzo de'Medici barely escaped death and his brother Giuliano was killed.
1. Despite the success of the Peace of Lodi, Italy was divided into two camps after the death of Cosimo in 1464—the papacy and Kingdom of Naples on the one hand and Milan, Florence, and Venice on the other.
2. The pope took the opportunity to appoint someone hostile as archbishop of Pisa, which was part of the Florentine state.
3. In Rome, the pope used his power to destroy the Medici while favoring the Florentine Pazzi family.
4. A member of the Pazzi family conceived a plan to rid Florence of the Medici and involved other members of his family and the archbishop of Pisa.
5. The plan was to kill both Medici at a banquet, but Giuliano did not attend.
6. The plan was revised to kill the brothers in the cathedral of Florence during a mass.
7. As Machiavelli explained in the *Discourses*, many things can go wrong in a conspiracy.
8. Giuliano was killed, but Lorenzo escaped.
9. The Florentines took revenge on the Pazzi, other conspirators, and the archbishop of Pisa.
10. Machiavelli notes at the end of this narrative that Giuliano left a pregnant wife; the child was named Giulio and was the one who commissioned Machiavelli to write the *Florentine Histories*. Giulio became Pope Clement VII in 1523.

B. Machiavelli describes the death of Lorenzo de'Medici in 1492 and reflects on his qualities.
1. He reminds readers that Lorenzo's second son, Giovanni, became Pope Leo X in 1513.
2. He points out that Lorenzo was not a successful businessman and instead sought land as a stable form of wealth.
3. In both his construction of towns and fortifications and in the way he conducted diplomacy, he built strong defenses for Florence.
4. He was a great patron of arts and letters and sponsored elaborate festivals and celebrations.
5. He was a great lover of women and played too many silly games.
6. There were portents in nature of Lorenzo's death.

C. Machiavelli ends the *Florentine Histories* without even mentioning by name Lorenzo's successor, his son Piero.

Recommended Readings:

Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, translated by Laura Banfield and Harvey Mansfield, Books V–VIII.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it surprising to find Machiavelli sometimes critical of the Medici, given that a member of the Medici family commissioned the *Florentine Histories*?
2. How does Machiavelli's detailed description of the Pazzi conspiracy help us understand better what he wrote about conspiracies in his *Discourses*?
3. Why might Machiavelli have ended his *Florentine Histories* in 1492 rather than in 1494?

Lecture Twenty-Three
The Fate of Machiavelli's Works

Scope: *The Prince* and *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* were privately circulated but not published in Machiavelli's lifetime. When they were printed in the years following his death in 1527, they soon found themselves on the papacy's Index of Prohibited Books. Later in the 16th century, the principal works were translated into French. Machiavelli became known in England largely through the writings of French political thinkers who had access to his works.

In the 17th century, Machiavelli's works were translated into English and, thus, directly entered into the political writings of the era of the crises and temporary destruction of the English monarchy. The ongoing political discourse from England later entered the thoughts and works of writers in the American colonies. Hence, at least indirectly, Machiavelli's republican thought contributed to the development of an American republican tradition.

Outline

I. None of the works examined in this course was printed in Machiavelli's lifetime.

- **A.** The only political work to be published before Machiavelli's death in 1527 was *The Art of War*, which was published in 1521.
- **B.** *The Prince* was first printed in 1532 and the *Discourses* in 1531.

II. These works were often not well received.

- **A.** All of Machiavelli's books were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books by the pope in 1559.
- **B.** Protestants in particular disliked Machiavelli, whose ideas were thought in part to be behind the brutal St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris in 1572 while Catherine de'Medici was queen of France; she was the daughter of the Lorenzo de'Medici to whom *The Prince* was originally dedicated.

III. In England, the term *Machiavel* was used to denote a cynical, dishonest character by the end of the 16th century.

- **A.** There were no English translations of *The Prince* before 1640, but the work was known in England in the late 16th century, primarily through a French translation.
- **B.** Christopher Marlowe has a character named Machiavel introduce the sinister character in *The Jew of Malta*. The character says, "I count religion but a childish toy," and there is "no sin but ignorance."
- **C.** Several characters in Shakespeare can be described as Machiavels, including Richard II, Richard III, and Iago (in *Othello*). Even *Hamlet* has instances that reveal so-called Machiavellian characteristics.

IV. *The Prince* has had an unsavory reputation since its publication.

- **A.** Men as different as Louis XIV, Napoleon, and Benito Mussolini used *The Prince* for guidance.
- **B.** In the 18th century, Frederick I of Prussia, along with Voltaire, wrote anti-Machiavelli works.

V. I want to concentrate also on the importance of the *Discourses* as a major work of republican political thought that has directly or indirectly influenced thinkers in England beginning in the 17th century (when his works were translated into English) and in the United States beginning in the 18th century.

- **A.** Even among Machiavelli's younger Italian contemporaries, attempts were made to incorporate his insights into works of political thought that "softened" some of his more radical and novel positions.
- **B.** Before turning to influences in the English-speaking world, it is worthwhile to focus on some elements of Machiavelli's thought in somewhat different terms than were used in the exegetical lectures earlier in the course.
  - **1.** Machiavelli developed the idea of virtue (*virtù*) in original ways.
  - **2.** Machiavelli carefully and systematically examined Aristotle's and Polybius's ideas of mixed government.

3. Machiavelli returned to a more classical understanding of *Fortuna* or Fortune; in this understanding, although Fortune is something that comes from the outside, it is *not* something over which we have no control whatsoever.
4. This last point has the effect of further secularizing ideas of historical causation.
5. In the 18th century in England, there was a greater emphasis on historical causation, as opposed to Fortune or fate, and hence, on corruption as a replacement for Fortune in historical explanation.

C. In the early 17th century, before the Interregnum, some political thinkers in England argued that their nation had a mixed constitution of king, lord, and Commons and, hence, found the tradition of republican political thought useful and relevant even in a monarchical state.

D. However, it was the replacement of the monarchy in 1649 that allowed Machiavelli's republican thought to enter more into political discourse.

E. The key English thinker who incorporated Machiavelli's republican thought into British writing was James Harrington, with the publication of his *Oceana* in 1656.
1. His main purpose in doing this was to justify the existence of an armed people during the Interregnum.
2. He envisioned a republic that involved civic virtue and participation.

VI. It has been argued that both the American Revolution and the American Constitution owe something to Italian Civic Humanism generally and to Machiavelli in particular.

A. The American concept of the separation of powers is related to Machiavellian themes.

B. Americans argued that civic life demanded active participation and a sense of the common good.

C. Part of the image Americans had of themselves was of armed men acting patriotically, an idea found in Livy but also mediated through Machiavelli.
1. The relationship between an armed citizenry and popular freedom comes directly from Machiavelli.
2. The organization of Revolutionary War veterans was called the Order of the Cincinnati, named for the great Roman hero Cincinnatus.
3. The fear of corruption is found in our Constitution and in *The Federalist Papers.*

Recommended Readings:

J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, chapters 11, 12, 15, pp. 361–422 and 506–552.

Questions to Consider:

1. When and why did Machiavelli become a "sinister" figure in the minds of so many people?
2. Given the fame of *The Prince*, how can we see Machiavelli's principal legacy as a republican thinker?
3. Where do we see elements of Machiavellian thought in America's Constitution and republican ideology?

Lecture Twenty-Four
Was Machiavelli a Machiavellian?

Scope: The title question sounds like a silly tautology. However, given what the word *Machiavellian* has often come to mean in American political discourse, it is an important question.

Some important points to consider after having examined the life and writings of Machiavelli are the following: (1) Is the way people commonly think of Machiavelli today fair? If not, then what is the value in trying to reread and rethink what he wrote? (2) Beyond the oft-perceived legacy of Machiavelli as a counselor to dictators, how has the thought of Machiavelli contributed to the development of republican theory and practice? (3) If indeed Machiavelli is an important republican thinker, how can the study of his works today further our understanding of mixed and balanced government? (4) Why is Machiavelli such a vital model, even after five centuries?

Outline

I. The question posed in the title of this lecture is not as silly as it sounds.

- **A.** Often, we mischaracterize historical figures and even misquote them.
  - **1.** One example is the fact that Alexis de Tocqueville never wrote his most "quoted" statement: "America is great because America is good, and when America ceases to be good, it will cease to be great." Those words were not said until more than 50 years after Tocqueville died.
  - **2.** Certainly, authors are not responsible for how others characterize or use their writings.
    - **a.** John Calvin would hardly recognize the thought of many Calvinists.
    - **b.** Karl Marx would be surprised by many ideas commonly labeled Marxist today.
- **B.** The definition of *Machiavellian* is essentially derived from one of Machiavelli's works, *The Prince*.
  - **1.** There is no word *Machiavellian* before Machiavelli, but he certainly did not invent many of the elements of what that term has come to mean.
  - **2.** In fact, Machiavelli would be the first to agree with this view in that he gave ancient and modern examples of all of his major points in *The Prince*.
- **C.** We do need to realize how startlingly new much of Machiavelli is.
  - **1.** Although Machiavelli may be describing well-documented behaviors of princes in the past, his praise of what others have condemned is new.
  - **2.** His use of such phrases as "cruelty well used" is a jolt to traditional classical and Christian political theory.
  - **3.** His divorce of personal from political ethical standards is a break with a long past that can be traced to the ancient Greeks and Cicero.
- **D.** We must consider whether Machiavelli is the author of a new (and realistic) political morality or whether he holds an amoral or immoral position.

II. It is important to consider Machiavelli in relation to thought that preceded him and in his own political and intellectual context.

- **A.** For an author who is so rooted in the study of history, it is ironic that his words and ideas are so often completely stripped of context.
- **B.** He needs to be understood as an admirer—though not an uncritical one—of the classical past.
- **C.** Machiavelli is the heir of the Renaissance Humanist tradition, although he is not afraid to disagree with the most renowned Humanists.

III. Although *The Prince* will continue to be the book that makes Machiavelli a household name and is read widely in university courses, it is important to look at his other works, especially the *Discourses.*

- **A.** Because it is hard not to argue that Machiavelli is ultimately a republican political thinker, it is vital to consider his great work of republican political thought.

B. He has taken ideas about mixed government that go back to Aristotle and, especially, Polybius and the republican tradition of Rome and reconfigured them in light of events in his own day and his own original approach.

C. Machiavelli, both directly and indirectly, has been a contributor to the development of republican thought in the West.

D. Although most public discourse today focuses on democracy, most people mean nothing like ancient Athenian democracy but something much more like the American variety of republicanism, that is, a mixed constitution of limited government and checks and balances.

1. We should use Machiavelli's sober analysis of successful republics as an element in our modern discourse about political arrangements.

2. We should also consider Machiavelli's understanding of how to create a republic where none has existed before.

IV. Machiavelli is an important historical writer but an even more important writer about the necessity of thinking historically when looking at the present and future.

A. Machiavelli's importance as a historical thinker is not primarily found in his *Florentine Histories*.

B. Rather, it is Machiavelli's careful and critical examination of the past and his zealous interest in how it can engage in a dialogue with and inform the present that make him such a vital model in a culture that so often shortchanges the value of studying the past.

1. Machiavelli is not at all antiquarian but rather is always looking to apply knowledge of the past to an understanding of the present and as a guide for the future.

2. It is hard to imagine anyone more interested in his own present while so committed to the need for a study of the past in order to understand that present.

Recommended Readings:

Article by Quentin Skinner, in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, et al., eds., pp. 293–309.

Harvey Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue*, chapters 11–13, pp. 258–314.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should universities revise their curricula to include the *Discourses* rather than *The Prince* because of its importance to and insights into the republican tradition in the West?

2. How can Machiavelli be perceived as a tutor to the modern world concerning the uses of the past?

Timeline

509 B.C.	Traditional date for the founding of the Roman Republic.
c. 64 B.C.–A.D. 17	Life of Livy.
27 B.C.	The date most commonly given for the end of the Roman Republic.
A.D. 1434	Cosimo de'Medici returns from exile and begins to rule in Florence.
1454–1494	Peace of Lodi.
1464	Death of Cosimo de'Medici.
1469	Death of Piero de'Medici and accession to power of Lorenzo de'Medici; birth of Niccolò Machiavelli.
1478	Pazzi conspiracy.
1492	Death of Lorenzo de'Medici.
1494	Expulsion of the Medici from Florence; establishment of the Florentine Republic; time of growing influence of Girolamo Savonarola.
1498	Execution of Savonarola; Machiavelli appointed secretary of the Second Chancery of the Florentine Republic.
1500	Machiavelli meets Louis XII during a diplomatic mission to France.
1502–1503	Machiavelli undertakes a diplomatic mission to Cesare Borgia and is with him at the time of the death of Cesare's father, Pope Alexander VI.
1506–1507	Machiavelli journeys on a diplomatic mission to the Emperor Maximilian.
1507	Machiavelli named as chancellor of a group of officials charged with raising a militia in Florence.
1512	The Medici return as rulers of Florence; Machiavelli is dismissed from his offices.
1513	Machiavelli is arrested and tortured but soon receives a pardon and moves to his family's estate at Sant' Andrea in Percussina. He writes *The Prince*.
1513–1517	Machiavelli writes the *Discourses* and, while doing so, also composes *The Art of War*.
1518–1519	Machiavelli writes his first and best-known play, *The Mandrake Root*.
1520	Machiavelli completes his life of Castruccio Castracani and is commissioned by Giulio de'Medici to write a history of Florence.
1521	Publication of Machiavelli's *Art of War*.
1526	Machiavelli finishes his *Florentine Histories*.
1527	Medici expelled from Florence. Machiavelli dies.
1531	Publication of Machiavelli's *Discourses*.
1532	Publication of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.
1559	Machiavelli's books placed on the Index of Prohibited Books.
1640	First English translation of *The Prince* published.

Glossary

Art of War: The only political work of Machiavelli published during his lifetime.

Auxiliaries: Foreign troops borrowed from an ally. Machiavelli believed that auxiliaries were worthless.

Ciompi Rebellion: An uprising by workers in the woolen industry in Florence in 1378. Despite temporary success, the rebellion was thoroughly put down by 1381.

Council of Florence: An ecumenical council of the Roman Church meeting in 1439 that temporarily patched the split between the Roman and Orthodox Churches.

Decemvirs: A group of 10 men appointed in the early Roman Republic to create laws.

Dictator: An occasional office in the Roman Republic. A dictator would be elected for a short period of time to supersede the regularly elected officials in matters of war. Cincinnatus and Fabius Maximus were famous dictators.

Florence: An independent city-state located in Tuscany. It had at least the façade of a republican government during the late Middle Ages and into the 15th century. From 1434 to 1494, the Medici family ruled. Florence returned to a republican form of government in 1494, but the Medici returned to power in 1512. After a brief republican government beginning in 1527, the Medici became hereditary rulers and eventually grand dukes of Tuscany.

Florentine Republic: Could refer to the government of Florence before 1434 but usually refers to the government of Florence between 1494 and 1512. Machiavelli was an official of the Florentine Republic from 1498 until its fall in 1512.

Fortuna: An Italian word often translated as "Fortune." In the classical world, Fortune was said to be a woman and could, to some extent, be controlled or her effects influenced. In the Christianization of the concept of Fortune in the Middle Ages, the concept came to be associated with fate and was considered totally out of human control. Machiavelli returns to a more classical definition of Fortune, feeling that some things are out of our control but maintaining that we can be prepared for Fortune and her effects.

Guelfs and Ghibellines: Two political factions present in Italian cities in the later Middle Ages. The Guelfs generally favored papal power, while the Ghibellines supported the Holy Roman Emperor. Florence was a predominantly Guelf city, although there were two short periods of Ghibelline rule in the 13th century. Around 1300, the Guelfs split into White and Black factions, so named because a woman in one of the factions was named Bianca, "white" in Italian.

Humanism: The dominant educational program in Renaissance Florence. Humanists studied the classics and modeled their thought and writings on exemplars from classical antiquity.

Lucca: City in Tuscany that retained its independence from Florence. Home of Castruccio Castracani.

Machiavellian, Machiavel: Adjectives created within a century of Machiavelli's death, usually meaning someone who is ruthless and will use any means to achieve his ends.

(*La*) *Mandragola* (*Mandrake Root*): Machiavelli's most famous play.

Mercenaries: Foreign hired troops, usually a body of men with a commander (*condottiere*). Machiavelli thought they were worthless.

Mixed constitution: A form of government consisting of elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

Pazzi conspiracy: An unsuccessful plot to put an end to Medici rule in Florence in 1478. Lorenzo de'Medici escaped, although his brother Giuliano was killed.

Pisa: City in Tuscany that was a traditional enemy of Florence. Florence captured the city in 1408 but had difficulty controlling it.

Pistoia: A Tuscan city near Florence that was part of the Florentine city-state but was often difficult for Florence to control.

Renaissance: Term used to describe cultural, intellectual, and artistic changes beginning in Italy in the 14th century and centered in Florence in the 15th century. Refers specifically to the revival of, interest in, and imitation of Greek and Roman classics.

Republic: A form of government defined as a mixed government with elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Florence prided itself on its republican heritage, although it only roughly approximated the classic definition of a republic.

Risorgimento: The movement in the 19th century that led to the unification of Italy. Machiavelli was regarded as a "prophet" of Italian unity by leaders of the Risorgimento.

Romagna: An area of north central Italy that came under the rule of Cesare Borgia.

Sant' Andrea in Percussina: Village about 11 kilometers south of Florence. It was here that Machiavelli lived after leaving Florence in 1513. While in Sant' Andrea, he wrote *The Prince* and his *Discourses on Livy*.

Siena: Independent republic south of Florence and a traditional rival of Florence.

Venice: A republic in the northeastern part of the Italian peninsula. It was often regarded as a model for a republic because of its success and longevity. Machiavelli was not as enthusiastic about Venice as a model as many of his fellow Florentines were.

Virtù: An Italian word often translated as "virtue" but whose meaning is not exactly what modern people mean when they use the word. It suggests strong and manly action (*vir* = man in Latin) and does not necessarily connote "ethical."

Biographical Notes

Alexander VI (1431–1503): A pope whose name was Rodrigo Borgia. He spent much of his reign establishing a territory for his son Cesare and finding a husband for his daughter Lucrezia.

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.): Greek philosopher who wrote a great deal about politics and the idea of a mixed constitution.

Borgia, Cesare (1475–1507): Son of Pope Alexander VI. He ruled much of the Romagna but fell from power when his father died and Julius II became pope. He was something of a hero for Machiavelli.

Brutus (fl. 510 B.C.): The Roman most responsible for the expulsion of the last king and the establishment of the republic in 509 B.C. The Brutus who assassinated Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. claimed to be the direct descendant of this Brutus.

Castracani, Castruccio (1281–1328): Military leader from Lucca. Machiavelli wrote a biography of him as a prelude to writing his *Florentine Histories*.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106–43 B.C.): Statesman, orator, and writer in the late Roman Republic. In his famous book *On Duties* (*De officiis*), he outlines the qualities of a good leader. Machiavelli challenges his widely held beliefs.

Clement VII (1478–1534): Born Giulio de'Medici, son of Giuliano de'Medici, who was killed in 1478 during the Pazzi conspiracy. Elected pope in 1523. He commissioned Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*.

Fabius Maximus (d. 203 B.C.): Elected dictator of Rome after Hannibal defeated Rome in the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C.E. He was famous for his plan not to attack Hannibal directly; thus, he is sometimes known as Fabius the Delayer.

Gracchi: Refers to the brothers Tiberius (d. 133 B.C.) and Gaius (d. 121 B.C.) Gracchus, both of whom sought to establish agrarian laws calling for major land reform in the second half of the 2nd century B.C.E.

Hannibal (247–182 B.C.): The Carthaginian general who conducted the Second Punic War against Rome.

Harrington, James (1611–1677): Most important English political writer to incorporate elements of Machiavelli's republican philosophy into his and, hence, into English political thought. His principal work is called *Oceana*.

Julius II (1443–1513): The pope who succeeded, after the very brief reign of Pius III, Alexander VI. Julius was quite a military figure; he commissioned Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Leo X (1475–1521): Elected pope in 1513. He was born Giovanni de'Medici, the son of Lorenzo de'Medici. Machiavelli held out great hope that having the papacy and Florence ruled by the same family would lead to the expulsion of foreign armies from Italy.

Livy (c. 64 B.C.–A.D. 17): His complete name was Titus Livius. Livy wrote a long history of Rome, only parts of which survive. The first 10 books deal with the history of the Roman Republic before about 386 B.C. Machiavelli's *Discourses* are an extended commentary on those 10 books.

Machiavelli, Niccolò (1469–1527): Florentine official and author. Author of *The Prince*, *Discourses on Livy*, *Florentine Histories*, and other works.

Medici: Florentine family that dominated political matters there after 1434. The Medici were expelled in 1494, returned in 1512, expelled again in 1527, and permanently returned in 1530. They ruled Florence during most of the Renaissance.

Medici, Cosimo de' (1389–1464): De facto ruler of Florence from 1434–1464. He did not hold office but controlled who did. He was much venerated and known as the "father" of his country.

Medici, Giuliano de' (1453–1478): Brother of Lorenzo de'Medici who was assassinated in 1478 during the Pazzi conspiracy. He was also the father of Pope Clement VII.

Medici, Lorenzo de' (1449–1492): Grandson of Cosimo and ruler of Florence from 1469–1492. He escaped an assassination attempt during the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478. Lorenzo was known as a great patron of the arts and is often referred to as "the Magnificent." His son Giovanni became Pope Leo X.

Numa Pompilius: According to legend, succeeded Romulus as king of Rome and established religious customs.

Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 B.C.): A Greek who wrote an important history of Rome. He best articulated the idea of Rome as a republic having a mixed constitution.

Romulus: Legendary founder of Rome in the 8th century B.C.

Savonarola, Girolamo (1452–1498): A Dominican friar born in Ferrara who became the most important political figure in Florence following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. He claimed to be a prophet and tried to carry out a moral cleansing of Florence. Machiavelli famously referred to him as an "unarmed prophet." In 1498, Savonarola was executed in Florence.

Soderini, Piero (1452–1522): Held the chief office (Gonfaloniere of Justice) in the Florentine Republic from 1502 to 1512. Machiavelli worked in the government while Soderini was in charge. Though Machiavelli recognized Soderini's competence, he criticized him for being too passive.

Tarquin (the Proud): The last king of Rome, expelled in 509 B.C.

Vettori, Francesco (1474–1539): Friend and correspondent of Machiavelli. He was serving as Florence's ambassador to the papacy when Machiavelli was composing *The Prince* in 1513, and he is the recipient of the famous letter in which Machiavelli describes life in Sant' Andrea in Percussina.

Bibliography

Works of Niccolò Machiavelli:

The Art of War. Translated by Christopher Lynch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. This volume is not only a translation but also contains a lengthy interpretative essay and a glossary.

Discourses on Livy. Translated by Julia Bondanella and Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. This is a complete and readable translation of Machiavelli's greatest work. It contains a useful introduction plus a bibliography and notes. It is the translation used in this course.

Florentine Histories. Translated by Laura Banfield and Harvey Mansfield. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. This volume is a complete translation and has a brief but helpful introduction. This is the translation used in this course.

Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence. Edited and translated by James Atkinson and David Sices. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996. This is the only complete collection in English of Machiavelli's correspondence, and it gives an important window into his life and thought.

The Portable Machiavelli. Edited and translated by Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa. New York: Penguin, 1979. Here is a convenient anthology of Machiavelli's writings, including selections from the *Discourses*, *The History of Florence*, and *The Art of War*. It contains *The Prince* in its entirety plus several letters, including the famous one of 1513 to his friend Vettori, and one of Machiavelli's plays, *The Mandrake Root*.

The Prince. Translated by Peter Bondanella. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. This is an outstanding and lively translation. The introduction is by the famous Machiavelli scholar Maurizio Viroli. There are almost countless translations of this classic. In this course, the Bondanella translation is used.

Works Useful to the Study of Niccolò Machiavelli:

Bock, Gisela, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, et al., eds. *Machiavelli and Republicanism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. This is a wonderful collection of essays by many of the leading authorities on Machiavelli, including Quentin Skinner, Nicolai Rubenstein, John Najemy, and Maurizio Viroli. Most of the essays are about Machiavelli and his works, but one section focuses on Machiavelli's influence in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Brucker, Gene. *The Civic World of Early Renaissance Florence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977. Brucker is perhaps the most distinguished historian of Renaissance Florence in the English-speaking world. This book is a history of Florence from 1378 to the beginning of Medici rule in 1434 and, thus, covers a period of history that Machiavelli treats with great interest in his *Florentine Histories*.

———. *Renaissance Florence*. Huntington, NY: Krieger, 1975, reprint with additional materials. This work is Brucker's general history of Florence during the Renaissance and carries the story to the end of the republic, shortly after Machiavelli's death.

Cicero. *On Obligations.* Translated by P. G. Walsh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. It is useful for students of Machiavelli to read this work because it was so influential in the political thought of the Renaissance. Machiavelli boldly rejected most of Cicero's arguments about the moral basis of rulership.

De Grazia, Sebastian. *Machiavelli in Hell*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. A distinctive and somewhat unconventional biography, it received a Pulitzer Prize for biography.

Fiore, Silvia Ruffo. *Niccolò Machiavelli: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism and Scholarship*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990. This work covers a half century of Machiavelli scholarship.

Gilbert, Felix. *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963. This is a classic work of Renaissance history. It examines the two greatest Florentine writers of Florentine history.

Guicciardini, Francesco. *Dialogue on the Government of Florence.* Edited and translated by Alison Brown. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. This work, written by Machiavelli's contemporary and fellow historian, dates from the 1520s but is cast as a debate about Florence's government following the expulsion of the Medici in 1494.

———. *The History of Florence.* Translated by Mario Domandi. New York: Harper, 1970. This is Guicciardini's account of Florence from the death of Cosimo de'Medici and includes history that Machiavelli wrote about and events that Machiavelli took part in as an official of the Florentine Republic.

Hale, J. R. *Machiavelli and Renaissance Italy*. London: English Universities Press, 1961. Hale's biography is fairly short and focuses on the historical context in which Machiavelli's works were created.

Hulliung, Mark. *Citizen Machiavelli*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. This work argues that Machiavelli took issue with Humanist thought.

Johnson, Paul. *The Renaissance: A Short History*. New York: Modern Library, 2000. Although focusing on art, this is an elegant though brief history of the Renaissance and provides a good context for the study of Machiavelli.

Kristeller, Paul. *Renaissance Thought.* Two volumes. New York: Harper and Row, 1961, 1965. Not easy reading, but these tomes are the best exploration of thought in Florence before and during the time of Machiavelli.

Levy, Michael. *Florence: A Portrait*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996. With an excellent text and lavish illustrations, this is both a serious history of the city of Florence and almost a coffee-table book.

Livy. *The Early History of Rome.* Translated by Aubrey de Selincourt. New York: Penguin, revised edition, 2002. In order to read the *Discourses on Livy*, ideally, one should read Livy. This translation is of Books I–V.

———. *The Rise of Rome: Books 1–5*. Translated by T. J. Luce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. This is a somewhat newer translation of the first five books of Livy than the one listed above.

———. *Rome and Italy.* Translated by Betty Radice. New York: Penguin, 1982. This is a translation of Books VI–X of Livy.

Mansfield, Harvey. *Machiavelli's New Modes: A Study of the Discourses on Livy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. Here is an extraordinary book-by-book, passage-by-passage commentary on Machiavelli's most significant work.

———. *Machiavelli's Virtue*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. This book is an interesting look at Machiavelli as a thinker. Mansfield is sympathetic to Machiavelli. There are two chapters devoted to Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*, which Mansfield also translated (see above).

Martines, Lauro. *April Blood: Florence and the Plot Against the Medici*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Martines has provided a fascinating account of the conspiracy against the Medici in 1478 that Machiavelli used as his major example of the dangers of conspiracies.

———. *Power and Imagination*. This is arguably the best one-volume look at Italy in the age of the Renaissance. It not only deals with political history but is also an astute introduction to Renaissance culture; its chapter on Humanism is the best brief treatment of the subject in English.

———. *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390–1460*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963. This has become a standard work on early Humanism in Florence and contains sketches of the most important figures.

Masters, Roger. *Fortune Is a River: Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli's Magnificent Dream to Change the Course of Florentine History*. New York: Free Press, 1998. This book is a somewhat fanciful but certainly imaginative look at a plan to divert the Arno River so that it no longer flowed through rival Pisa. The title is taken from Machiavelli's discussion of Fortune in *The Prince*.

Najemy, John. *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori Letters of 1513–1515*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. These letters, which can be read in English (see *Machiavelli and His Friends*, above), are well analyzed by Najemy and provide important insights on Machiavelli while he was writing *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.

Pocock, J. G. A. *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. This is something of a classic. It provides a thorough medieval and Renaissance context for Machiavelli as a republican political thinker, then traces the influence of his thought in England and America. The book is quite difficult to read without a considerable amount of background.

Ridolfi, Roberto. *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli.* Translated by Cecil Grayson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. Despite many new entries, this biography is still considered "the classic."

Rubinstein, Nicolai. *The Government of Florence under the Medici, 1434–1494*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966. This is a wonderful study of the political world into which Machiavelli was born and about which he wrote.

Skinner, Quentin. *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981 (reprint, 2000). Skinner's slim volume is a brilliant introduction to Machiavelli and his thought by a distinguished historian of political thought.

Strauss, Leo. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. Strauss has little good to say about Machiavelli and the legacy he left the Western world.

Viroli, Maurizio. *Machiavelli*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. This is a thoughtful study of Machiavelli's ideas and not a biography. It is part of a distinguished series, *Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought*.

———. *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2000. Here is Viroli's biography, well written and providing a positive assessment by a scholarly "fan" of Machiavelli.

Weinstein, Donald. *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970. This book is an interesting study of Savonarola, who fascinated Machiavelli and about whom Machiavelli comments in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.

Wilcox, Donald. *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969. The title makes it clear that this is a useful book for understanding how Machiavelli's contemporaries understood and wrote about the past.

Internet Resources

"Livy." *Reed College.* http://academic.reed.edu/humanities/110Tech/Livy.html#Texts. This is a useful site for learning about Livy and finding part of his *History of Rome* in English. The site also has a bibliography and links to other related Web sites. This is a good place to find useful background before reading Machiavelli's *Discourses*.

Letter from Niccolo Machiavelli to Francesco Vettori. http://econ161.berkeley.edu/Politics/Vettori.html. The famous letter from Machiavelli to Francesco Vettori describing his life in the country is found here.

"Niccolò (di Bernardo) Machiavelli." *Brandeis University*. http://www.brandeis.edu/~teuber/machiavellibio.html. This Web site provides a basic biography and list of works.

"Discourses." *Constitution Society.* http://www.constitution.org/mac/disclivy.txt. Although not the most modern translation, this Web site reproduces the *Discourses* in English.

"The Prince." *Constitution Society.* http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm. Similar to the above Web site, this one provides an older translation of *The Prince*.

La Biblioteca di Babele. http://www.debibliotheca.com. Those who wish to test their Italian can look at several of Machiavelli's works in Italian by going to this Web site, clicking on Indice, then clicking on the letter M. Both the *Discourses* (*Discorsi Sopra la Prima Deca Di Tito Livio*) and *The Prince* (*Il Principe*) are here.

"Nicolo [sic] Machiavelli (1459–1527): The Prince, 1513." *Medieval Sourcebook*. http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/machiavelli-prince.html. This Web site contains *The Prince* and Machiavelli's life of Castruccio Castracani.

