

CONTROLLING FORTUNE

GREGG'S GUIDE TO *THE PRINCE*



LESSONS FOR POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND LIFE FROM NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

The Text: Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Second Edition, Translated and with an Introduction by Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

INTRODUCTION

Some call Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) “the great teacher of evil” and his most famous book, *The Prince*, has been called a “handbook for dictators.” Machiavellianism has become a term often used to describe ruthless and cunning politicians, and few of us would want to be known publicly as one of his followers.

His negative reputation might be deserved, but in this study of *The Prince* we will focus on finding lessons that can be applied to leadership challenges found in our everyday lives. We won't aim to create or empower any Machiavellian politicians, but we will seek to learn from the Florentine's cold realism and see what we can gather to help us be better leaders—or at least understand other people, friends and enemies, better.



In the following pages you will find a reading guide to *The Prince* accompanied by core insights to consider as you make your way through one of history's most popular treatises on political leadership.

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OVERVIEW OF READINGS



SESSION I

Dedicatory Letter, Appendix “Niccolò Machiavelli to Francesco Vettori, Florence, Dec. 10, 1513” pp. 3-4, 107-111

SESSION II

Chapters 1-5, pp. 5-21

SESSION III

Chapters 6-8, pp. 21-38

SESSION IV

Chapters 9-10, pp. 38-44

SESSION V

Chapters 11-15, pp. 45-62

SESSION VI

Chapters 16-18, pp. 62-71

SESSION VII

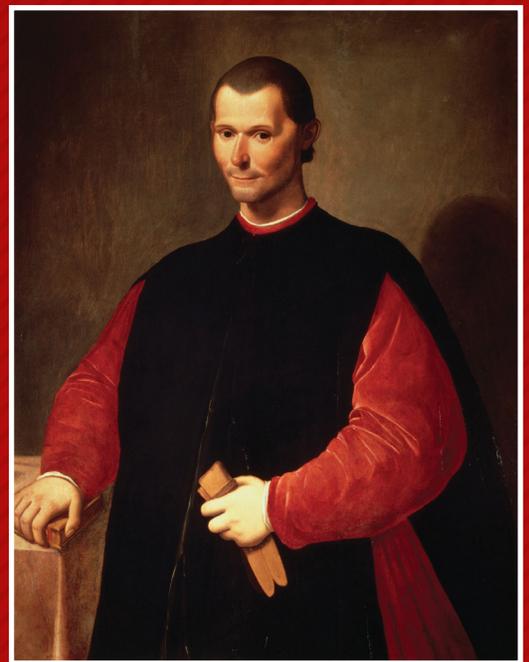
Chapters 19-20, pp. 71-87

SESSION VIII

Chapters 21-23, pp. 87-95

SESSION IX

Chapters 24-26, pp. 96-105



“I have found nothing in my belongings that I care so much for and esteem so greatly as the knowledge of the actions of great men, learned by me from long experience with modern things and a continuous reading of ancient ones.”

—Niccolò Machiavelli



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SESSION I ★ JULY 15, 2019

READ: Dedicatory Letter, Appendix
“Niccolò Machiavelli to Francesco Vettori,
Florence, Dec. 10, 1513” pp. 3-4, 107-111

KEY LESSONS

1. Learn from contemporaries and the ancients.
2. Perspective is important when viewing politics.

SESSION II ★ AUG. 15, 2019

READ: Chapters 1-5, pp. 5-21

KEY LESSONS

3. High expectations come with new leaders and cannot be met.
4. You must always offend those over whom you have become the new leader.
5. Learn before you lose—most of us only learn *after* having been beaten or overthrown.
6. “...men should either be caressed or eliminated.”
7. Be prudent and care for the long-term consequences.
8. Don't delay a war.
9. Don't bite off more than you can chew.
10. “Whoever is the cause of someone's becoming powerful is ruined.”

SESSION III ★ SEPT. 15, 2019

READ: Chapters 6-8, pp. 21-38

KEY LESSONS

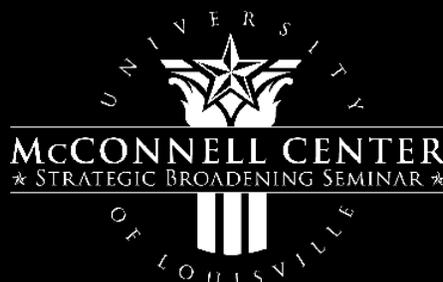
11. Follow great men.
12. The great rely on fortune only for the opportunity—then it is skill that counts.
13. There is great peril in founding new orders.
14. One can convince people easily – but don't expect them to stay with you.
15. What comes to be quickly has no roots and dies at the first good challenge.
16. Use cruelty correctly: focused and then ended
 - Spread benefits out over time.
17. One must get the people's support.

SESSION IV ★ OCT. 15, 2019

READ: Chapters 9-10, pp. 38-44

KEY LESSONS

18. There is great benefit in doing good when people expect evil.
19. Make yourself indispensable.
20. Peace through strength.
21. People's loyalty comes as much by what they give as what is given them.





GREGG'S GUIDE TO THE PRINCE



SESSION V ★ NOV. 15, 2019

READ: Chapters 11-15, pp. 45-62

KEY LESSONS

- 22. Men will not make great sacrifices for money only (mercenaries).
- 23. Care only for war.
 - Prepare during good times (peace) so you are always ready for troubles ahead (war).
- 24. Learn how *not* to be good.
- 25. It is impossible to get a completely good reputation—avoid the dangerous epitaphs.
- 26. Liberality plus leadership.

SESSION VI ★ DEC. 15, 2019

READ: Chapters 16-18, pp. 62-71

KEY LESSONS

- 27. A cruel prince is more merciful than chaos.
- 28. Better to be feared than loved.
- 29. Property is vitally important to people.
- 30. Be a fox and a lion.
- 31. Be flexible/adaptable.
- 32. Appearances are everything
 - Five key qualities to appear to possess: (mercy, faith, honesty, humanity, religion).

SESSION VII ★ JAN. 15, 2020

READ: Chapters 19-20, pp. 71-87

KEY LESSONS

- 33. Avoid hatred and contempt.
- 34. Keep the people content.
- 35. Use surrogates properly.
- 36. To be great, you must overcome great difficulties.

SESSION VIII ★ FEB. 15, 2020

READ: Chapters 21-23, pp. 87-95

KEY LESSONS

- 37. Keep people preoccupied (see #34).
- 38. Take sides.
- 39. Beware of overconfidence.
- 40. Properly hiring and managing assistants.
- 41. Getting the proper advice.

SESSION IX ★ MAR. 15, 2020

READ: Chapters 24-26, pp. 96-105

KEY LESSONS

- 42. Better to be impetuous/aggressive than cautious.

