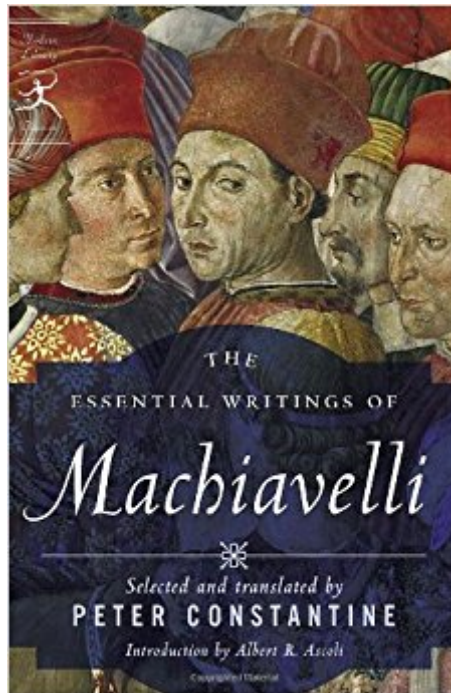


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The Essential Writings Of Machiavelli (Modern Library Classics)



Synopsis

FINALIST--2008 PEN TRANSLATION PRIZEIn *The Essential Writings of Machiavelli*, Peter Constantine has assembled a comprehensive collection that shows the true depth and breadth of a great Renaissance thinker. Refreshingly accessible, these superb new translations are faithful to Machiavelli's original, beautifully crafted writings. The volume features essays that appear in English for the first time, such as "A Caution to the Medici" and "The Persecution of Africa." Also included are complete versions of the political treatise, *The Prince*, the comic satire *The Mandrake*, *The Life of Castruccio Castracani*, and the classic story "Belfagor," along with selections from *The Discourses*, *The Art of War*, and *Florentine Histories*. Augmented with useful features—vital and concise annotations and cross-references—this unique compendium is certain to become the standard one-volume reference to this influential, versatile, and ever timely writer. Machiavelli's stress on political necessity rather than moral perfection helped inspire the Renaissance by renewing links with Thucydides and other classical thinkers. This new collection provides deeper insight into Machiavelli's personality as a writer, thus broadening our understanding of him.

—Robert D. Kaplan, author of *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*

Constantine's selection is not only intelligent; his translations are astonishingly good. Thoughtfully introduced by Albert Russell Ascoli, this edition belongs in everyone's library.

—John Jeffries Martin, professor and chair, department of history, Trinity University

If one were to assign a single edition of Machiavelli's works, this most certainly would be it.

—John P. McCormick, professor, department of political science, University of Chicago

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Customer Reviews

The synonym for political cynicism, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote much more than *The Prince*, for which he is (in)famous. It leads off this anthology, which both spans his range of compositions--from state papers to histories to personal letters--and imparts a greater complexity to his insights on politics and human nature than his reputation would imply. To be sure, translator-editor Constantine includes Machiavelli's cold-eyed advice on how to plot a conspiracy, but that rumination on assassination is embedded in *The Discourses* (on ancient Roman historian Livy), which otherwise shows Machiavelli as antityranny and favorable toward liberty and republicanism. Machiavelli was more than a theorist, however. Constantine's healthy representation of Machiavelli's reports as, in effect, the foreign minister of Florence in the early 1500s--until thrown out of office and tortured by the Medici in 1513--illustrates Renaissance Italy's dangerous political environment, on which Machiavelli drew for his insights on political conduct. Since *The Prince* is a collection standard, you can get more bang for the buck with this fluently translated anthology. Gilbert Taylor

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Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) was born in Florence. He served the Florentine republic as secretary and second chancellor, but was expelled from public life when the Medici family returned to power in 1512. His most famous work, *The Prince*, was a written attempt to reingratiate himself with the Medicis and return to politics. Peter Constantine is the recipient of a PEN Translation Prize and a National Translation Award. His Modern Library translations include Voltaire's *Canidide*, Tolstoy's *The Cossacks*, and Gogol's *Taras Bulba*. He lives in New York City.

This book is worth the price for its translation of *The Prince* alone. Think of it as *The Prince* plus 400 free pages of content. This is one of the most readable books I have ever read which is a testament to Constantine as many older books, like *Rhetoric* or *Meditations*, despite being English, can be clunky. The content is fascinating, Machiavelli's use of Greek and Roman history to teach is likely as relevant now as it was then. Just a good book all around.

All you need for studying and understanding machiavelli's way of thought great value all his writing and comprehensive studies of his writings

good book and good print

a compelling look at politics from an amoral point of view. It helped me understand a great deal about international politics and diplomacy. It's a must read for political science majors.

This is not a perfect coverage for all his writings. However, his essential writings were carefully selected by the editors. If you have interests in renaissance politics, this book would be a good introduction. The formatting and footnotes are excellent.

I read it liked it and then I sent it of to one of my grand sons who is in college

I firmly believe that most of Machiavelli's works were written with the goal of bettering the position of his beloved Florence in the horribly complex political and cultural milieu in which he was forced to operate, and knew extremely well from his diplomacy on behalf of Florence. Europe was changing more than it ever had. The new world was opening up. The Renaissance was in its infancy, but starting to gather momentum. What he did was combine the works of Livy with his own observations, which resulted in *The Prince*. I believe *The Prince* was written in hopes of obtaining some sort of position with the Medici, and thereby have some sort of influence, even if only minimal, on the diplomatic and political conduct of Florence, in hopes of influencing things to her benefit. He was the first to dispassionately list the real, sometimes loathsome things even a good ruler was at times forced to resort to in order to secure long term benefit to his political entity. He also said it was better to have a government that was not always forced to resort to these things by dint of its citizens being satisfied with their ruler. A republic was the most stable in his mind. Machiavelli was the first real political theorist, and if a wise ruler had practiced some of what Machiavelli had concluded, maybe Italy and Florence might not have had the subsequent three hundred years or so of political turmoil and domination by others.

In 1469-1527 this great man's writings explain what and how politics effects our life, good or bad. It also is very eerie because it seems as if he was describing today. I had never read a book beside the Bible that helped me to understand different kinds or rulers. Unbelievable!

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