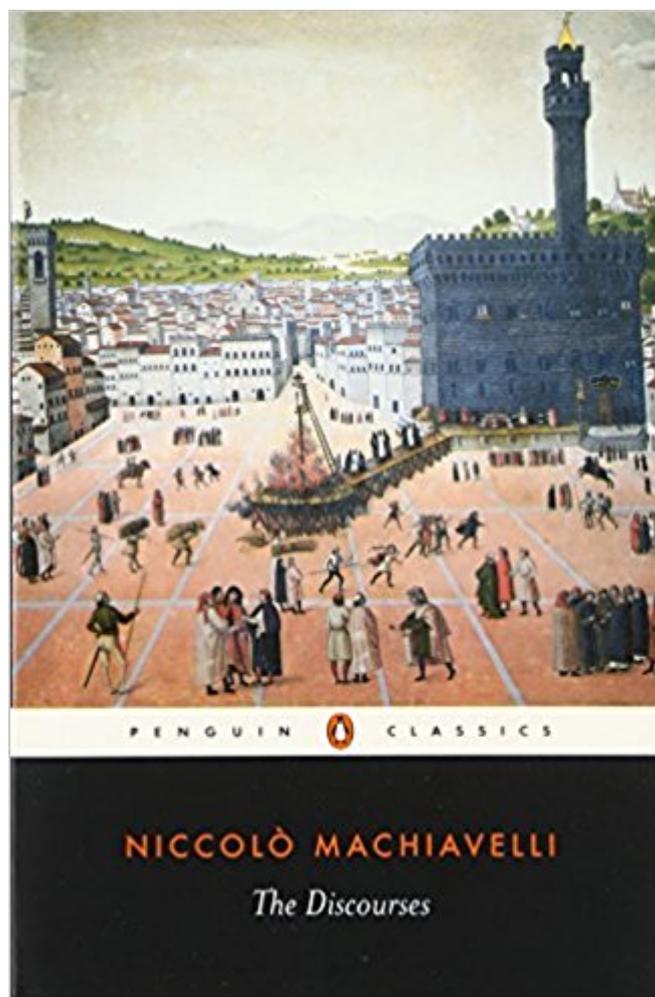


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# Discourses



## Synopsis

"It is not the well-being of individuals that makes cities great, but the well-being of the community" Few figures in intellectual history have proved as notorious and ambiguous as Niccolò Machiavelli. But while his treatise *The Prince* made his name synonymous with autocratic ruthlessness and cynical manipulation, *The Discourses* (c.1517) shows a radically different outlook on the world of politics. In this carefully argued commentary on Livy's history of republican Rome, Machiavelli proposed a system of government that would uphold civic freedom and security by instilling the virtues of active citizenship, and that would also encourage citizens to put the needs of the state above selfish, personal interests. Ambitious in scope, but also clear-eyed and pragmatic, *The Discourses* creates a modern theory of republic politics. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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## Customer Reviews

Text: English, Italian (translation) --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) was a Florentine statesman who was later forced out of public life. He then devoted himself to studying and writing political philosophy, history, fiction, and drama.

Machiavelli's Discourses... a book that is a compendium of historical events analyzed in such a way as to obtain a lesson that is both precise as well as eternal. I think that all who consider going into politics or any kind of management role should be handed a copy of this book. And by any kind of management I mean from management of a state to managing a home and family. It is practical, ruthless and efficient. You can glimpse its central premises through the actions of those who succeed. The translation of this book is flawless and delivers the full content of the author's message. I'm convinced that this was a life changing book for me to read, it certainly affected my perspective of events around me and my way to interact to them. It is a self help book if you can interpret it beyond the historical dressing. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in history, management, or politics.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who might've enjoyed books like Sun Tzu's "Art of War" or Robert Greene's "The 48 Laws of Power" or even someone who is even religious (Muslim, Christian, etc.) who might not be too afraid of understanding the perspective of a politician. I mix in religion because, perhaps to someone who subscribes to a more "pious" take on life, Machiavelli may hold a severely secular stigma. But this book may offer an alternative, if even more secular, view on the decisions made by religious/state leaders like Moses and Muhammad. As for those who also are into government conspiracy theories I'd also recommend this book- mix it with what you already think and you may come up with some more original theories of your own! ;) Machiavelli comes across as a learned observer of mankind and expresses a rare understanding of the continual state of flux of mankind. Through his studies of history and in comparing past events to "present" (circa 1500s) ones Machiavelli makes strongly supported arguments throughout the discourses. Where Robert Greene falls short in "48 Laws" I believe is Machiavelli's stronger point- applying the [quite helpful] description of the characteristics of the parties involved which helps the reader summate the outcomes [of many of the events that are described throughout his discourses] right along with the reading. "48 Laws" does this well at times but falls short of this fluidity with many of his examples which can leave a certain level of disparity between the example(s) given and the "Law" to which it applies. In summary I'd note that this is one of the few books that I wish didn't finish. I don't agree with him on every point, but I admire the proofs to his arguments on every page.

For those interested in a very interesting take on the functioning of democracies and republics and their history this is a good choice. Machiavelli is certainly one of the most misrepresented writers. His main theme is pragmatism.

This book describes how Rome was being governed as a Republic and gets into detail about the wars they fought. Even for Machiavelli these writings were distant history and what really surprised me was the way this book has been written and translated. Being an admirer of Rome and its golden age this book really gave me new insights, despite reading a lot of other books about this subject. As in Machiavelli's most famous book 'The Prince' politics are again the major subject. It is really astonishing to see the details and consequences of the actions that are being taken. If you would like to know more about Rome, history or politics, grab a copy of this book.

Good book if you like history and politics

as advertised

THIS IS ABOUT the edition with Ninian Hill Thomson as the translator. I returned it, which is exceedingly rare for me, because the table of contents lacked the descriptive notations and there was no commentary or introductory analysis with the edition. The book itself is also in a cumbersome format, but that could have been excused. I sent it back and bought the modern library edition (prince and discourses combined) instead.

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