

Course # | Ancient Political Thought

Description

This course aims to acquaint students with central texts in the history of Western political thought, from Greek and Roman antiquity to medieval Christendom. The course concludes with a brief look at the transition to modernity reflected in the work of Machiavelli. The purpose of the survey is to introduce students to frameworks for thinking about justice, virtue, constitutions, democracy, piety, and citizenship as developed in the ancient and medieval worlds. Ancient traditions provide the necessary starting point for efforts to understand the evolution in political thinking in the early modern period, the age of modern revolutions, and the 21st century.

Assignments

- (1) *Reading Notes*: For each session's assigned readings, answer the questions identified in the provided "Reading Notes Template" and submit them to your online reading journal. The journals are ungraded, but their content may be used on the exams.
- (2) *Three Response Essays*: The readings for each class are accompanied by two or three reflection questions. Sign up for one class from each "Part" of the course for which you will compose a 1000-word response paper to one question for that date. Papers are due by 11:59 PM one week after the class to which you are responding. Choices must be submitted by 5:00 PM Friday, [Date].
- (3) *Midterm Exam*: A closed-book, open-note exam will be held in class on [Session 19]. It will be one-half text identifications and one-half essay questions. Identifications quote a passage from the readings and ask you to identify the source of the quote and explain its meaning and context. The essay questions will focus on the themes from the first half of the course.
- (4) *Final Exam*: A closed-book, open-note final exam will be held during the university's exam period. It will be one-half text identifications and one-half essay questions. Identifications quote a passage from the readings and ask you to identify the source of the quote and explain its meaning and context. The essay questions will focus on the overarching themes of the course as a whole.

Course Schedule

1. The Greeks

01. Introduction: *The Birth of Democracy*

- Christopher Blackwell, "Athenian Democracy: A Brief Overview"

02. Thucydides: *Athens vs. Sparta*

- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 1.1-24; Book 2.35-46; Book 2.60-64; Book 3.69-84; Book 5.84-116.

03. Plato: *Athens' Sin Against Philosophy*

- Plato, "Apology," in *The Trial and Death of Socrates*: pp. 20 – 45.

04. Plato: *What Is Justice?*

- Plato, *The Republic*, Book I (327a – 354c): pp. 3 – 34.

05. Plato: *The Two Cities and the Education of the Guardians*

- Plato, *The Republic*, Books II – IV (357a – 427c): pp. 35 – 105.

-
06. **Plato: *The City-Soul Analogy***
- Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV (427d – 445e): pp. 105 – 125.
-
07. **Plato: *The Three Waves***
- Plato, *The Republic*, Book V – VI (449a – 487a): pp. 127 – 167.
-
08. **Plato: *Discussion of Philosophy***
- Plato, *The Republic*, Book VI – VII (487b – 521b): pp. 167 – 200.
-
09. **Plato: *Taxonomy of Regimes and Souls***
- Plato, *The Republic*, Book VIII – IX (543a – 592b): pp. 221 – 275.
-
10. **Plato: *The Myth of Er***
- Plato, *The Republic*, Book X (608c – 621d): pp. 291 – 303.
-
11. **Aristotle: *What is the Highest Good?***
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1.1 – 1.13: pp. 1 – 25.
-
12. **Aristotle: *Eudaimonia and Virtue***
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.1 – 3.5: pp. 26 – 54.
-
13. **Aristotle: *The Moral Virtues***
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.6 – 4.9: pp. 54 – 89.
-
14. **Aristotle: *Justice and the Intellectual Virtues***
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 5.1 – 6.13: pp. 90 – 134.
-
15. **Aristotle: *The Political Animal***
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 10.9: pp. 229 – 235.
 - Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.1 – 1.13: pp. 35 – 54.
-
16. **Aristotle: *On Plato and Citizenship***
- Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.1 – 2.5 and 3.1 – 3.5: pp. 54 – 63 and 86 – 94.
-
17. **Aristotle: *Justice and Regime Types***
- Aristotle, *Politics*, 3.6 – 4.4: pp. 94 – 126.
-
18. **Aristotle: *The Best Regime and the Best Life***
- Aristotle, *Politics*, 4.5 – 4.11, 5.1 – 5.7, and 7.1 – 7.3: pp. 126 – 136, 147 – 162, and 197 – 203.
-
19. **MIDTERM EXAM**

2. The Romans

-
20. **Cicero: *The Honorable***
- Cicero, *On Duties*, Book I: pp. 1 – 62.
-

-
21. **Cicero: *The Beneficial***
▪ Cicero, *On Duties*, Book II: pp. 63 – 100.
-
22. **Cicero: *Tension Between the Honorable and the Beneficial***
▪ Cicero, *On Duties*, Book III: pp. 101 – 147.
-
23. **Augustine: *A Critique of Paganism***
▪ Augustine, *City of God*, Book 2, Book 4.1 – 4, 15, and Book 5.1, 7 – 17, and 21 – 24.
-
24. **Augustine: *The City of God and the Earthly City***
▪ Augustine, *City of God*, Book 18.1 – 3, 41, 47, 49, 51 – 53; Book 19; Book 20.1 – 3, 9, 30.
-

3. Post-Classical Thought

-
25. **Aquinas: *Types of Law***
▪ Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, ch. 2: pp. 10 – 58.
-
26. **Aquinas: *Human Laws***
▪ Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, ch. 2, pp. 59 – 96.
-
27. **Aquinas: *Justice***
▪ Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, ch. 3, pp. 97 – 129.
-
28. **Aquinas: *Tolerance, Church-State Relations, and Statecraft***
▪ Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, chs. 7 and 8: pp. 190 – 210.
-
29. **Gilson: *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy***
▪ Gilson, “The Problem of Christian Philosophy” and “The Concept of Christian Philosophy,” in *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*: pp. 1 – 41.
-
30. **Machiavelli: *The Prince***
▪ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. XV – XIX, XXV and XXVI: pp. 61 – 71, 98 – 105.
-