



CLASSICAL POLITICAL THEORY

Political Science 381, Spring 2021

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ONLINE OFFICE HOURS: T 11-12, W 1-3, TH 11-12 & by appointment

MEETING TIME: 12:30-1:45, T&TH

LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86062532702?pwd=Z2JYMFb2bDIkdTVlZXk1RDI0TUlBZz09>

In this course we will examine the political thought of major figures from the classical world, spanning from ancient Greece to medieval Europe. These thinkers remain important today, most obviously because they form the basis for what is considered the “Western Canon,” the books traditionally thought essential for one’s education. But reading these books can also help us to both appreciate our own place in history and to better understand the wide range of assumptions and ideas about humanity that have existed over time.

The study of classical political thought also has immediate relevance for us. For these philosophers, thinking about politics required attention to a variety of other human problems, such as ethics, psychology, epistemology, religion, social structure, and so on. This semester, we’ll think about topics ranging from the ideal political regime to questions of good and evil, from the role of the family to the relationship between care for one’s soul and politics. We’ll analyze the authors’ discussions of these problems together in class. These readings should help you think about your own responses to these questions and how those responses might change the way you view your world. In short, you will be engaged in political theorizing.

Over the course of this semester, you should:

- Hone your own understandings of the contemporary political world through an engagement with classical thought.
- Practice “analytical thinking” about politics. This requires you to provide reasons for what you believe and to consider counterarguments.
- Develop abilities to interpret texts and use textual evidence to support your claims.
- Develop your writing skills. The assignments in this course stress critical analysis based on defensible interpretations and textual support, along with careful organization.

The format of this class includes lectures, large whole-class discussions, and small group discussions. Lectures will provide you with background information as well as fleshed-out conceptual frameworks for understanding the thinkers we will be studying. Discussions will allow us to interrogate these philosophers in greater detail, enhancing our understanding and allowing us to evaluate their ideas. Finally, small group discussions will not only give those of you who are shy a chance to participate in a less intimidating setting, but will also allow you to work together in puzzling out some of the problems and questions left to us by these thinkers.

Course Prerequisites

You should have completed POLS 101, POLS 122, or have my permission to be enrolled in this course.

Requirements

Two Essay Exams:	100 points each
Two Multiple-Choice Exams:	50 points each
Reading Quizzes:	100 points

Grades

A:	373 points and above	C:	293-306 points
A-:	360-372 points	C-:	280-292 points
B+:	347-359 points	D+:	267-279 points
B:	333-346 points	D:	253-266 points
B-:	320-332 points	D-:	240-252 points
C+:	307-319 points	F:	239 points and below

Essay Exams

Two four-to-five-page take-home essay exams will be assigned during the semester. Instructions and prompts will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date for each essay exam. You will have the opportunity to rewrite your first essay exams; if you decide to rewrite, your grade will be calculated as the average of the scores from your original version and your rewritten version. Essay exams will be due in Western Online by a specified date and will incur a ten-point penalty for each day they are late unless **prior arrangements** are made with me. Late essays are ineligible for the rewrite option.

Multiple-Choice Exams

Two open book, open note 25-question multiple-choice exams will be administered during class time in Western Online, one mid-semester and one during the final exam period. The final will cover only the material from the second half of the course. Each of these exams will be worth 50 points. No make-up exams will be available without prior permission and no final exams can be rescheduled, except in accordance with university regulations.

Reading Quizzes

Each day during class, a five-question quiz will be administered using the polling feature in Zoom. These quizzes will be open book and open note, meaning that you may use your text along with any notes that you have taken on the readings. However, quizzes will have a **3-minute** time limit, which means that there won't be time to look up all of the answers, so doing the assigned reading and taking notes to be ready for these quizzes is vital. After each quiz, we will flip a coin to determine whether or not the quiz will count; the average of all of these quizzes taken together will be worth 100 points. (Except for **Thursday, February 25**, when the quiz will definitely count!) Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped from the calculation of your quiz average. No make-up quizzes will be available.

Attendance

Regular attendance is the **biggest** predictor of success in this course. Attendance will be taken daily. If you need to miss class for **any reason** and would like to earn credit for that day's missed quiz, please just contact me via email **before the end** of the class you will be missing (by **1:45 pm**). If the quiz counted that day, I will send you a writing prompt related to the topic discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to complete a 500-word assignment to make up for the missed quiz. This make-up assignment will be due via email before the next class period unless we make alternate arrangements. Please note that if you do **not** email me **before the end** of the class you are missing, this make-up option **will not be available**. No matter why you miss class and whether or not you choose to notify me or do the make-up assignment, it is **your responsibility** to find out what you missed from me or one of your classmates.

Required Reading

The required texts are below with ISBNs. Translations differ, so please make sure that you buy these versions:

- Sophocles, *Theban Plays* (9780872205857)
- Plato, et al, *The Trials of Socrates* (9780872205895)
- Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature* (9780872201682)
- Plato, *Republic* (9780872201361)

We will also be using the following texts. The readings from these texts are required, but they will be available on Western Online, and are designated as (WO) in the course calendar. Thus, purchase of these books is **optional**; if you would prefer to **download the readings** from Western Online you do **not need to buy** these texts.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (9780872204645)
- Seneca, *Moral and Political Essays* (9780521348188)
- Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics* (9780872206632)
- Aristotle, *Politics* (9780872203884)
- Augustine, *City of God* (9780385029100)

Two additional readings will be available only on Western Online; they are designated (WO only) in the calendar.

Because this class will largely be based on our discussions together, it is **crucial** that everyone has prepared the readings. This means that you should read carefully, take notes as you read, and review your reading notes before class. Reading and taking notes is one of the best ways to ensure success on your reading quizzes and in this course more generally. To help with your reading and note-taking, I'll often provide a list of reading questions before we begin each thinker to help you focus on important sections or problems in the text.

Email

During the workday (8 am to 5 pm), I usually respond to email within hours, but it does take me longer in the evenings and on weekends, when I try to spend time away from screens. For this reason, you should just assume that a) if you email me in the evening, you will hear back from me the next day and b) if you email me over the weekend, you will hear back from me on Monday. It will help me get back to you more quickly when you include the number or name of the course (POLS 381 or Classical Political Theory) in your subject heading.

Zoom Classroom Guidelines

Though classes conducted in Zoom will never be exactly like classes conducted in person, my goal is to try to emulate the face-to-face classroom environment as much as possible. To help me with that, please:

- attend our Zoom meetings from a relatively quiet place where you are free to **speak out loud** to answer my questions, ask questions of your own, and participate in discussion.
- keep your **video on** so that your classmates and I can see you; this allows me to get the visual feedback I need to know if I am moving at the right speed, if you are confused or bored, or if I need to switch gears.
- **mute** your microphone when you are not speaking to avoid picking up any distracting background noise.
- use the **raise hand** feature in Zoom when you have a question or want to contribute to the discussion. When I see your hand raised, I will call on you and you can unmute yourself and speak. When you're done, you will need to re-mute yourself and lower your hand.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact Disability Resources at 309-298-1884, sdsc@wiu.edu or in 125 Memorial Hall. Please notify me as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Sex Discrimination and Sexual Assault or Misconduct

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at:

http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php.

If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator, no matter when or where the incident occurred. The complete Title IX policy is available at:

<http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Student Rights and Responsibilities & Academic Integrity

You are required to familiarize yourself with the university's Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity Policies, which are available at the following URLs:

<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students/>

<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

Pay special attention to the Academic Integrity Policy. Violations of this policy will be punished in accordance with the guidelines it describes; all assignments submitted containing any plagiarism will automatically earn zeroes.

Calendar

This schedule may be changed if the needs of the class change or for pandemic-related reasons. Changes will be announced in class and online, via email and/or on Western Online. It is your responsibility to come to class and to check your email and the course's Western Online page regularly. **Please reach out if you have questions.**

Readings should be done by the date next to which they are listed. **Always have your readings close by during class.**

DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Intro: Why Read the Classics?		
T Jan 19	Course Syllabus	
TH Jan 21	Shorris: "In the Hands of the Restless Poor" Allen: "Democracy and the Power of Education" (both on WO only)	
Part I: Themes in Ancient Greece		
T Jan 26	Sophocles: <i>Oedipus</i> , pp. 62-88	
TH Jan 28	Sophocles: <i>Oedipus</i> , pp. 88-124	
T Feb 2	Sophocles: <i>Antigone</i> , pp. 2-60	
TH Feb 4	Plato: <i>The Trials of Socrates</i> Introduction & <i>Euthyphro</i> , pp. vii-25	
T Feb 9	Plato: <i>Apology</i> , pp. 26-61	
TH Feb 11	Plato: <i>Crito & Phaedo</i> , pp. 62-83	
T Feb 16	No Class Meeting – Watch "The Greeks: Crucible of Civilization" and Take Quiz (both on WO)	
TH Feb 18	Thucydides: <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> Origins of War, pp. 15-37 Pericles and the Plague, pp. 39-58	<i>Essay Exam 1 Questions & Instructions Distributed</i>
T Feb 23	Thucydides: <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> Mytilenean Debate, pp. 66-76 Revolution in Corcyra, pp. 89-95 Melian Dialogue, pp. 102-109	
TH Feb 25	First Essay Exam Questions & Instructions	Quiz Definitely Counts Today!
T Mar 2	No Assigned Reading – Midterm Exam Review	
TH Mar 4	No Class Meeting – Midterm Exam Online	Midterm Multiple-Choice Exam Due in Western Online by 1:45 pm Essay Exam 1 Due March 8 by 11:59 pm
Part II: Classical Political Thought		
T Mar 9	Plato: <i>Republic</i> , Book I, pp. 1-31	
TH Mar 11	Plato: <i>Republic</i> , Book II, pp. 32-59	
T Mar 16	Plato: <i>Republic</i> From Books III & IV, pp. 86-96 & 102-121	
TH Mar 18	Plato: <i>Republic</i> From Book V, pp. 122-141 & 146-156 From Book VI, pp. 170-177	
T Mar 23	Plato: <i>Republic</i> From Book VII, pp. 186-193, 204-205, 211-212 From Book X, pp. 282-292	
TH Mar 25	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (WO) Book I, pp. 1-18	
T Mar 30	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (WO) Book II, pp. 18-30 Book III, Ch. 1-7, pp. 30-42	

TH Apr 1	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (WO) Book VI, Ch. 1-9 & 12-13, pp. 86-94 & 96-99 Book X, Ch. 9, pp. 167-171 Aristotle: <i>Politics</i> (WO)	
T Apr 6	Aristotle: <i>Politics</i> (WO) Book I, Ch. 1-7 & 12-13, pp. 1-12 & 21-25 Book III, Ch. 1 & 4-13, pp. 65-67 & 70-91 Book IV, Ch. 1, 6-9 & 11-12, pp. 101-103, 112-117, 118-123 Book V, Ch. 1-2 & 7-8, pp. 134-137 & 149-156	
Part III: Hellenistic Thought		
TH Apr 8	Seneca: <i>On Anger</i> (WO) From Introduction, pp. 3-13 From Book I, pp. 17-31 & 35-38 From Book II, pp. 42-55 & 61-62	
T Apr 13	NO CLASS	
TH Apr 15	Seneca: <i>On Anger</i> (WO) From Book II, pp. 65-75 From Book III, pp. 81-90 & 98-116	<i>Essay Exam 2 Questions & Instructions Distributed</i>
Part IV: Christian Thought		
T Apr 20	Augustine: <i>City of God</i> (WO) From Introduction, pp. 7-11 From Book I, pp. 39-49 From Book XI, pp. 206-208 & 236-238 From Book XII, pp. 244-255 From Book XIV, pp. 295-304 & 320-322	
TH Apr 22	Augustine: <i>City of God</i> (WO) From Book XV, pp. 323-331 From Book XIX pp. 436-446, 449-452, 456-460, 463-466, 479-482	
T Apr 27	Aquinas: <i>On Law, Morality, and Politics</i> (WO) pp. xiv, 10-15, 16-24, 26-36, 38-40, 42-44, 48-55, 61-75, 182-185	
TH Apr 29	No Assigned Reading – Final Exam Review	Essay Exam 2 Due by 11:59 pm
T May 4	No Class Meeting – Final Exam Online	Final Multiple-Choice Exam Due in Western Online by 2:50 pm