

POLI110A: Citizens and Saints
Fall 2016, UC San Diego

Tuesdays, 5 to 7:50 PM
Office Hours: Mondays 3-5 PM, SSB 447
Mandeville B-150

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Course description: This course provides an introduction to some of the most important texts and concepts in ancient political theory. It is divided into three parts. The first part looks to drama and history, in Sophocles and Thucydides, for a sense of how the ancient Greeks conceptualized the nature of politics and its relation to other human activities. The second part looks directly to Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* to understand how the two most influential philosophical traditions from Greek antiquity understood the nature of justice, the role of humans in the cosmos, and the forms and purposes of political action and community. The third part takes up these two traditions and traces their develop in the Christian political thought of Augustine and then Aquinas, emphasizing the influence of Platonic idealism and Aristotelian thought on Augustine's conception of the cities of God and man and Aquinas' understanding of natural law.

Course expectations: You can expect the following from me. I will: treat you with respect; respond to any queries as promptly as possible; come to class each day prepared to discuss the material; and grade your work and comment on it as fairly as I can and with attention to how you can improve as a writer and a thinker. In response, I expect you to: treat each other with respect; read the syllabus carefully; come to class each day having done the required reading; and complete all of the required assignments to the best of your abilities.

Course objectives:

- Learning to carefully and sympathetically read classical primary texts
- Thinking creatively about important ideas that have shaped much of the way we now look at the world, and trying to understand how the ancient way of looking at the world is or is not different from our own
- Tracing an intellectual and genealogical history that runs from Plato and Aristotle through Augustine and Aquinas
- Having fun discussing interesting and important ideas every week!

Required texts: Many if not all of these classic texts could be found for free online, but it's important that you have the same text we're all using, for a number of reasons. First, the free translations are usually quite bad. Second, this is the only way we can all literally be on the same page when discussing passages in class, which we will do often. And third, the editions we're using have good introductions and footnotes that can help to guide you through some of the more difficult passages. We'll be reading them in the order presented here, so you have plenty of time to buy at least two thirds of them used online and much cheaper than at the bookstore.

- Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone; Oedipus the King; Oedipus at Colonus*, Penguin Classics, Robert Fagles (trans), ISBN-13: 978-0140444254
- Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature: Selections from the History of the Peloponnesian War*, Hackett Classics, Paul Woodruff (trans), ISBN-13: 978-0872201682

- Plato, *Republic*, Hackett Classics, 3rd edition, C.D.C. Reeve (trans), ISBN-13: 978-0872207363
- Aristotle, *Politics*, Hackett, C.D.C. Reeve (trans), ISBN-13: 978-0872203884
- *The Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha: A Complete Guide to the World of the Bible*, Suggs, Sakenfeld, and Mueller (eds), ISBN-13: 978-0195290004
- Augustine, *Political Writing*, Hackett Classics, Michael Tkacz and Douglas Kries (trans), ISBN-13: 978-0872202108
- Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics*, Hackett Classics, 2nd ed, Richard Regan (trans), ISBN-13: 978-0872206632

Grading: As a general rule, if you have questions about how anything will affect your grade, send me an email or talk to me during office hours or before or after class.

Breakdown of course requirements

- Weekly questions, submitted via email at least two hours prior to class (20%)
 - These should demonstrate that you are actually reading our texts, and so are also a measure of having done so (each week is worth two points, and you can get one for asking a question and one for showing how it connects to the reading - and note that I can usually tell when one just glances at the text for a passage to discuss.).
 - Because we only meet once a week, I think it's fair to expect and require you to read at most 5-6 hours each week (as opposed to 3 or 2 hours in a class that meets two or three times a week). If you find on a given week that you are exceeding this amount, please do let me know.
- Participation (15%)
 - This is an actual part of your grade (and not a 'throwaway' criterion as often seems to be common). If you ace everything else but are silent in (or absent from) lecture, for instance, you would get 0 of 15 points here
- papers (65% total)
 - First paper (15%)
 - On part one, due week four. This will be four full pages long and have one question on Sophocles and one on Thucydides (each 10% and two pages long)
 - Second paper (25%)
 - On part two, due week eight. This will be five full pages long and will (tentatively) have three short questions: one on Plato's *Republic*, one on Aristotle's *Politics*, and one on the relation between the two
 - Third paper (30%)
 - On part three, due at our scheduled finals time. This will also be five full pages long and will (tentatively) focus on how Plato and Aristotle's political theories are taken up and changed, with the influence of Christianity (and the Bible), by Augustine and Aquinas.

Weekly Question Guidelines: This is intended both to get you engaged with the material and to provide ideas for class discussion beyond the questions and lecture notes I will prepare each class. We have nine meetings after the first meeting, and you will be required to email me seven out of these nine times (giving you two sessions where you don't have to do so) in order to get full credit on this part of your grade. These are intended both to show that you're doing the reading and to provide you with a chance to ask me any questions you might have, or point out what you think are interesting linkages to

current events or other issues. These questions should be relevant to the weekly themes, or to any supplemental themes I mention in lecture the previous week. They are **due** via email no later than two hours prior to lecture (so, by 3 on Tuesdays) – but earlier if possible, so I have time to look through them.

Paper Guidelines. More detail on the paper requirements will be provided in class. I will also distribute some writing tips on style, structure, and substance prior to the first written assignment. Without prior approval, late papers will be docked a third of a letter grade for every unexcused calendar day (*not* class day) a paper is overdue.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Be sure to provide a full citation for any external sources used in your papers, and to always provide parenthetical citations even if you're paraphrasing or 'moving the words around a little'. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to contact me. I would much prefer to clarify a small confusion than be forced to give you a failing grade in the class.

Course outline

nota bene – reading assignments are subject to revision any time up to the class prior to their assignment. If you miss a class, verify the next day's readings by contacting me. For days with heavier reading or viewing loads, I will specify areas of focus.

Part I: Introducing the Hellenic world

Week one: overview and mechanics

- introductions and course expectations
- overview of themes and content

Week two: Sophocles, *Antigone*

Read:

Antigone (entire play)

Themes and concepts:

The civic and political functions of Athenian drama

Art and rhetoric in social and political life

Conflict of goods (state and family)

Introducing law, natural and human

Political leadership

Ancient versus modern conceptions of citizenship, liberty, and political obligation

Week three: Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (excerpts)

Read:

Thucydides: On Justice, Power, and Human Nature, pp. 15-122

Focus on: debate at Sparta in 432 (16-30); Pericles funeral oration and the

Athenian plague (39-50); the Mytilenean debate (66-75); the civil war in Corcyra

(89-93); the Melian dialogue (102-110); and the debate at Athens (over the

Sicilian expedition) (112-122)

Themes and concepts:

- The realist tradition in political theory
 - Stability and the breakdown of social order: previewing the 'state of nature'
 - The state's interests and/vs. the people's values
- Relation of law to justice and morality
 - Within and between (city-)states
 - Democracy and empire
- Political virtue, citizens and leaders
 - Leadership and rhetoric in classical Athens
 - Civic virtue and the good Athenian citizen

Part II: The good city (*Kallipolis*) and the real world

Week four: Plato

Read:

Republic, Books I-IV (areas of emphasis to be provided)

Themes and concepts:

- Justice
 - Thrasymachus' political realism
 - Glaucon's psychological egoism and the ring of Gyges
 - Justice as an instrumental (vs inherent) good
- Metaphor of the body politic
- The allegory of the cave
- The examined life
- The Noble Lie
- Women in the *Kallipolis*
- Platonic idealism and the Forms
- Private property and political community
- Logos* and *nomos*

Week five: Plato

Read:

Republic, Books V-IX (areas of emphasis to be provided)

Themes and concepts:

- (in addition to the what remains of the above, from week four)
- The divided line
- The ship of state
- The decline of different regimes

Assignments :

1st paper due at the beginning of class

Week six: Aristotle

Read:

Politics, Books I-IV (areas of emphasis to be provided)

Themes and concepts (for this week and the next):

Politics as natural or artificial
 And the *polis* in particular as a natural type
From family to village to city-state
Sixfold typology of regime types
 Different kinds of regimes, different conditions for flourishing
Comparative constitutional analysis
Role of: slaves, women, foreigners
Rulers and subjects
 Politics, statesmen, and practical judgment (*phronesis*)
Phronesis and *theoria*, practical and theoretical knowledge/wisdom
Civic and theoretical virtue (in different kinds of city-states)
Endoxa, *episteme*, and Aristotle's method of inquiry
Zoe and *bios*, mere life and living well
 Eudaimonia, happiness, and political virtue
On naturalism
Scala naturae and the great chain of being

Week seven: Aristotle

Read:

Politics, books V-VIII (areas of emphasis to be provided)

Part III: The city of God and the city of man

Week eight: the Bible

Read:

In *The Oxford Study Bible*, read all of: *Genesis*, *John*, *Matthew*, *Letter to the Romans*
(pending possible substitutions and particular areas of emphasis)

Themes and concepts:

Political authority
Logos and *nomos*
The law of man and the law of God
 And the law of Moses vs that of Jesus
The nature of progress (cyclical cosmos vs. linear eschatology)
The human place in the cosmos
Symbolism and the sacrament
Social class and social order
The role of religion in politics (and society)
Original sin
Works vs. faith alone
Bible as revealed truth or arrived at through natural reason

Assignment:

2nd paper due at the beginning of class

Week nine: Augustine

Read:

Augustine: Political Writings

Excerpts from *City of God* and other writings, to be provided

Themes and concepts:

Tracing the incorporation of Platonism and Stoicism into Christianity
The city of God (*civitas dei*) and the city of man
Just war theory
Civic and philosophical virtue vs Christian faith
Theoretical reason in Greek philosophy and the Christian God
The Hellenic ordered cosmos, distance from God, and the case of deformity
God and the republican civic good (vs the modern liberal conception)
Rationality, the nature of God, and the status of women

Week ten: Aquinas

Read:

Aquinas: On Law, Morality, and Politics

Excerpts from *Summa Contra Gentiles* and other writings, to be provided

Themes and concepts:

Examining Aquinas' blend of Aristotelianism and Augustine
Divine and human truth
Practical and theoretical reasoning
 Practical wisdom and statecraft
Focus on Law
 Natural law and natural justice
 Law and reason
Evil acts and evil objects
Obedience and rebellion
Causation and priority in Aristotle and Aquinas
Foreshadowing Protestantism and the scientific revolution: from Bible as revealed truth
 to the role of reason in natural law

Assignment:

third paper due at final time (Friday, 12/09, 9-10 AM, in my office, SSB 447)