

This course has three purposes. First, we shall survey the political theories of the ancient and medieval periods, in roughly chronological order. Second, we shall learn to analyze political theories, trying to see what kinds of political dilemmas these writers were concerned with and how they went about dealing with them. Finally, we shall evaluate the arguments in these works and assess their importance for our own time.

The content of the course falls under five headings.

- 1 ) **Reading.** The substantive ideas to be discussed in class are found in the assigned readings. It is imperative that students read these carefully and critically before they are discussed. Students will accordingly profit more from class sessions, and they will be in a much better position to contribute to class discussion.
- 2 ) **Discussion.** This class will be conducted by discussion as much as possible. How much this is possible is in large part dependent upon students' preparation and willingness to enter into what is being discussed. Over the course of the semester, the instructor will use a number of different strategies to encourage discussion. For example, on one particular day, students may be asked to write for five minutes or so on a question posed by the instructor, the answers not to be handed in but to be used as a basis for oral discussion the rest of the class period. At another time, students may be asked ahead to prepare one or two questions about the reading they will be doing for the next period, and then these questions will be the basis for discussion. Again, the class may be divided into groups, each of which will come up with one question for discussion about the material. These are simply examples of ways that discussion may be promoted. There will be times when the instructor must lecture, to provide historical background and such. But it is hoped that lecture will take a minimum of each class period.
- 3 ) **Papers and final examination.** This class requires three short (5-page) take-home essays, or critical analyses. The goal is to develop one's ability to analyze and to think critically about the course material. Paper 1 will cover Plato and Aristotle, Paper 2 will take in Augustine and Aquinas, and Paper 3 will be devoted to Machiavelli. Dates are below, and topics will be handed out a week in advance. The essays should each be about five double-spaced typed pages. The final exam, also all essay, will be comprehensive. You may bring books and notes with you to the exam. All written assignments are designed to develop your thinking skills, not to see how much you can memorize without an information overload breakdown!
- 4 ) **Oral defense.** Each student sometime over the semester will defend in class one position or idea of one of the theorists studied. The students working on a particular philosopher will be divided into pairs, and the two should then consult to decide on a position or idea on which they feel comfortable taking opposite sides. That is, one student will argue for position x and the other against. These oral defenses should last 5-10 minutes per student, and they should be active attempts to persuade the class of the desirability of the position being defended. The student should not simply repeat the arguments of the philosopher in question, but present arguments as to why he/she believes those arguments are true or false. The student, in short, is an advocate, one who should try to "get inside" the mind and feelings of the writer whose position is being attacked or defended. The student should also be prepared to respond to class requests for clarification and to class criticism. It helps to try to anticipate the kinds of questions or objections that might be raised and to imagine likely responses. The student needs to have read very carefully, understanding not only the author being defended or attacked, but also the fundamental assumptions, beliefs, desires, and interests that have produced the author's attitude towards politics.
- 5 ) **Grades.** Grades will be determined by students' performances on both oral and written work. You have

some choice here in how many essays you undertake; there are two options.

a) If you do all three essays, each will count 15%. The oral defense and your class participation will count 15% each, and the final exam will count 25%.

b) Since the third and final essay occurs quite close to the final, you also have option, if you like, of skipping this third essay. If you only do the first two essays, each will count 20%. The oral defense and class participation will still count 15% each. But the final exam will count 30%, not 25%. Having the two essays and the final each count 5% more than otherwise takes up the “slack” of the other 15% of the grade that would under option a) have been attached to the third essay.

Students should be informed that every letter grade means something definite, as follows. C means the student shows evidence of having read the course material and has at least attempted to participate on a regular basis. In other words, C is for those who demonstrate a beginning understanding of the questions and problems of political thought. D is for those who fall below this wide mark. The student seems to have read the material in sketchy fashion, and/or does not appear to be grappling with the dilemmas of politics. A grade of B goes to those who show a solid grasp of the material and its perplexities. This means knowing the material and participating in class--but also means having thought out the material and its implications. A, the gold medal, is reserved for those who have done all that is expected of the B's and demonstrate an additional measure of critical incisiveness and clearly articulated imagination.

Papers are expected to be handed in and oral defenses to be given on time. Lacking a clearly definable and/or documentable emergency, such assignments will be marked down one full letter grade for each class period that they are late. Students should also be aware that the class participation factor means actual participation--that is, contributions to class discussion. Regular attendance alone will not secure a high grade in participation.

Although the following may seem like too much detail, it may help you to know how grades are weighted and calculated in numerical terms, to avoid misunderstanding later. A straight A-B-C-D grade is calculated as a 95-85-75-65; a minus grade is 92-82-72-62; a plus grade is 98-88-78-68. On occasion you may receive a borderline grade on a paper or presentation, such as A-/B+, etc.; these are calculated as 90-80-70-60, which gives you the benefit of the doubt, since 90 or above at the end of the semester is an A, 80 or above a B, 70 or above a C, and 60 or above a D. When I calculate the grades at semester's end, I multiply each numerical grade by the decimal representing the percentage that the assignment counts in the final grade. For example, if you received a C on a particular paper, I would multiply 75 by .15, since each paper counts 15% if you elect to do all three essays. If you received a B on the final, I would multiply 85 by .25, since the exam counts 25% of the grade. Then I add together the numbers derived from such multiplication, and that total determines your final grade.

### **Required Readings** (at Bradley Bookstore)

Edward Portis, Reconstructing the Classes, (Chatham, 2nd edition)  
G. M. A. Grube, ed., Plato's Republic (Hackett)  
Ernest Barker, ed., The Politics of Aristotle (Oxford, 2nd edition)  
Henry Paolucci, ed., The Political Writings of St. Augustine (Gateway)  
Paul E. Sigmund, ed., St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics (Norton)  
Machiavelli, The Prince (Norton, 2nd edition)

Recommended:

George H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory -- on closed reserve  
Mulford Q. Sibley, Political Ideas and Ideologies (Harper and Row) -- on closed reserve at the library (2 copies)

### **CALENDAR OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week Of****Topic and Assignment**

Aug. 26	Introduction: Why Political Philosophy?		
Aug. 31	Plato, Book I--Justice, 1-31 Portis, 1-30		
Sept. 2	No class: Prof. Gill at APSA		
Sept. 7, 9	Plato, Book II-VI--The Philosopher King,		32-185
Sept. 14, 16	Plato, Books VII-X--The Just and Unjust,		186-292
Sept. 21, 23	Aristotle, Book I: Ch. 1-7,		pp. 7-20
		Ch. 12-13,	pp. 33-37
	Book II: Ch. 1-5,		pp. 38-51
		Ch. 7,	pp. 56-61
	Book III: Ch. 1,		pp. 84-87
		Ch. 4-18	pp. 90-132
	Portis, 31-47		
Sept. 28, 30	Aristotle, Book IV: Ch. 1-2,		pp. 133-137
		Ch. 8-11,	pp. 150-160
	Book V: Ch. 1-4,		pp. 178-189
		Ch. 8-9,	pp. 200-209
	Book VII: Ch. 8-10		pp. 268-275
Oct. 5	Wrap-up of classical theory		
Oct. 7, 14 (Oct. 12)	<u>Plato/Aristotle essay due Thurs., Oct. 7</u> Fall Break)		
	Augustine, Ch. I: Pt. A-C.,		1-43
		Ch. II: Pt. C,	88-117
		Ch. III: Pt. A & C,	118-153, 162-183
	Portis, 49-63		
Oct. 19, 21	Augustine, Ch. IV: Pt. A-C,		184-240
		Ch. V: Pt. B,	252-276
		Ch. VI: Pt. B,	305-317
Oct. 26, 28	Aquinas, <u>On Kingship</u> , all,		pp. 14-29
	Summa, Questions 2-108,		pp. 30-41
	Questions 90-95,		pp. 44-54
	Portis, 65-81		
Nov. 2, 4	Aquinas, <u>Summa</u> , Questions 96-109,		pp. 54-60
	Questions 10-154,		pp. 61-80
	Ullman and Jaffa, 115-124		
	Archibald, 136-142		
	Suarez, 148-151		
	Maritain 172-176		
Nov. 9, 11	Leo XIII, 152-162		
	John XXIII, 165-172		
	Castillo, 176-178		
Nov. 9, 11	Solar, 178-180		
	Adler and Moyers, 193-204		
	Maritain, 204-211		

Nielsen, 211-217  
Bourke, 217-221

Nov. 16            Augustine/Aquinas essay due Tues., Nov. 16  
Machiavelli, Introduction, vii-xvi  
The Prince, 3-72  
Letter to Soderini, 124-126  
Portis, 83-99

Nov. 18            The Prince - conclude

Nov. 23            Discourses, 89-118

Nov. 25            **THANKSGIVING**

Nov. 30, Dec. 2    Critical essays: Gilbert, 150-155  
Cassirer, 155-169  
Wolin, 169-177  
Berlin, 206-236  
Nietzsche, 251-255

Dec. 7             Conclusion  
Machiavelli essay (optional) due

Saturday, Dec. 11    **FINAL EXAMINATION, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.**