

PHLB16H3S Political Philosophy: Ancient Greece and the Middle Ages

Course Information

Course Number: PHLB16H3S
Tuesdays 7-9pm in SW 309

Marta Jimenez (m.jimenez@utoronto.ca)
Office Number: PO-103, Room #123
Office Hours: Tue. 5-6:30pm & by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course is a survey of ancient Western political and social thought. We will read works by a variety of political theorists including Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Dante, Marsilius of Padua and Ockham, and will analyze their views on the nature of justice, citizenship, political unity and freedom, political authority, property and war.

We will discuss first the political theories of Plato and Aristotle. Concretely, we will compare their views on the best way to organize the *polis*, with special attention to their disagreements concerning citizen participation in public decisions, the influence of family and private property in the community's well-being, gender equality, and the limits of political authority.

In the second part of the course we will look at Aquinas, as paradigm of the recovery of Aristotle in the Middle Ages and central figure of the movement known as "High Scholasticism". We will explore the similarities and differences that his general approach to political questions has with Aristotle's model in the *Politics*. Then, we will look at Aquinas' views on the best regime, political authority and property.

The final weeks will be devoted to three fascinating 14th Century debates: on papal authority, on poverty, and on self-sacrifice and just war.

Students are expected to exercise their analytical and critical skills by assessing different authors' theories, and to develop their own ideas and viewpoints on the various philosophical issues. Writing assignments and exams will ask students not only to demonstrate knowledge of the thinkers' specific writings and comprehensive understanding of their approach to political questions, but also to engage critically with the material and express their own views.

Required Texts

Plato: The Trial and Death of Socrates, trans. by J.M. Cooper, G.M.A. Grube (Hackett, 2001).

Plato: Republic, trans. by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett Publishing, 1992).

Aristotle: The Politics and the Constitution of Athens (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Aquinas: Political Writings, ed. and trans. by R.W. Dyson (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

In addition, several required readings will be available for download through the course website on Blackboard (See section 'Course Readings').

Course Outline

- Jan 5.- Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Political Thought.**
Readings: Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration", from the *Peloponnesian War*, Book 2.34-46 (see Course Readings on Blackboard)
- Jan 12.- The Philosopher vs. the Politicians: The Trial of Socrates. Socrates on Obedience to the Law.**
Readings: Plato, *Apology*; Plato, *Crito*.
- Jan. 19.- Challenges to Justice in Plato's *Republic*. Education and Civic Virtue in Plato's Political Project. The Value of Political Unity. Plato on Property and Family.**
Readings: Plato, *Republic* 327a-471c.
- Jan. 26.- Politics and Metaphysics in Plato: Justice and the Theory of the Forms. The Line, the Cave and the Sun. Philosopher Kings. Kinds of Political Regimes.**
Readings: Plato, *Republic* 471d-592b.
- Feb. 2.- Political Animals and Civic Friendship in Aristotle. Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Views on Political Unity.**
Readings: Aristotle, *Politics* I & II (Selections).
- Feb. 9.- Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Views on Political Unity. Education and Civic Virtue.**
Readings: Aristotle, *Politics* II & VII-VIII; *NE*, X.9.
- Feb. 16.- Aristotle's Notion of Justice. On the Best Political Regime. Aristotle on Property and the Family.**
Readings: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books 3-4 (Selections).
- Feb. 19.- ***Midterm Exam*****
- Feb. 23.- Aquinas on the Good Ruler and the Problem of Tyranny.**
Readings: Aquinas, *On Kingship* (Selections in Blackboard)
- Mar. 2.- Aquinas on Obedience and Property.**
Readings: Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Selections in Blackboard).
- Mar. 9.- Debate on Papal Authority in the 14th Century. Dante on World Government.**
Readings: Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam* (1302); Dante, *Monarchy* (Selections in Blackboard)
- Mar. 16.- Debate on Papal Authority in the 14th Century. Marsilius of Padua on the Separation of Church and State.**
Readings: Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of Peace* (Selections in Blackboard)
- Mar 23.- Debate about Poverty in the 14th Century. Ockham on Property and Poverty.**
Readings: Ockham, *Work of Ninety Days* (Selections); Papal documents relating to Franciscan poverty: *Ad conditorem canonum* (1322), *Cum inter nonnullos* (1323), *Quia quorundam* (1324) and *Quia vir reprobus* (1329). (Blackboard)
- ***Term Paper Due*****
- Mar. 30.- Medieval Thought on Just War. Debate on Self-Sacrifice in the 14th Century.**
Readings: Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* IIaIIae 40 ("On War"); Henry of Ghent and James of Viterbo: texts on Self-Sacrifice. (Blackboard)

Course Requirements

Class attendance, participation and improvement (10%). Includes several 10-minute in-class written comments on a topic discussed during that class or the previous class.

Mid-term examination, February 19 (25%). The exam includes short-answer and essay questions. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts, distinctions, theses, and arguments discussed in class. Students will also be expected to identify and explain relevant passages from the weekly assigned texts.

Course paper, March 23 (30%). 6-7 page paper. Paper topics will be given out at least two weeks in advance.

Final examination, date TBA (35%). (See the midterm's description.)

General Policies

1. **Email:** The University requires that you use your UT email account in all correspondence with me. I check email daily during the week and I am typically able to reply within 48 (often 24) hours.
Unfortunately, substantive questions about the contents of the readings or lectures cannot be answered on email at length, but I am more than happy to talk about them with you during my office hours.
2. **Submission of Papers:** Your papers must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on their due date. You can hand hard copies of your papers in to me directly or you can drop them off in the course box.
3. **Late Papers:** All excuses for late papers must be properly documented by an appropriate authority (e.g., a medical note from a doctor, a registrar's letter, etc.). Late papers without a properly documented excuse will be penalized 2% per day, including weekends.
4. **Extensions:** In order to be granted an extension, you must provide a documented excuse (same as above). All extensions must be negotiated *before* the deadline.
5. **Missed Test or Exam:** The only excuse for missing the exam is illness or emergency. These must be properly documented.
6. **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** All work submitted must be your original work. Any idea that is not your own, or that you have submitted or are submitting for credit in another context must be fully cited. If you are not sure, err on the side of caution. Failure to fully cite your sources will result in a "0" on your assignment or other disciplinary action.

For more information on what constitutes academic misconduct (ex. cheating, plagiarism) and what disciplinary measures may be imposed, please read: see: <http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/rules.htm#behaviour>