

Zephyr Philosophy Camp, 2024

Political Philosophy

Politics have become an area of confusion, conflict, and deadlock. This summer, we will get past the muddle and initiate reasoned, productive, *real* political conversation by returning to first principles. What is the purpose of the state? What does it mean to have a just society? Guided by our study of Plato, Aristotle, and excerpts from Hobbes, Locke, Mill, and others, we will explore the moral and philosophical foundations of human political communities.

Please do the reading for Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in advance of each day's discussion. If you would like some quick background to get you started on your reading of Plato and Aristotle, I recommend listening to the "History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps" podcasts on these texts by Peter Adamson, available for free at historyofphilosophy.net.

Monday: Justice and the Good (Plato, Aristotle)

Plato, *The Republic*, excerpts from books 1, 2, 4, and 9:

327a-328d, 331c-332d (setup and beginning of the conversation)

334e-336d (Socrates concludes that a just person will inflict no harm, Thrasymachus interjects)

342c-344d (Thrasymachus praises injustice)

351a-362c (What kind of good is justice?)

366b-369a (Socrates' method)

432b-435a, 441c-445b (justice in the state and the individual)

576b-580c, 588b-592b (the tyrannical individual and the just individual)

Aristotle, [*Nicomachean Ethics*](#),

book 1, chapters 1-5, 7; book 2, chapter 1 (the good, happiness)

Aristotle, *Politics*:

book 1, chapters 1-2; book 7, chapter 1 (political community, happiness in the individual and in the polis)

Tuesday: The Just Society (Plato, Aristotle)

Plato, *The Republic*, excerpts from books 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8:

369b-377c (the ideal state)

413c-419a (the guardians, the "noble lie")

457c-464c (on women and children, abolishing the family)

473d-e (on philosophers ruling)

514a-521c (the allegory of the cave)

543a-545d, 557a-558c, 559d-564a (Plato's critique of democracy)

Aristotle, *Politics*:

Book 3, chapters 6-7, 9, 10-13, 18 (Who Should Govern?)

Book 7, chapters 4-5, 9 (The Ideal State)

Wednesday: Liberalism I (Hobbes)

Selections from Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* read together at camp

Thursday: Liberalism II (Locke, Mill)

John Locke, [*Second Treatise of Government*](#), chapter 2, paragraphs 4-8, 11-15; chapter 9; chapter 19, paragraphs 224-6

John Stuart Mill, [*On Liberty*](#), chapter 1

Declaration of Independence

Friday: Free Speech

J.S. Mill, [*On Liberty*](#), chapter 2, “On the Liberty of Thought and Discussion,” pages 18-the top of 34 (through “until we again assert our mental freedom”), the bottom of 49 (beginning with “We have now recognized....”)-52.

Catharine MacKinnon, [*Only Words*](#), chapter 3, “Equality and Speech,” pages 70-110.

Stanley Fish, [*There is No Such Thing as Free Speech and It's a Good Thing, Too*](#), chapter 8, pages 102-119.