

POT 3013: Ancient and Medieval Political Theory

UCC Humanities Group Two Course

Gordon Rule Course (GRW credit)

Instructor: Alicia Steinmetz

Course Description and Purpose

This writing-intensive course surveys the origins and development of political thought in ancient Greece and the reinterpretation, appropriation, and contestation of this tradition in Roman and medieval Christian political philosophy. Throughout the course, students will learn to analyze concepts and arguments about political life within their appropriate historical and cultural context while also drawing parallels to the continuing relevance of these themes in contemporary political theory. In so doing, this course will draw on a variety of disciplines and approaches, including philosophy, political theory, and classical/literary studies.

Textbook and Course Materials

Readings in Classical Political Thought (Hackett Publishing Co., 2000), ed. Peter J. Steinberger

Assignments

Class attendance participation: 15%

Regular attendance and class participation is required. Attendance will be tracked via the FIU Check In App. Class sessions include a mixture of lecturing and class discussion. You are expected to come to class having completed the required readings for the class session, and ready to discuss the material in respectful conversation with your peers.

Four in-class quizzes: 25%

There will be four in-class quizzes throughout the semester, collectively totaling 25% of your final grade. Quizzes are open books and open notes, but you may not use a laptop or cell phone during the quiz. Any notes must be printed or written and you can only use a physical copy of the textbook.

If you miss class when one of these quizzes takes place, you will need to schedule a time with the instructor to take a make-up quiz. Make-up quizzes must be completed within 2 weeks (14 days) of the original missed quiz or else the quiz grade will turn to a 0.

Paper assignments: 20% each, 60% total

The paper assignments are designed to test both your command of the assigned material and your ability to make a cogent and coherent argument. Papers should demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas contained in the readings and the ability to analyze and apply those ideas. Each paper must be a minimum of 1,200 words.

Class Meeting and Reading Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1: Introduction and Course Overview

Monday, August 21st: Introduction to the Greek *Polis*

Reading: Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and make sure to purchase a copy of the textbook (you will need it starting week 2!)

Wednesday, August 23rd: Depictions of Justice in Greek poetry

Reading: Preface and Chapter 1: Early Poets, pp. 1-13 (just Homer and Hesiod) (I will provide this reading to you to allow you time to get the textbook. No readings from the textbook will be provided moving forward)

Week 2: What is a *Politeia*?

Monday, August 28th: Herodotus' Constitutional Debate

Reading: Herodotus, *Histories*, Book 3, Chapter 38, Book 5, Chapter 78, and Book 5, Chapter 92 (pp. 32-35)

Wednesday, August 30th: Athenian *Demokratia*

Reading: Solon of Athens fragments (pp. 14-16); Aristotle, "Constitution of the Athenians" (Canvas file)

Week 3: Two concepts of *nomos*

Monday, September 4th: Labor day, no class meeting

Wednesday, September 6th: The origins and purpose of Greek tragedy; the three great tragedians of Greek political thought; Antigone on justice and the law

Reading: Sophocles, *Antigone* (pp. 117 – 135)

Week 4: The Sophists

Monday, September 11th: Review of course material so far and QUIZ 1 in class (Please arrive on time. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. It is open book and open notes, but you may not have access to a laptop or a phone while taking the quiz, so any notes you use while taking the quiz must be handwritten and only physical copies of the textbook will be allowed)

Wednesday, September 13th: Can Virtue be Taught?

Reading: Chapter 2: Presocratics and Sophists, Introduction, Protagoras, Plato's Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon, and The Anonymous Iamblich (pp. 17-28); *Dissoi Logoi* (Canvas file)

Paper 1 assignment and prompts will be posted on Sunday, September 17th (Due Sunday, October 1st by 11:59pm)

Week 5: Democracy and Empire

Monday, September 18th: The Growth of the Athenian Empire and The Age of Pericles

Reading: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (pp. 35 – 47)

Wednesday, September 20th: The Mytilenean Debate and The Melian Dialogue

Reading: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (pp. 48 – 58)

Week 6: Socrates on Trial

Monday, September 25th: The Athenian case against Socrates

Reading: Plato, *Apology* (pp. 147- 158)

Wednesday, September 27th: Socrates and Civil Disobedience

Reading: Plato, *Crito* (pp. 159- 165)

Paper 1 due Sunday, October 1st by 11:59pm (upload on Canvas)

Week 7: Plato's *Republic* Books I, II, and III

Monday, October 2nd: Defining Justice: The Challenge of Thrasymachus

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 1 (pp. 166 - 181)

Wednesday, October 4th: The Origins of the City and the Noble Lie

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Books 2, and 3 (pp. 181 - 214)

Week 8: Plato's *Republic* Books, IV and V

Monday, October 9th: The Parts and Order of Kallipolis (the beautiful city)

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Books 4 and 5 (pp. 214 - 246)

Wednesday, October 11th: No class meeting

Week 9: Plato's *Republic* Books VI and VII

Monday, October 16th: Review of course material and then QUIZ 2 in class (Please arrive on time. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. It is open book and open notes, but you may not have access to a laptop or a phone while taking the quiz, so any notes you use while taking the quiz must be handwritten and you must have a physical copy of the textbook)

Wednesday, October 18th: Educating the Guardians

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Books 6 and 7 (pp. 247 - 276)

Paper 2 assignment and prompts will be posted on Friday, October 20th (Due: Friday, November 3rd by 11:59pm)

Week 10: Plato's *Republic* Books VIII, IX, and X

Monday, October 23rd: The City and the Soul

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Books 8 and 9 (pp. 276 - 303)

Wednesday, October 25th: The Myth of Er

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Book 10 (pp. 303 - 317)

Week 11: Aristotle on the Purpose of Life and the Purpose of Politics

Monday, October 30th: Introduction to Virtue Ethics

Reading: Aristotle, Introduction, *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* Book 1 (pp. 358-384)

Wednesday, November 1st: Aristotle's Critique of Plato; Friendship and Citizenship; Redefining Regime Types

Reading: Aristotle, *Politics*, selections from Books II- VI (pp. 384-421 (stop at Book VII))

Paper 2 due Friday, November 3rd by 11:59pm (upload on Canvas)

Week 12: Cicero and the Mixed Constitution

Monday, November 6th: Review of course material and then QUIZ 3 in class (Please arrive on time. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. It is open book and open notes, but you may not have access to a laptop or a phone while taking the quiz, so any notes you use while taking the quiz must be handwritten and you must have a physical copy of the textbook)

Wednesday, November 8th: The Idea of *Res Publica*; Comparing Cicero to Aristotle and Plato

Reading: Cicero, Introduction and *Republic* selections (pp. 443-460)

Week 13: Augustine's City of God

Monday, November 13th: Christianity and the Fall of the Roman Empire

Reading: Augustine, *City of God* (pp. 461-482 (up to Book XIV))

Wednesday, November 15th: Augustine's Psychological and Political Realism

Reading: Augustine, *City of God* (pp. 482 - 504)

Week 14: Aquinas and the Order of Law

Monday, November 20th: Reconciling Christianity and Aristotle

Reading: Aquinas, Introduction and *Summa Theologica* (pp. 505 - 542)

Wednesday, November 22nd: The Question of Obedience

Reading: Aquinas, *Statesmanship* (pp. 542 - 546)

Paper 3 assignments and prompts will be posted on Friday, November 24th (Due Friday, December 8th by 11:59pm)

Week 15: The Birth of Modern Political Theory: Ruptures and Continuity

Monday, November 27th: Machiavelli's *The Prince*

Reading: Machiavelli, Letter to Francesco Vettori and *The Prince* (pp. 549 - 559)

Wednesday, November 29th: Machiavelli's *The Prince*

Reading: Machiavelli, Letter to Francesco Vettori and *The Prince* (pp. 559 - 590)

Week 16:

Monday, December 4th: Review of course material and then QUIZ 4 in class (Please arrive on time. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. It is open book and open notes, but you may not have access to a laptop or a phone while taking the quiz, so any notes you use while taking the quiz must be handwritten and you must have a physical copy of the textbook)

Wednesday, December 8th: Conclusion: Ancients, Moderns, and You; extra credit quiz!

Paper 3 due Friday, December 8th by 11:59pm (upload on Canvas)