

History of Political Thought I: Justice, Virtue, and the Soul

Political Science 391/5090

Professor Frank Lovett

Spring 2021
Monday/Wednesday
8:30 – 10:00 am
Seigle 208

flovett@wustl.edu
Office Hours:
Tuesday/Wednesday,
1:00 – 2:00 pm

This course is designed to be the first in a three-semester sequence on the history of political thought. The sequence offers a critical introduction to the main issues and debates in predominantly western political theory, including but not limited to the topics of justice, legitimacy, equality, democracy, liberty, sovereignty, and the role of history in the political and social world. Students are encouraged, but not required, to take the courses in chronological sequence. The first semester begins with ancient Greek political thought, and follows the development of political ideas up through the early sixteenth century.

Course Requirements

Both undergraduate and graduate students may take this course, and the requirements are different for each. The undergraduate requirements are as follows:

1. **Readings.** The course schedule below indicates the readings required prior to each lecture; these readings average about 100 pages a week. The “further readings” indicated for each section of the course are optional, but will add depth to the required readings.
2. **Three (3) papers, 3–4 pages each.** Four (4) paper assignments are indicated on the class schedule below, and you must write at least three of them. If you choose to write all four, your lowest grade will be dropped. *Everyone must write the first paper.* The papers will together count for 75% of your overall grade. Paper topics will be provided in advance, along with detailed instructions regarding grading, turning in late papers, and so on.
3. **Final exam,** on May 7th. This exam will count for 25% of your overall grade. No makeup exams will be offered, barring demonstrable emergencies.

Graduate students enrolled in this course are expected to attend the lectures and do all of the scheduled readings. The “further readings” are also strongly recommended. Graduate students must write either two shorter papers of at least 10 pages each, or one seminar paper of 20 or more pages in length.

Course Materials

For this course you will need all the following books, which should be available for purchase at the Campus Bookstore:

Aquinas, *On Politics and Ethics* (Norton)
Aristotle, *Politics* (Hackett)
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford)
Augustine, *City of God* (Penguin)
Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (Penguin)
Cicero, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws* (Cambridge)
Dante, *Monarchy* (Cambridge)
Inwood and Gerson (eds), *Hellenistic Philosophy* (Hackett)
Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (Penguin)
Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Chicago)
Plato, *Republic* (Cambridge)
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Penguin)

There are many good editions of these books, and if you happen to own some already, do not feel obligated to buy these particular editions. Additional readings are available online through the course Canvas website. Please contact me if you have any difficulty finding or accessing any of the readings.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Jan 25 Introduction (no assignment)

I. THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Jan 27 Thucydides, *History*, bk. I: 1, 20–23, 31–45, 56–96, 139–146;
bk. II: 8–14, 18–23.
Plutarch, “Life of Lycurgus” (online)

Feb 1 Thucydides, *History*, bk. II: 34–65; bk. III: 1–19, 25–85; bk. V: 1–26,
84–116.

Feb 3 Thucydides, *History*, bk. VI: 1, 8–32, 42–52, 60–61, 72–93; bk. VII: 1–18,
42–55, 59–87.

Further reading: Homer, *Iliad*, bk. I; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, bks. I–II; Plato, “The Apology;” Sun Tzu, *Art of War*.

II. PLATO’S IDEAL REPUBLIC

Feb 8 Plato, *Republic*, bks. I–II.

- Feb 10 Plato, *Republic*, bks. III–IV.
- Feb 15 Plato, *Republic*, bks. V–VI.
- Feb 12 **First paper due** (at 12:00 noon)
- Feb 17 Plato, *Republic*, bks. VII–VIII.
- Feb 22 Plato, *Republic*, bks. IX–X.

Further reading: Plato, “Laches,” “Gorgias,” and “Meno;” Confucius, *Analecets*, bks. 1, 4–5, 12–14; *Early Buddhist Discourses*, nos. 3, 7, 9.

III. ARISTOTLE AND THE DEMOCRATIC POLIS

- Feb 24 Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. I: 1–2; *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. I: 1–11; bk. II: 1–7; bk. VIII: 1–3, 9; bk. X: 9.
- Mar 1 Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. I: 3–7, 12–13; bk. II: 1–5; bk. III: 1–5, 10–13; bk. VII: 2–4, 13–15.
- Mar 3 Wellness Day (no class)
- Mar 8 Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. III: 6–7, 15–16; bk. IV: 1–14; bk. V: 1–4, 8–9, 11.

Further reading: Plato, “Statesman;” Aristotle, *Physics*, bk. II, and *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. V; *Mengzi*, bks. 1A, 2A, 4A, 6A.

IV. LATER ANCIENT THOUGHT

- Mar 10 *Hellenistic Philosophy*, selections on Skepticism, pp. 285–297, 302–308; selections on Epicureanism, pp. 5–19, 32–36; selections on Stoicism, pp. 111–112, 132–139.
- Mar 12 **Second paper due** (at 12:00 noon)
- Mar 15 *Hellenistic Philosophy*, selections on Epicureanism, pp. 28–31; selections on Stoicism, pp. 184–188, 190–203.
Epictetus, “The Handbook” (online).
Seneca, “On The Private Life” (online).

- Mar 17 Polybius, *Rise of the Roman Empire*, selections (online).
Cicero, "On the Commonwealth," bk. II: 1–24, 45–63.
- Mar 22 Sallust, "Conspiracy of Catiline" (online).
Cicero, "On the Commonwealth," bk. I: 1–15; bk. VI: 9–29.
- Mar 24 Cicero, "On the Commonwealth," bk. I: 30–71; bk. II: 64–70;
bk. III: 8–48; "On the Laws," bk. I: 1–52.

Further reading: *Hellenistic Philosophy*, pp. 36–40, 113–124; Livy, *History of Rome*, bks. I–II; Cicero, *On Ends*, bks. I–IV; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*; *Bhagavad Gita*, chs. 1–2, 4–5, 8; Nagarjuna, *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, chs. 1–2, 6–7, 13, 18, 24–25.

V. EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

- Mar 29 St. Paul, "Letter to the Romans" (online).
St. Augustine, *City of God*, bk. I: preface, 1–15, 29–36; bk. II: 20–22;
bk. III: 1, 9–14, 30–31; bk. IV: 1–7, 33–34.
- Mar 31 St. Augustine, *City of God*, bk. V: preface, 1, 8–19, 24; bk. VIII: 1–13;
bk. XI: 1–8; bk. XII: 1–9, 28.
- Apr 2 **Third paper due** (at 12:00 noon)
- Apr 5 St. Augustine, *City of God*, bk. XIV: 1–6, 11–18, 21–28; bk. XV: 1–2,
4–5; bk. XIX: 1–7, 11–21, 24–28; bk. XXII: 30.

Further reading: the Gospel of Luke; Plotinus, *Enneads*, I.6, III.8, V.1; Augustine, *The Political Writings*, chs. 4–5, and *On Free Choice of the Will*; Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*.

VI. THE MIDDLE AGES

- Apr 7 Aquinas, *On Politics and Ethics*, p. 3–13, 30–37, 61–64.
Averroes, "The Decisive Treatise ..." (online).
- Apr 12 Wellness Day (no class)
- Apr 14 Aquinas, *On Politics and Ethics*, p. 37–60, 64–83.
- Apr 19 Aquinas, *On Politics and Ethics*, p. 14–29.
Dante, *Monarchy*, bk. I: 1–16; bk. III: 1–4

Apr 21 Dante, *Monarchy*, bk. III: 5–16.
Marsilius, *Defender of the Peace*, selections (online).

Apr 23 **Fourth paper due** (at 12:00 noon)

Further reading: Alfarabi, “The Political Regime;” Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, bk. II: 32, 36–40; John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, bks. IV–VI; Bartolus, “On the Government of a City.”

VII. RENAISSANCE POLITICAL THOUGHT

Apr 26 Machiavelli, “Letter to Vettori” (see appendix to *The Prince*).
Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier*, pp. 39–68, 87–101, 281–289,
296–300, 306–315.

Apr 28 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, dedication, chs. 1–9, 12–19, 21–26.

May 3 Machiavelli, *Discourses*, bk. I: preface, chs. 1–6, 9, 16–18, 27, 34, 55, 58;
bk. II: chs. 1–2; bk. III: ch. 9, 41, 49.

Further reading: Christine de Pizan, *Book of the City of Ladies*, I.1–4, I.7–9, I.11, I.14, I.27, I.46, II.7, II.13, III.19; Petrarch, “How a Ruler Ought to Govern His State;” Bruni, “Panegyric to the City of Florence;” Guicciardini, *Maxims and Reflections*; Thomas More, *Utopia*.

May 7 **Final Exam** (take home)

Secondary Readings

The following are a small selection of the many works by contemporary historians, philosophers, and political theorists discussing the authors and themes we study this class. They are an excellent place to begin if you wish to explore these topics in greater depth.

Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*
White, *A Companion to Plato’s Republic*
Hansen, *Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*
Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*
Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*
Lear, *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand*
Yack, *Problems of a Political Animal*
Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*
Beard, *S.P.Q.R.*
Wood, *Cicero’s Social and Political Thought*

Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*
Irwin, *Classical Thought*
Kretzmann and Stump, *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*
Morrall, *Political Thought in Medieval Times*
Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought*
Waley and Dean, *The Italian City-Republics*
Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*
Viroli, *Machiavelli*