

**PSC 5393-01**

**Advanced Seminar in Political Philosophy: Xenophon**

Baylor University

Fall 2015

Thurs 2:00-4:45

Burleson 305

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office hours: by appointment

This course will consist of a close reading of an important work in Western Political Thought, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. The work is an account of the education and life of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian empire. In it, Xenophon slyly articulates the education and political progress of someone raised in a classical republic whose ambition and extraordinary talent drove him to found a version of a multicultural world empire. The *Cyropaedia* might today be classified as a historical novel, but what permits it to transcend that classification is that it was composed by Xenophon, an outstanding philosophic student of Socrates who was deeply gripped by the challenge that divine revelation poses to the life of reason and one who, moreover, garnered the open admiration of Machiavelli, the founder of modern political philosophy. The *Cyropaedia* is in fact the only work of classical political philosophy mentioned (for both praise and, subsequently, blame) in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and is for that reason a pivotal work in the history of political philosophy. We will be examining Xenophon's presentation of the advantages and disadvantages, for human flourishing, of a world empire that aims to be democratic in the sense of meritocratic—one that aims, that is, to tear down static theological, political, and class distinctions in the name of genuine merit, on a grandly international scale.

**I. Required Text:**

Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus*, Wayne Ambler, translator. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.

## II. Recommended Secondary Readings

- Ambler, Wayne. 2001. "Introduction." *The Education of Cyrus*. Editor and translator. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Bartlett, Robert C. 2015. "How To Rule The World: An Introduction To Xenophon's *The Education of Cyrus*." *American Political Science Review* 109.1 (Feb. 2015), 143-54.
- Bruell, Christopher. 1987. "Xenophon." In *History of Political Philosophy*. 3rd edition. Ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Danzig, Gabriel. 2012. "The Best of the Achaemenids: Benevolence, Self-Interest, and the 'Ironic' Reading of *Cyropaedia*." In Hobden, Fiona, and Christopher Tuplin. 2012. *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Inquiry*. Leiden: Brill, 499-539.
- Due, Bodil. 1989. *The Cyropaedia: Xenophon's Aims and Methods*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Faulkner, Robert. 2007. "Imperial Grandeur and Imperial Hollowness: Xenophon's Cyrus the Great." In *The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Grant, Alexander. 1883. *Xenophon*. Edinburgh: Blackwood.
- Gray, Vivienne, ed. 2010. *Xenophon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkin, David J. 2004. *The Twenty-first Century Confronts Its Gods: Globalization, Technology, and War*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Machiavelli, Niccolo. 1998. *The Prince*. 2nd ed. Ed. and trans. Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nadon, Christopher. 2001. *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia*. California: University of California Press.
- Newell, Waller R. 2013. *Tyranny: A New Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rasmussen, Paul J. 2009. *Excellence Unleashed: Machiavelli's Critique of Xenophon and the Moral Foundations of Politics*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 2010. "The Death of Cyrus: Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* as a Source for Iranian History." In Gray 2010, 439-53.
- Sandridge, Norman B. 2012. *Loving Humanity, Learning, and Being Honored: The Foundations of Leadership in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies.
- Sandridge, Norman. 2012. "Cyrus' Paradise: The World's First On-line Collaborative Commentary to an Ancient Text." <http://www.cyropaedia.org/author/norman/>.
- Strauss, Leo. 2013 [originally published 1961]. *On Tyranny: Corrected and Expanded Edition Including the Strauss-Kojève Correspondence*. Ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Strauss, Leo. 1939. "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon." *Social Research*. 6 (4): 502-36.
- Stronk, Jan P. 2010. *Ctesias' Persian History: Part 1: Introduction, Text, and Translation*. Duesseldorf: Wellem Verlag.
- Tatum, James. 1989. *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### III. Course Requirements:

Attendance requirements: no unexcused absences. Excused absences will be granted upon presentation of a doctor's note or a relative's obituary.

One ten-page essay, on a section of the text of your choice, due on the day that we cover the topic in class. An assignment sheet will be passed out on the first day of class.

The term grade will be computed as follows: essay 80% participation 20%. Please note that I will be using Baylor's new grading scale, available [here](#).

### IV. Class Schedule:

Thursday, August 27	Introduction to the course; Book I, chapters 1-3
Thursday, September 3	<b>APSA meeting; no class</b>
Thursday, September 10	Book I, chapters 4-6
Saturday, September 12	(9:00-noon class to make up for September 3)
Thursday, September 17	Book II, chapters 1-4
Thursday, September 24	Book III, chapters 1-3
Friday, October 1	Book IV, chapters 1-3
Thursday, October 8	Book IV, chapters 4-6
Thursday, October 15	Book V, chapters 1-3
Thursday, October 22	Book V, chapters 4 & 5, Book VI, chapter 1
Thursday, October 29	Book VI, chapters 2-4
Thursday, November 5	Book VII, chapters 1-3
Saturday, November 7	(9:00-noon class to make up for November 12) Book VII, chapters 4 & 5, Book VIII, chapter 1
Thursday, November 12	<b>No class: Northeast PSA convention</b>
Thursday, November 19	Book VIII, chapters 2-4
Thursday, November 26	<b>Thanksgiving break; no classes</b>

Thursday, December 3

Book VIII, chapters 5-8