

Western Political Philosophy

Course: PSC 2343-02

Instructor: Stephen Block

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45am

Room: BSB A105

Office: Draper 350

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10am-12pm, and by appointment

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Goals and Objectives:

This course is intended to introduce students to the history of Western political philosophy, and to the fundamental problems about politics and human association that have motivated some of the greatest philosophic endeavors in our tradition. Although this is a survey course in which we will read numerous authors in the Western political tradition, we will approach these different thinkers by keeping in mind some of the common issues that grow out of their attempts to answer the following question: What is the best life for a human being to live and what type of political order or regime is most appropriate for and conducive to the good life for the human being? In approaching this question, we will be considering different understandings of human nature and the human soul, different answers as to who ought to govern and rule, and different presentations of the primary purposes for the existence of political communities and why and how they exist and come into existence, and numerous other issues that arise from thinking about the permanent questions that arise naturally in political life.

TEXTS

Four Texts on Socrates: Plato's "Euthyphro," "Apology of Socrates," "Crito," and Aristophanes' "Clouds" (trans. Thomas West and Grace Starry West)

Plato: Gorgias (trans. James Nichols, Jr.)

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins)

Aquinas: Political Writings (trans. R.W. Dyson)

Hobbes: Leviathan (ed. Edwin Curley)

Rousseau: The Basic Political Writings (trans. Donald Cress)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All members of the class are expected to attend all sessions of the course and to have completed the assigned readings before the date on which they are listed. In accordance with Baylor's attendance policy, a student who misses more than 25% of the scheduled classes will fail the course. **Be prepared to discuss the assigned readings and contribute to class discussion.**

There will be three written interpretive exercises, a paper, a final exam, a series of announced and unannounced quizzes, and a participation grade. The final exam will consist of short answer passage and concept identifications. The participation grade will be determined by attendance record and the quantity and quality of in-class participation.

The course requirements contribute to the overall course grade in the following proportions:

Interpretive Exercise 1:	5%
Interpretive Exercise 2:	10%
Interpretive Exercise 3:	15%
Paper:	25%
Final Exam:	15%
Quiz Average:	20%
Participation:	10%

Grading Scale:

100->93=A; 93->90=A-; 90->87=B+; 87->83=B; 83->79=B-; 79->77=C+; 77->73=C; 73->69=C-; 69->66=D+; 66->63=D; 63->60=D; <60=F

Note on Technology: The use of cell phones during class is prohibited. Each violation of this rule will result in a deduction of *five points* from the student's final grade. Laptop computers/tablets may only be used in class with the consent of the instructor, which typically will require giving cause (learning disability). If the instructor discovers improper use of a computer in class (i.e. anything but taking notes) *five points* will be deducted from the student's final grade.

Tentative Course Reading Schedule:

8/25: Course Introduction

8/27: Plato, *Apology of Socrates* (entire)

9/1: Plato, *Crito* (entire) ([50a6-54c10])

9/3: Plato, *Gorgias*, 447a1-461b2 ([455a4-358e2])

9/8: Plato, *Gorgias*, 461b3-481b5 ([469b8-475e6])

9/10: Plato, *Gorgias*, 481b6-527e6 ([481b6-486d2])

9/15: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I ([1094a1-1096a10]; [1097a15-1098b8])

9/17: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II ([1103a115-1105b18], [1105b19-1107a27])

9/22: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III ([1113b3-1115a6], [1115a7-1117b23])

9/24: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books IV ([1123a35-1125a35])

9/29: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V ([1134a18-1136a9])

10/1: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI ([1140a24-1142a32])

10/6: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books VII ([1145b22-1147b19])

10/13: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII ([1158b12-1159b24])

10/15: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IX ([1167b17-1169b2])

10/20: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X ([1177a12-1179a32])

10/22: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I ([1253b1-1255b40])

10/27: Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Book I, Chs. 1-7 ([Chs. 1-2])

10/29: Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Book I, Chs.8-15 ([Chs. 9-12])

11/3: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, Chs 1-3, 6, 10-12 ([Ch. 11])

11/5: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, Chs. 13-16 ([Chs. 13])

11/10: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II, Chs. 17-18, 21, 28, 29; Part IV, Ch. 45 ([Ch. 17])

11/12: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* ([pp. 7-9])

11/17: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Preface, Part 1 ([pp. 44-51])

11/19: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Part 2 ([pp. 60-67])

11/24: Catch Up

12/1-12/3: Philosophers' Debates (Extra Credit)

Final Exam: Friday, December 11th, 2-4pm