

When we describe the political philosophy of Plato and of Aristotle as classical political philosophy, we imply that it is the classic form of political philosophy. The classic was once said to be characterized by noble simplicity and quiet grandeur.... Classical political philosophy is non-traditional because it belongs to the fertile moment when all traditions were shaken, and there was not yet in existence a tradition of political philosophy.... From this it follows that the classical political philosophers see political things with a freshness and directness which have never been equaled. They look at political things in the perspective of the enlightened citizen or statesman.... They do not look at political things from the outside, as spectators of political life.

— Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy?”

Political Science 4081
History of Political Theory: Plato to More
Fall 2015

Instructor: James Stoner <poston@lsu.edu>
Stubbs 214 (tel: 225-578-2538)

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:30;
Thursdays, 10:00-11:30, and by appointment

Course requirements:

Daily quizzes on the reading [20%]
Midterm examination, on Oct. 8 [20%]
8-10 pp. term paper: topic due Oct. 23; glossary due Nov. 6; paper due Nov. 23 [30%]
Final examination, Dec. 9 [30%]

Graduate Students and Honors Option: Extra sessions and 8-10 page paper on Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226777016], due December 4 [worth equals term paper; percentages adjusted]

Grading scale:

A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%)
C+ (78%-80%), C (73%-77%), C- (70%-72%)
D+ (68%-70%), D (63%-67%), D- (60%-62%)
F (below 60%)

Books available for purchase:

Thomas R. West & Grace Starry West, trans., *Four Texts on Socrates* (Cornell) [ISBN 9780801485749]
Allan Bloom, trans., *The Republic of Plato* (Basic) [ISBN 9780465069347]
Seth Benardete, trans., *Plato's Symposium* (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226042756]
Robert C. Bartlett & Susan D. Collins, trans., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226026756]
Carnes Lord, trans., *Aristotle's Politics* (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226921846]

Dino Bigongiari, ed., *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Free Press) [ISBN 9780684836416]

John Fortescue, *On the Laws and Governance of England* (Cambridge) [ISBN 9780521589963]

Thomas More, *Utopia*, tr. Wootton (Hackett) [ISBN 9780872203761]

Course Website:

A course website will be available to registered students through the Moodle system.

Library Reserve:

The readings for the course will be available on reserve in Middleton Library, and many are available as well on the internet. In some cases the editions or translations may differ from those listed above; I strongly encourage you to use the translations of Plato selected here. Please check with me if using other editions creates confusion as to what material is assigned. In addition, I will from time to time place on reserve certain secondary works that I think you might find particularly useful in helping you interpret the authors we are studying and in locating their place in the tradition of political philosophy. It should go without saying that secondary works are no substitute for the assigned reading; indeed, read without knowledge of the originals they are more apt to mislead than assist you.

SYLLABUS:

Tues., 8/25 Introduction

I. THE PROBLEM OF SOCRATES

Thurs., 8/27 Aristophanes, *Clouds*

Tues., 9/1 Plato, *Apology of Socrates*

Thurs., 9/3 *Apology of Socrates*

Tues., 9/8 Plato, *Crito*

II. THE PROBLEM OF JUSTICE

Thurs., 9/10 Plato, *Republic*, book 1

Tues., 9/15 *Republic*, book 2-3

Thurs., 9/17 *Republic*, book 4

Tues., 9/22 *Republic*, book 5-6

Thurs., 9/24 *Republic*, book 7

Tues., 9/29 *Republic*, book 8-9

Thurs., 10/1 *Republic*, book 10

Tues., 10/6 *Republic*, books 1-10 (review)

Thurs., 10/8 MIDTERM EXAM

III. THE PROBLEM OF LOVE

Tues., 10/13 Plato, *Symposium*, 172a-189b (pp. 1-18)

Thurs., 10/15 *Symposium*, 189b-212b (pp. 18-42)

Tues., 10/20 *Symposium*, 212c-223d (pp. 42-54)

IV. VIRTUE AND THE CITY

Thurs., 10/22 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, III

Fri., 10/23 TERM PAPER TOPIC DUE

Tues., 10/27 *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII, IX

[FALL BREAK]

Tues., 11/3 Aristotle, *Politics*, I, II.1-5

Thurs., 11/5 *Politics*, III

Fri., 11/6 TERM PAPER GLOSSARY DUE

Tues., 11/10 *Politics*, V

Thurs., 11/12 *Politics*, VII

V. GOD AND THE LAW

Tues., 11/17 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, qq. 90-94 (pp. 3-54)

Thurs., 11/19 *Summa Theologica*, I-II, qq. 95-97, 105.1; II-II, qq. 42, 57 (pp. 55-104)

Mon., 11/23 TERM PAPER DUE

VI. THE BEST REGIME, REVISITED

Tues., 11/24 Fortescue, *In Praise of the the Laws of England*, intro., ch. 1-37 (pp. 3-54)

[THANKSGIVING BREAK]

Tues., 12/1 More, *Utopia*, Letter to Giles, Book I (pp. 52-89)

Thurs., 12/3 *Utopia*, Book II (pp. 90-160)

FINAL EXAMINATION (Wednesday, December 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m.)