

University of Wisconsin-Madison

PS501: Ancient and Medieval Western Political Thought

Fall 2007

Instructor: R. Avramenko
Office: 201c North Hall
Office Hours: R 2:00 – 4:00

Course: PS 501
Location: 165 Bascom
Time: TR 12:00–12:50
TA: Brandon Turner: bpturner@wisc.edu

Course Objective:

The objective of this course is two-fold. First, this course introduces students to some basic texts of ancient and medieval western political thought. Through a careful reading of these canonical texts, the foundational symbols and concepts of Western thought will come to light.

Our second objective is to learn how these symbols and concepts can be brought to bear on contemporary problems and how they can inform questions about our own political and personal order. What part, for instance, does honor play in our world? What does a good citizen look like? What is the role of reason? What is the place of violence? What does justice look like? Students are encouraged to keep both these objectives in mind for both discussion sections and their written work.

Required Texts:

Aristophanes. *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes*, ed. Moses Hadas (Bantam Classic, 1988). ISBN 0553213431.

Aristotle. *Politics*, transl. T.A. Sinclair (Penguin Classics, 1981). Isbn 0140444211

Augustine. *City of God*, transl. Bettenson (Penguin Classics, 2003). ISBN 0-140-44894-2.

God. *Bible*. Any edition.

Homer. *The Essential Iliad*, transl. Stanley Lombardo (Hackett, 2000). ISBN 0-87220-542-8.

Herodotus. *The Histories*, transl. de Selincourt (Penguin Classics, 1996). ISBN 0-140-44908-6

Plato. *The Republic*, transl. Sterling and Scott (Norton, 1985). ISBN 0-393-31467-7.

Plato. *Four Texts on Socrates*, transl. West and West (Cornell University Press, 1984). ISBN 0-8014-9282-3.

Students are **strongly** encouraged to purchase these particular translations. This is a text-based course and full participation requires that we navigate and explore the text together—that we be on the same page, so to speak. Students must bring the text under consideration both to class and sections.

Requirements:

Section Participation:	10%
First Midterm (September 26):	20%
Midterm Paper (10 pp, due October 30):	20%
Second Midterm (November 21):	20%
Final Exam (December 20):	30%

Itinerary:

I. Honor and Warrior Citizenship

September 4: Introduction

September 6: The Ancient World and Homer (*Iliad*, Books 1-16)

September 11: Honor and Manly Courage in Homer (*Iliad*, Books 17-24)

September 13: Herodotus and the Spartan 300 (*Histories*, Book vi, sections 94-121; vii, 1-200)

September 18: Cowardice and Dishonor (*Histories*, Book vii, 201-239; viii, 83-96; ix, 28-90)

September 20: Shame and the Civic Good of Courage (Read: Suzanne Mettler, "Bringing the State Back Into Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans" available on JSTOR)

II. Justice and Discursive Citizenship

September 25: **First Midterm (bluebook)**

September 27: Introduction to Socrates, Plato, the Peloponnesian War, and Athenian Empire (Read: "Melian Dialogue")

October 2: Plato, *The Apology* (17a-28b)

October 4: Plato, *The Apology* (28b-42a)

October 9: Plato, *Crito*

October 11: Plato, *Crito*

October 16: Aristophanes, *The Frogs*

October 18: Aristophanes, *The Frogs*

October 23: Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* (a.k.a., *The Assemblywomen*)

October 25: Plato, *Republic*, Book I

October 30: Plato, *Republic*, Book II (**midterm paper due, 10pp**)

November 1: Plato, *Republic*, Book III, IV

November 6: Plato, *Republic*, Book V, VI

November 8: Plato, *Republic*, Book VII

November 13: Plato, *Republic*, Book VIII

November 15: Plato, *Republic*, Book IX, X

November 20: **Second Midterm (bluebook)**

November 22: Thanksgiving Break

III. Faith and Universal Citizenship

November: 27: Aristotle, *Politics* (Bk I: Chs. 1-7, 13, Bk III: Chs. 1-13) (lecture by Brandon Turner)

November 29: Aristotle, *Politics* (Bk VI: Chs. 1-5; Book VII: Chs. 1-4, 13-17) (lecture by Brandon Turner)

December 4: Bible, Genesis and Exodus; St. Augustine, *City of God* (Bk I., preface, Chpts 1-9, 11, 12, 20, 21, II.20; IV.5, 15, 33;)

December 6: Bible, Matthew and John; Augustine, *City of God* (V.12-24, VII.21, 32; VIII.3-13; IX.14, 15, 17, 18)

December 11: St. Augustine, *City of God* (X.14, 20; XI.1-8, 16-24)

December 13: St. Augustine, *City of God* (XII.14, 15, 18, 20-22; XIX.4, 11-14, 17, 24-28)

December 21, 7:45am (Friday): Final Exam

Course Rules:

Exams. The exam days are set. Clear your schedule now. There will be no second sittings and no make up exams. If you are seriously sick or critically injured and miss an exam, you need to provide evidence (cast, severed limb, sputum, etc.) to your TA. If an exam is missed for a valid reason (catching a flight to the family cabin in Aspen, didn't feel ready, too hung over, need to leave early for vacation, & etc., are not valid reasons for missing an exam, except for me), your TA will give you a substitute assignment. **This will be an essay of 10 pages based on the material covered in the exam and will be due two days after the date of the missed exam.** If the exam is missed for an invalid reason, you will receive a failing grade.

Paper. The paper is due in class, before the lecture begins, on October 30th. Papers not received before the lecture begins are **LATE**. Late papers will be penalized one half letter grade per 24 hour period. Thus, if you are 1 minute late, or 24h, it costs you one half letter grade (A/B becomes B, for example). 24 hours and 1 minute late costs you a full letter (A/B becomes B/C) and so on.

Grades. Upon return of exams and papers, TA's will not discuss your grade for at least 48 hours. If, after two days, you would like to discuss your grade, you must schedule an appointment with your TA. You must provide a written memo detailing how and why you think your grade ought to be different than assigned. Your TA will evaluate your memo, reread the paper/exam and determine whether the grade was accurate. There are no further appeals.

Honor Code. This course demands adherence to a certain code of honor. As such, I will construe all cheating in this class as a personal insult. Since it is no longer acceptable to get satisfaction in a duel, I will have to recur to a less-than-honorable recourse: I'll tell on you and fail you. In short, plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. If you plagiarize or cheat, you will receive an F for the course and the case will be referred to the Dean's Office.