

PSCI 2300A
History of Political Thought
Tuesday/Thursday 9:35am - 12:25pm
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Professor Peter Emberley
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Office Hours: 12:30 – 1:30 Monday to Thursday

Overview:

This course is an introduction to political philosophy. It involves a close study of philosophical texts which were decisive in the formation of Western consciousness. Though they were responses to the historical disorders of their day, these texts are not read for their antiquarian interest but rather as a means of critically widening the present moment - for understanding why we think and act politically the way we do.

In the spring term, we will examine the two “primals” constituting the Western tradition - ancient Greek political philosophy and (early) medieval Christianity. The three writers we are examining - Plato, Aristotle, Augustine - lie at the origin of our self-understanding, specifically how we value the political realm, but also how we esteem expressions of human possibility which transcend politics. Both the important convergence and the differences between these thinkers set the stage for the major debates of the modern era and our own contemporary times. Understanding them provides us with a more nuanced and comprehensive awareness of our current political situation, especially when we realize that these thinkers are not wholly from the past, but continue to be present in the way we think and act.

Important Note:

Reading a philosophical text is not like reading books for information or an author’s personal perspective. Nor would it be right to say that the thinkers we are reading are presenting views about “what ought to be.” Rather, each of these writers begins with the task “Know Yourself” and, having meditatively explored what a human being is - through the full range of human experience - turns to the political community to see how our nature limits or makes possible public initiatives. Each is writing about what “is,” and attempting to draw out the meaning and justification of what we already do, or could do if we truly understood what we already do. While these writers are responding to political and personal disorder in their own times, for them this “local mischief” is only a particular version of a universal predicament - which is the real object of their reflections. None of them think that disorder can be totally rectified if only humankind adopted their interpretations of reality, but each does believe that the desires and passions at the source of disorder can be educated by political means or by

philosophy. In addition, these writers are in a dialogue with one another, sometimes reversing the priorities of an earlier thinker, sometimes radicalizing the potential of an earlier idea, sometimes adapting the idea to new circumstances.

You are strongly advised not to substitute secondary readings (reference books or internet sites) for diligent attention to the books and lectures.

Texts (required)

Plato, **Republic**, Library of Liberal Arts, ISBN 0023529504

Aristotle, **Politics**, Penguin, ISBN 0140444211

Coursepack (containing excerpt from Aristotle, **Nicomachean Ethics**; and excerpts from Augustine, **City of God, & On Christian Doctrine**)

You should use **ONLY** the exact texts ordered for the course as we will be making continuous reference to page numbers and passages from these editions. Other translations can be misleading, and their use will make it very difficult to follow the lectures. It is essential that you bring the book we are reading to class.

Course Work:

- 25% Mid-Term Test (May 25) short-answer questions
- 25% Short Essay 5-7 pages (due June 10)
- 50% Exam (Scheduled by Registrar) - whole term's work

NOTE:

All components of the course must be completed in order to receive a passing grade.

SCHEDULE:

Spring Term:

May 11: Greek Polis and Socrates

May 13: Plato, Republic 1-3

May 18: Plato, Republic 4-6

May 20: Plato, Republic 7-10

May 25: Test In First Half of Class/Aristotle, Ethics (from Coursepack) in Second Half of Class

May 27: Book I Politics I-III

June 1: :Aristotle, Politics IV - VI

June 3: Aristotle, Politics VII-VIII

June 8: : Augustine, City of God (from coursepack)

June 10 Book 1, On Christian Doctrine, (from coursepack) – short essay due.

June 15: St. Thomas Aquinas

June 17: Greeks and Latins/Athens and Rome: A Dialogue

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations.** If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **June 11 2010 for early summer examinations and July 30 2010 for late summer examinations.**

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.