

PSCI 2301A
History of Political Thought I
Tuesdays, 9:35 am – 11:25am
This course will be held remotely online

Instructor: Sophie Marcotte Chénard

Office: Loeb D690

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30pm-3:30pm (link on Brightspace) or by appointment

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Course Description

This course examines foundational texts that have shaped Western political thought. Through a careful reading of the works of Greek poets, political philosophers and historians such as Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle and Thucydides, we will explore central themes and topics of classical political thought.

In the course of our investigation, we will address several fundamental questions such as:

- ◆ What is justice?
- ◆ Should we always obey the law?
- ◆ What makes one a good citizen?
- ◆ Is democracy the best political regime?
- ◆ Does might make right in times of war?

Through a close reading of the texts, we will also attempt to answer questions about the authors' intentions in writing what they wrote. How should we understand Plato's radical proposition of a new city the *Republic*? What does Sophocles tell us about the nature of justice in *Antigone*? What can we learn about the nature of war from Thucydides' account of the conflict between the Spartans and the Athenians? To answer these questions, we will examine the fundamental doctrines and principles of Greek political thought, with the aim of discovering and understanding what these texts can still teach us today. This course will also provide an overview of the historical context and political organization of Greek cities in 4th century BC.

Learning Objectives:

This course is designed to help students:

1. Gain knowledge of the primary texts and intellectual context of the historical period covered;
2. Provide an elaborate account of the key political concepts developed in classical Western thought, such as democracy, justice, liberty, and equality;
3. Draw parallels with the use of these concepts in contemporary politics;
4. Explain theories and arguments presented in the text and assess their strengths and weaknesses;
5. Develop skills in analytical thinking, critical reading and constructing arguments through tutorial discussions and written essays.

Contact Policy:

The best way to contact me outside of scheduled office hours is via email. You can expect a reply within 48 hours (weekends excluded). If your question cannot be answered by a short email, please drop by during online office hours. If your question is of general interest to the whole class, please post on the “Ask your instructor” forum so that all students can benefit from seeing the answer.

When emailing:

- Include the **course code** in the subject line of the email (PSCI2301)
- Use your **Carleton email account**
- **Address** the email properly (please avoid starting your email with “hey you” or “lol”)
- Sign off with your **first and last name** and include your **student number**.

Course Format

This course is delivered remotely using a blended approach of asynchronous elements (pre-recorded lectures, integrated lecture activities, weekly polls) and synchronous sessions (tutorials and office hours).

Lectures will be posted each week on Wednesday, covering the coming week’s readings and giving you ample time to complete the interactive lectures in preparation for your tutorial session the following Tuesday. You are free to go at your own pace, but I recommend that you keep up with the weekly readings, lectures and tutorials so as to be in the best position to complete your assignments on time and do well in this course.

Lecture slides will also be made available each week, along with other materials, including additional academic articles and resources, cartoons, editorials and newspaper articles that deal with topics related to this course.

Use of Brightspace: Course announcements, deadline reminders and course materials will be posted on the course page. Please ensure that you have access to the course on Brightspace and consult it regularly.

Required Texts (Available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore)

- Plato, *The Republic* (Basic Books, 1991, 2nd or 3rd Edition, translated with notes and introduction by Allan Bloom)
- Aristotle, *The Politics* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1984, translated by Carnes Lord)
- Used copies of these books can be found at the library, online or at bookstores (such as Black Squirrel).
- All other readings are available **directly on Brightspace** at no cost to you

Course Assignments

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Completion of Lectures Activities	Marked weekly	20%
Critical Review	Friday, September 30	15%
Tutorial Participation	Marked weekly	10%
Final Essay	Friday, November 25	30%
Take-Home Exam	TBD, exam period	25%
Create a Meme	Anytime before Dec 6	2% (bonus points)

Course Assignments Overview

1. Completion of Lectures (20%) – Marked upon completion

Pre-recorded lectures will be posted on Brightspace every Wednesday. They include short video lectures with PowerPoint slides combined with interactive activities to test your understanding of the material. The lecture activities are graded upon completion only (you basically get 20% simply to “show up” to class).

2. Critical Review (15%) – Due Friday September 30th

An important skill in academic and professional settings is the ability to read critically, effectively and to summarize the main points of a text. In this course, we are dealing with writings that are sometimes difficult to decipher, which makes this exercise an important one to master. The critical review is a summary and analysis of a text, for which the aim is to explain and assess the main thesis and supporting arguments. Ideally, you should be able to use this model of

analysis for all your readings. A complete guide on how to write a critical review, including a grading rubric and a checklist, will be available on Brightspace.

You can submit your critical review in Word or PDF format in the “Assignments and Guidelines” module. Please name your submitted assignment as follows: Lastname.Firstname.Assignment1

3. Tutorial Participation (10%)

Participation in the tutorials is an essential component of this course, which is normally (i.e. when there is no global pandemic) based on conversations, debates and exchange of ideas. Because there are no in-class discussions during the lectures, attending tutorials is even more crucial. Through synchronous weekly group discussions, students will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the readings, exchange and learn from their peers and the TA and further deepen their understanding of the texts. Sessions will be held via Big Blue Button (link on the course page) every Tuesday, **starting on September 20th**.

To help you prepare for the tutorials and to guide you in your weekly readings, **discussion questions** will be posted each week on Wednesday.

To **get the full 10 points**, students are required to attend tutorials regularly, demonstrate that they have done the readings and contribute actively, positively and respectfully to the discussion with their classmates.

I understand that many factors (geographical, personal, medical, etc.) can prevent you from attending tutorials regularly. If for some reason you are unable to participate in a tutorial session, you can alternatively send your TA an email with a one-paragraph answer (approximately 150 words) to one of the weekly discussion questions posted on Brightspace. This can only be done **once a term**.

4. Final Essay (30%) – Due Friday November 25th

You will be required to write one final essay (1750-2000 words including references) that should be submitted **on the due date before 11:59pm** on Brightspace. A choice of essay topics, along with detailed instructions, video explanations and examples, will be posted on Brightspace in the “Assignments and Guidelines” module during the term.

The purpose of the essay is to demonstrate that you have read the texts carefully, that you master the interpretive and analytical tools seen in class and that you are able to formulate a clear thesis and to present arguments in a coherent and logical manner. **No outside sources are necessary**; this is an interpretive essay based on the readings covered in class. If you happen to have read a secondary source, be sure to cite it and include it in your bibliography. The essays will be graded on grammar, clarity of writing, organization of argument, understanding of the material, use of the texts and rigour in the exposition of the thesis.

The essay should include page numbers and bibliography. You can submit your final essay in Word or PDF format. Please name your submitted assignment as follows:
Lastname.Firstname.Assignment2

5. Take-Home Exam (25%) – TBD, formally scheduled

Students will write the exam at home and have a multi-day window in which to submit the exam. The examination office will set the time and date for the exam. The exam will be cumulative and will consist of a set of short answer questions and two long essay questions drawn from the material covered in class. More information, including due date and other instructions, will be posted on Brightspace later in the term.

6. Create a Meme (2% bonus points) – Anytime before Tuesday December 6th

Using humour to express philosophical ideas and problems is a proof that you have understood those ideas and can mobilize them in various, creative ways. At anytime during the term, you can post a meme on the “Create a Meme Forum” and share your creation with the rest of the class to earn a 2% bonus. The memes must be related in some way to the topics/concepts/thinkers covered in the course. The TAs and I will determine the top 5 memes at the end of the term. The authors of the winning memes will win absolutely nothing except public recognition of their exceptional sense of humour.

Summary

Students are required to:

- 1) Complete the readings and read the discussion questions before tutorials;
- 2) Attend the weekly tutorials sessions regularly (10%);
- 3) Watch the interactive weekly lectures and complete lecture activities (20%);
- 4) Submit a critical review of one reading (15%);
- 5) Submit their final essay (30%)
- 6) Complete the take-home exam (25%)

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1: Introduction: What is Classical Political Thought? (Sept 13)

- ◆ Required reading: Syllabus (8 pages)

Week 2: The Politics of Epic Narratives: Homer’s *Odyssey* (Sept 20)

- ◆ Required reading: Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book 9: A Pirate in a Shepherd’s Cave (18 pages)

Week 3: Tragedy, Injustice, Law: Sophocles’ *Antigone* (Sept 27)

- ◆ Required reading: Sophocles, *Antigone* (Selections posted on Brightspace)

Week 4: War and Peace: Thucydides’ *War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians (I)* (Oct 4)

- ◆ Required reading: Thucydides, Book 1, 1- 23; Book II (Pericles’ Funeral Oration, pp. 108-117) (32 pages)

**Week 5:
(Oct 11) Power and Domination: Thucydides (II)**

- ◆ Required reading: Thucydides, *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, Book V (The Melian Dialogue, p. 378-385); Book VI (The Sicilian Expedition, p.391-402) (19 pages)

**Week 6:
(Oct 18) Socrates on Trial: Plato's *Apology* and the Fate of Political Philosophy**

- ◆ Required reading: Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* (Selections posted on Brightspace)
- ◆ Optional: Xenophon, *Socrates' Defence to the Jury*

Week 7 – October 24-28: Fall Break (no class)

**Week 8:
(Nov 1) The Question of Justice: Plato's *Republic* (I)**

- ◆ Required reading: Plato, *The Republic*, Book I (p. 3-34) (31 pages)

**Week 9:
(Nov 8) Imagining *Kallipolis*: Plato's *Republic* (II)**

- ◆ Required reading: *The Republic*, Book IV-V (Selections posted on Brightspace)

**Week 10:
(Nov 15) Philosophy, Politics and Democracy: Plato's *Republic* (III)**

- ◆ Required readings: Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII (Allegory of the Cave 514a-521c) and Book VIII (555b-566d) (19 pages)

**Week 11:
(Nov 22) Ethics, Politics and the Good Life: Aristotle's *Politics* (I)**

- ◆ Required reading: Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book 1 (Chap. 1-2); Book 3 (Chap.1-4, 6-9); Book 4 (Chap. 1-2, 8) (25 pages)

**Week 12:
(Nov 29) Oligarchy and Democracy: Aristotle's *Politics* (II)**

- ◆ Required reading: Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book 5 (Chap. 8-9); Book 6 (Chap. 1-5), Book 7 (Chap. 1-3, 13-15) (33 pages)

**Week 13:
(Dec 6) Final Review**

- ◆ No required reading

Take-Home Exam: December (TBD)

Key Dates: Summary

Date	Topic	Assignment
Tuesday, September 13	What is Classical Political Thought?	
Tuesday, September 20	Homer	
Tuesday, September 27	Sophocles	
Friday, September 30		Critical Review due
Tuesday, October 4	Thucydides (I)	
Tuesday, October 11	Thucydides (II)	
Tuesday, October 17	Plato's Apology	Final Essay topics posted
Tuesday, October 24-28	Fall Break	
Tuesday, November 1	Plato's Republic (I)	
Tuesday, November 8	Plato's Republic (II)	
Tuesday, November 15	Plato's Republic (III)	
Tuesday, November 22	Aristotle (I)	
Friday, November 25		Final Essay due
Tuesday, November 29	Aristotle (II)	
Tuesday, December 6	Final Review	Create A Meme – Last day for submission
December – Exam Period		Take-home exam

Course Policies

Copyright: Lectures and course materials (including all PowerPoint presentations, videos, and similar materials) are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial purposes without my express written consent.

Citations and Bibliography

All written assignments should include a full list of sources used and avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity. For examples of what constitutes plagiarism and what could be the possible sanctions, consult this page on academic integrity: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

You must indicate all references to the texts in footnotes or with in-text references. You are free to choose the style of citation with which you are most comfortable (APA, Chicago, etc.), as long as it is consistent throughout your assignment. For more details on how to cite properly, please consult the MacOdrum Library website: <https://library.carleton.ca/help/citing-your-sources>

All assignments submitted should be double-spaced, formatted in 12-point font and should include page numbers.

Late Essays & Extensions

If you are ill or have any other legitimate reason for not being able to complete coursework or submit your assignments on time, **please advise me as soon as possible (preferably before the deadline)**. If an extenuating circumstance prevents a student from submitting an assignment on time, they should be prepared to provide proper documentation concerning the situation. Accommodations can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

There is an increased risk of depression and anxiety among students during the pandemic, so please make sure to seek help if you are experiencing mental health-related problems. Carleton offers a broad range of resources: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Please note that assignments and exams in other courses **are not sufficient grounds** for an extension. As you dispose of several weeks to complete the assignments, it is your responsibility to start early in the term.

Late assignments will be penalized at the **rate of 4% of the student's assignment grade** per day. An assignment is considered one day late if it is submitted to Brightspace any time up to 23:59 hours after the deadline. Assignments that have **not been submitted seven (7) days** after the deadline will not be accepted.

Grade Appeal

Any suspicion of error on the part of the TAs or the instructor should be brought up immediately to be corrected. You are more than welcome to drop by during office hours to discuss your assignment. If you are concerned that your assignment was not assessed fairly, you can request a review by submitting a **one-page justification** to your TA explaining the reasons why the assignment should be reviewed. You should send the justification along with the original essay by email to your TA **no later than one (1) week** after receiving your grade. A request for review can involve the raising or lowering of a grade upon further examination.

Appendix

Covid-19 Information

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf.

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, please visit carleton.ca/pmc.

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <http://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Plagiarism

Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

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.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.