

PSCI 2301 A
History of Political Thought I
Wednesday, 12:35 – 2:25
Confirm Location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Said Yaqub Ibrahim
Office: B642, Loeb Building
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00–4:00 or by appointment.
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Course Description and Format

This course provides an in-depth introduction to foundational texts in political theory, emphasizing the works of key Ancient Greek philosophers and historians. Through close study of Thucydides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle, students will explore ancient perspectives on political life, leadership, and the enduring challenges posed by political division. A primary focus of the course is the phenomenon commonly referred to today as political polarization. Ancient Greek authors analyzed how citizens, often driven by fear and frustration, turned to leaders who manipulated public sentiment for personal or political gain. By critically examining these classical responses, students will develop a deeper understanding of recurrent patterns in political behavior and the complexities of contemporary political dynamics.

The course's lectures and tutorials aim to:

- Provide a solid foundation in Ancient Greek political thought, preparing students for advanced studies in political theory.
- Offer conceptual frameworks to interpret modern political challenges through the insights of classical philosophy.
- Equip students with analytical tools to identify and critically evaluate manipulative political strategies and rhetoric.

This is an **in-person course** requiring students' regular attendance and active participation in both lectures and tutorials.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the central concepts and themes in ancient political thought.
- Explain the foundational principles that underpin the development of political theory.
- Analyze diverse approaches to collective reasoning, governance, and decision-making.
- Assess the causes, manifestations, and dynamics of political divisions from a comparative and historical perspective.
- Interpret Ancient Greek political ideas and critically evaluate their relevance to contemporary political debates.

Required Texts

The following texts are available free of charge in the Perseus Digital Library and other reputable open-access digital repositories also available in Ares:

- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*
- Sophocles, *Antigone*
- Aristophanes, *Clouds*
- Plato, *Apology*
- Plato, *Republic*
- Aristotle, *Politics*

Optional Reading

- James S. Romm, *Plato and the Tyrant: The Fall of Greece's Greatest Dynasty and the Making of a Philosophic Masterpiece* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2025), \$39 CAD. Students can purchase it online and also a copy is available as a 4-hour loan at MacOdrum Library.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Tutorial Participation (20%)

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all tutorial sessions, which will be led by the Teaching Assistants. Evaluation will be based on both the *quality* and *consistency* of participation, including engagement with discussion topics and contributions to group dialogue.

2. Tutorial Presentation (10%)

Each student will deliver an individual presentation in their assigned tutorial session. More than one student may present during a single tutorial. The presentation should be approximately five minutes in length and should focus on a particular element of that week's assigned reading that the student found especially engaging or thought-provoking. The student must explain why they found it significant and pose one discussion question for the class that emerged from their reading.

3. Assignment 1: Sophocles' *Antigone* Debate (10%)

Students should submit a 2–3-page reflection paper (double-spaced, 12-point font) responding to themes and issues discussed in the *Antigone* debate. Detailed guidelines will be posted on Brightspace one week prior to the due date: **Due October 8.**

4. Assignment 2: Socrates Debate (10%)

Students should submit a 2–3-page reflection paper (double-spaced, 12-point font) responding to themes and issues discussed in the Socrates debate. Detailed guidelines will be posted on Brightspace page one week prior to the due date: **Due October 22.**

5. Term Paper: Plato's *Republic* (25%)

Students will write a 10-page paper (double-spaced, 12-point font) addressing the question: *Why is Plato's Republic still important?* Detailed instructions outlining the

purpose, structure, and expectations for the paper will be posted on Brightspace. **Due December 3.**

6. Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will be conducted online and will require students to answer two essay questions comparing the political and philosophical thought of Plato and Aristotle. The exam is open book, and detailed instructions will be discussed during the final class and posted on Brightspace.

Late Submission Policy

Assignments must be submitted online on Brightspace. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Late submissions will be penalized daily (2% of the overall grade for the assignment per day). Requests for extensions must be submitted prior to the assignment due date and arranged directly with the Teaching Assistant.

Statement on use of AI

Unless explicitly authorized by the instructor or teaching assistants, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce any assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, images, summaries, videos, etc.) constitutes a violation of Carleton University's academic integrity standards.

Course schedule

Week 1 (September 3): Introduction

Week 2 (September 10): Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Book 3.

Week 3 (September 17): Sophocles, *Antigone*

Week 4 (September 24): Aristophanes, *Clouds*

Week 5 (October 1): Plato, *Apology*

Week 6 (October 8): Plato, *Republic*. Book 1

Week 7 (October 15): Plato, *Republic* Book 2

Week 8 (October 22): Fall Break

Week 9 (October 29): Plato, *Republic* Book 6

Week 10 (November 5): Plato, *Republic* Book 7

Week 11 (November 12): Aristotle, *Politics* Book 1

Week 12 (November 19): Aristotle, *Politics* Book 2

Week 13 (November 26): Aristotle, *Politics Book 3*

Week 14 (December 3): Aristotle, *Politics Book 4*. Discussion on the purpose of reading the classics and final exam instructions.

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

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:

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

Mental Health and Wellbeing:

<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):

<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389,

<https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>

ood2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic:

<https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances:

Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University.

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more

information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: 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 [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its 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: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

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 will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me 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.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within **three working days** to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

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). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's official withdrawal dates

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's Official Exam Period (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#).

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

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required

to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

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:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, 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 that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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 can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777) B640 Loeb
Registrar's Office (3500) 300 Tory
Centre for Student Academic Success (3822) 4th floor Library
Academic Advising Centre (7850) 302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608) 501 Nideyinàn
Career Services (6611) 401 Tory