

PSCI 2300B
History of Political Thought
Fridays 8:35am - 10:25pm
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:30 to 12:30, or by appointment

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 fall 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)*Updated September 10th 2012

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

Plato, **Gorgias**

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

Aristotle, **Nicomachean Ethics**

Augustine, **Free Choice of the Will**

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

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:

20% Tutorial Participation

15% Mid-Term Test (October 12) short-answer questions

25% Short Essay 5-7 pages (due November 16) Topics distributed on September 21

40% Exam (Scheduled by Registrar)

NOTE: The Mid-term test will ONLY be conducted on October 12, with the exception of students who have become ill, verified by a doctor's note. Essays are to be submitted in class. Grades are non-negotiable, other than through a formal appeal. All components of the course must be completed in order to receive a passing grade.

SCHEDULE:

Fall Term:

September 7: Greek Polis and Socrates

September 14: Plato, Republic 1-3

September 21: Plato, Republic 4-6

September 28: Plato, Republic 7-10

October 5: University day, classes suspended

October 12: Test in First Half of Class/Aristotle, Ethics (from Coursepack) in Second Half of Class

October 19: Book I Politics I-III

October 26: Aristotle, Politics IV - VI

November 2: Aristotle, Politics VII-VIII

November 9: Augustine, City of God (from coursepack)

November 16: Book 1, On Christian Doctrine, (from coursepack) – short essay due.

November 23: St. Thomas Aquinas

November 30: Greeks and Latins/Athens and Rome: A Dialogue

Academic Accommodations

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, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** 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*). 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*).

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.

Grading: Assignments and exams will be graded with a percentage grade. To convert this to a letter grade or to the university 12-point system, please refer to the following table.

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

Grades: Final grades are derived from the completion of course assignments. Failure to write the final exam will result in the grade ABS. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

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.

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.