

**POL 485 H 1 (S)/POL 2027 H 1 (S): Plato's *Laws*
Spring Semester, 2010**

Professor: Ryan K. Balot
Department of Political Science
Sidney Smith Hall, Rm. 3018
Ryan.Balot@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-4:00pm

Description

We will undertake an intensive study of Plato's last and longest dialogue, the *Laws*. In addition to reading this work in entirety (at least in English; those with Greek should prepare as much of the text as possible in the original), we will compare and contrast Plato's thinking in the *Laws* with the philosophical discussions of other, primarily late, Platonic and pseudo-Platonic dialogues. Our goal, in the first instance, is to understand Plato's examination of the nature of law and the associated problems of political foundation and stability. This will require us to explore Plato's reflections on topics such as education, pleasure, the mixed constitution, the construction of legislative codes, punishment, theology, and the best city.

Texts

Pangle, T. (tr.). 1980. *The Laws of Plato*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stalley, R.F. 1983. *An Introduction to Plato's Laws*. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Strauss, L. 1975. *The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

These books are available at the Bob Miller Book Room, 180 Bloor St. West.

Format, Requirements, and Marking Scheme

Our in-depth study of the *Laws* will be conducted as a seminar in which the instructor will lecture and initiate discussion and in which students will be required to participate actively. Active participation in class will require considerable time and effort in preparing for class. You should plan to read the assigned Platonic texts very carefully, taking notes as you read, marking your texts, and returning again and again to difficult or salient passages. You should also plan to do all of the assigned secondary reading (in the schedule below, "consult" means that you should read the work if at all possible). Because the reading and the in-class sessions will be demanding, it is important that you sign up only after realistically assessing whether your schedule this semester will permit you to do the required work.

Class participation will count for 15% of the final mark. In addition to speaking up during our discussions, each student (including auditors) will be required to present one substantial question to the class over the course of the term. We will discuss each question during the final half-hour of our seminars. The essay requirements are as follows: for undergraduates, the first essay of 1500 words will be due on February 19th by noon (35% of the final mark); a second essay of 4000 words will be due on April 5th by noon (50% of the final mark). Graduate students will have the option of writing two essays according to the undergraduate scheme or writing a single essay of

6000 words (worth 85% of the final mark) due on April 5th by noon. The papers should be sent to me at Ryan.Balot@utoronto.ca. I will suggest paper topics two weeks before the deadlines. If you would like to work up your own topics, then you should discuss these with me at least two weeks before the deadline. In addition to making an original and well-structured argument, each paper must also (1) refer to at least two Platonic dialogues other than the *Laws* and (2) engage seriously and substantively with the secondary literature. Undergraduates are required to cite at least four secondary sources, two of which must be books, for the first paper; and, for the second paper, undergraduates will be required to cite at least seven secondary sources, three of which must be books. Graduate students will have the same requirements if they write two papers; if they write a single final paper, however, then they will need to engage with eleven secondary sources, five of which must be books.

The deadlines are firm. No extensions will be granted except in dire cases. Seriously. I will penalize tardiness by subtracting two points per day of lateness. Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before turning them in to me. These should be kept at least until the marked assignments have been returned.

You should also familiarize yourself with the university's policy on plagiarism. See in particular <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>. In short, to comply with the university's code regarding academic honesty, you must write your papers specifically for this class; you should not borrow material from another class; and you should not use another person's words or ideas without attribution, whether those words or ideas come from conversations, the internet, or printed materials. If you are in doubt about whether you are committing plagiarism, feel free to ask me. A good rule of thumb is that if you are wondering whether you might be committing plagiarism, you should cite a source.

Translations and the Greek Reading Group

Especially if you do not have a working knowledge of Greek, you should plan to consult *both* the Pangle and the Saunders (in the Penguin or in J.M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997]) translations, in order, hopefully, to avoid being misled by the interpretations that are inevitably imposed on ancient texts by their modern translators. Translation of this dialogue is itself a hotly contested issue; for reflections on the question of translating the *Laws*, consult the introduction to the Pangle translation and pp.10-12 of R.F. Stalley, *An Introduction to Plato's Laws* (at the Bob Miller Book Room).

Schedule

Even though we will be discussing particular books of the *Laws* during particular meetings, it is highly recommended that you read the entire dialogue well before the end of term. You are also strongly encouraged to read Plato's *Statesman* in the Cooper edition (in entirety, but with special attention to 257a-263a, 268c-279c, 286e-287d, 291a-311c), along with the pseudo-Platonic *Minos* either in the Cooper edition or in T.L. Pangle (ed.), *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987], or in both. Readings that are drawn from secondary literature other than Pangle and Stalley or the internet will be available on reserve at Robarts Library (see the bibliography below). In particular, we will engage with Bobonich regularly, even though I have not ordered the book for this course, because it is out of print.

N.B.: The following schedule is only a rough approximation. Our progress in each seminar will determine the most relevant sections for subsequent seminars.

January 7: NO CLASS: Instructor away. Once we meet on January 14th, we will find a time to make up this class.

January 14: Introduction: Reading Platonic Dialogues; *Laws I*

Pangle, "Interpretive Essay," 375-404

Stalley, 1-44

Strauss, 3-21 (N.B.: Strauss' volume dedicates one chapter apiece to each book of the dialogue; please follow Strauss' discussion as we move through the text, even though I will not explicitly assign Strauss on a chapter-by-chapter basis.)

Consult: Bobonich, 89-97, 119-136

January 21: Plato, *Laws II-IV*.707d

Pangle, 404-423

Stalley, 45-79

Consult: Bobonich, 145-53, 209-215, 258-267

January 28: Plato, *Laws IV*.707d-V.734e

Pangle, 423-449

Stalley, 80-122

Consult: Bobonich, 97-119

February 4: Plato, *Laws IV*.707d-V.734e (again)

Pangle, 449-457

Stalley, 123-33

D. Cohen, "Law, Autonomy, and Community in Plato's *Laws*," *Classical*

Philology 88 (1993) 301-317, available at <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0009-837X%28199310%2988%3A4%3C301%3ALAAPCI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2> (Campus only)

Consult: Bobonich, 288-295, 343-350

February 11: Plato, *Laws V*.735a-VII

Pangle, 457-496

Consult: Bobonich, 374-391

February 18: **Reading Week; no class** [In addition to reading ahead for the course, this would be a good time to struggle through Plato's *Timaeus* if you have not already read it.]

February 25: Plato, *Laws VIII*

R. Clark, "Platonic Love in a Colorado Courtroom: Martha Nussbaum, John

Finnis and Plato's *Laws* in *Evans v. Romer*," *Yale Journal of Law and the*

Humanities 12.1; reprinted in Richard O. Brooks, ed., *Plato and Modern Law*

(Ashgate 2007), available at <http://www.randallclark.org/publicat/2000a.pdf>

March 4: Plato, *Laws IX*

Pangle, 496-510

Stalley, 137-65

T.J. Saunders, *Plato's Penal Code*, 217-57

March 11: Plato, *Laws X*

T.L. Pangle, "The Political Psychology of Religion in Plato's *Laws*" *APSR* 70.4

(1976) 1059-1077 available at

<http://www.jstor.org/view/00030554/di960983/96p01666/0> (Campus only)

Stalley, 166-78

E.C. Halper, "Soul, Soul's Motions, and Virtue," in Scolnicov and Brisson, 257-267

March 18: Plato, *Laws* XI-XII

G. Klosko, "The Nocturnal Council in Plato's *Laws*," *Political Studies* 36 (1988)

74-88, also available at <http://people.virginia.edu/~gk/publications.html/nc.pdf>

Stalley, 179-85

Consult: Bobonich, 391-408

March 25: Plato (as needed)

Consult: Bobonich, 419-479

April 1 [time permitting]: Subsequent reflection on Plato's *Laws*: the Platonic school, Aristotle [Plato], *Epinomis*

J. Dillon, "Philip of Opus and the Theology of Plato's *Laws*" in Scolnicov and Brisson, 304-311

Aristotle, *Politics* II.6

Peter Simpson, "Plato's *Laws* in the hands of Aristotle," in Scolnicov and Brisson, 298-303

On Reserve at Robarts Library

(other copies may be available in the stacks or in the college libraries)

Allen, D. 2000. *The World of Prometheus*. Princeton. KL4395 .A43 2000X

Benardete, S. 2000. *Plato's Laws: The Discovery of Being*. Chicago. B398 .O5 B46 2000X

Bobonich, C. 2002. *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*. Clarendon Press. B398 .E8 B63 2002

Cooper, J. 1999. *Reason and Emotion*. Princeton University Press. BJ161 .C66 1999X

Hobbs, A. 2000. *Plato and the Hero*. Cambridge. B398 .C77 H63 2000

Irwin, T. 1995. *Plato's Ethics*. Oxford University Press. B398 .E8 I78 1995X

Klosko, G. 1986. *The Development of Plato's Political Theory*. Methuen. JC71 .P62 K56 1986

Lisi, F. (ed.) 2001. *Plato's Laws and its Historical Significance*. Academia Verlag.

Morrow, G. 1960. *Plato's Cretan City*. Princeton University Press. JC71 .P6 M6

Rowe, C.J. and Schofield, M. (eds.) 2000. *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*. Cambridge University Press. JC51 .C294 2000

Saunders, T. 1991. *Plato's Penal Code*. Oxford University Press. HV8523 .S28 1991

Schofield, M. 2006. *Plato*. Oxford. JC71 .P62 S36 2006 1

Scolnicov, S. and Luc Brisson (eds.). 2003. *Plato's Laws: From Theory into Practice*. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag.

Stalley, R.F. 1983. *An Introduction to Plato's Laws*. Hackett. JC71 .P264 S78 1983

Strauss, L. *The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws*. Chicago. 1975. JC71 .P264 S86