

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science
2015-16
POL 355Y1 (Y)
Topics in Classical Political Thought
(Virtue & Politics)

Instructor: Laura Rabinowitz
E-mail: laura.rabinowitz@utoronto.ca
Lecture: Wednesday, 4-6
Location: Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2108
Office: Sidney Smith Hall, Room 3118
Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:30-3:30

Course Description:

This course will be guided by two questions: What is virtue or human excellence? What is the relationship between virtue and politics? We will read a range of classical texts, including philosophy, comedy, and tragedy. After opening with Sophocles' *Antigone*, our study of virtue will turn to and remain anchored in Thucydides' great narrative, *The Peloponnesian War*—a text that offers two rival visions of virtue, those associated with the war's principal antagonists, Sparta and Athens. Through our study of these works of classical thought, we will explore such perennial questions as: What are the virtues of political leaders and citizens? What are the virtues of wisdom, moderation, courage, and justice? Are these virtues in harmony or in tension with one another? Is virtue grounded in nature or merely in conventions? What is the relationship between virtue and happiness?

Required Texts (Please always bring texts for the day's readings with you to class.):

Course Texts are available at Bob Miller Bookroom

- Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*, trans. Peter J. Ahrensdorf & Thomas L. Pangle, Cornell University Press. ISBN# 0801478715
- Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* in *The Landmark Thucydides*, Simon & Schuster, Robert B. Strassler, ed. ISBN# 0684827905

Second Semester Texts TBA

Assignments:

- 15% Participation
- 15% Essay 1 (due October 28th)
- 20% 1st Term Test (in-class on December 2nd)
- 20% Essay 2 (due March 9th)
- 30% Final Exam (TBA)

Participation:

In Class: Your participation is an essential feature of this course. Attendance is expected. A significant amount of time each class session will be devoted to discussion. Participation will also come in the form of *short* written reflections on the readings, to be completed either during or prior to class. To make the most of your time in class, it is important that you have done the reading carefully and are ready and willing to contribute. Your participation grade will reflect both the quantity and, more important, the quality of your participation throughout the year. Details on how participation is evaluated will be discussed during our first class meeting.

Online: Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to continue our in-class discussions outside of class through an online forum. Each student will be responsible for posting 1 set of questions/reflections and 2 short responses each term (less than 1 page). A sign up sheet for posting questions will be distributed early in the semester. Responses may be made to any post that interests you, but responses should be distributed evenly over the course of the semester. At least 1 response should be written before, and 1 after, the essay due dates each semester.

Questions are to be written for your classmates during your assigned week and posted on Blackboard **by 4 p.m. on Sunday**; responses may be written at any time, but to count toward the minimum requirement should be posted **by 4 p.m. Tuesday**.

All students should follow the Blackboard thread and feel free to weigh in on any given exchange. Details, including instructions for how to post on Blackboard, will be discussed and a sign-up sheet distributed early in the semester.

Essays:

Essay topics will be distributed at least two weeks in advance of the essay due date (additional topics on new readings may be offered closer to the due date). You may also, in consultation with me, propose your own topics. Please be sure your topic has been approved before beginning your essay.

These essays are a chance for you to delve deeper into course material and to advance your writing ability. On your first essay, I will identify certain aspects of your writing that could be improved. Your second essay will be evaluated in part on the extent to which you have developed these elements of your writing. I am happy to work with you on your writing throughout the year. Additional details regarding my grading expectations will be provided prior to the first essay assignment.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>

In addition to submitting your essay electronically, please submit a **hard-copy** of your essay to me in class on the day that it is due.

Late essays come at the cost of **2 initial points, and then 1 point for every additional calendar day**. Late papers may not be submitted past the point at which your classmates' essays have been returned.

1st Term Test and 2nd Term Final Exam:

The 1st term test will be in class test on December 2nd. You will be given possible essay questions and/or themes in advance. The final exam, which will take place during the exam period, is of a similar format and will be cumulative.

Details on how the test and exam are evaluated will be provided prior to the 1st term test.

Other Policies:

Office Hours: You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of office hours. Sign-up sheets will be distributed at the start of each semester to schedule and ensure at least one in-person meeting. I am more than happy to discuss and help with any aspect of the course. If you have a conflict with scheduled office hours, feel free to schedule an appointment.

Technology policy: Please keep all gadgets turned off and tucked away while in class. Since they are not conducive to an atmosphere of conversation and are distracting both to their own users and to others, use of laptops is strongly discouraged.

Email Policy: Please put POL355Y1Y in the subject line of all emails. Please save substantive questions about course material for office hours.

Make-up Policy: Students are expected to take the midterm and final on the scheduled dates. Exceptions will be made only under extreme circumstances (e.g. serious medical illness accompanied by a physician's note.)

Essays: Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before handing them in. Essays should be kept until the marked essays have been returned to you and the final grades are posted on ROSI.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Changes may be made to the following schedule to accommodate class discussion and interest.

The specific pages of reading assignments (or any adjustments to those listed below) will be announced in-class or by email. Please note in particular that in the case of Thucydides you will often only be reading selections—exact pages will be announced in class.

In addition to the readings listed below I may occasionally provide short supplementary readings. These additional readings will be made available to you either through handouts or Blackboard.

Fall Semester

Week/Date	Topics/Readings	Assignments/Evaluations
1: Sep 16	Introduction	
2: Sep 23	Antigone (all)	
3: Sep 30	Antigone (continued)	
4: Oct 7	Thucydides (Book I, selections)	
5: Oct 14	Thucydides (Books I-II, selections)	
6: Oct 21	Thucydides (Book II, selections)	
7: Oct 28	Thucydides (Book III, selections)	1 st Essay Due
8: Nov 4	Thucydides (Book III, selections)	
9: Nov 11	Thucydides (Book IV, selections)	
10: Nov 18	Thucydides (Book V, selections)	
11: Nov 25	Thucydides (Book VI-end, selections)	
12: Dec 2	No new reading	In-Class Test

Spring Semester TBA