Classical Political Philosophy (4331)
Spring 2018

Department of Political Science and Philosophy

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Class Times and Room: Rassman 111, Thursday, 2:00-4:50


Additional supplemental texts will be made available on the Classical Political Philosophy website on Blackboard.

Course Description
The political thought of classical Greece and Rome continues to provide the so-called ‘West’ with a vision of its own self-image. But what is this image an image of? What kind of place is the ‘West’ supposed to be? What does it mean to be a ‘Westerner?’ In this semester long course students will engage in a close reading of the founding texts of the Western political tradition; the texts of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli and others. The issues that concerned the Greeks and Romans are issues which still concern political thought today; what is tyranny? What is democracy? What is justice? Who should be a citizen? What does it mean to live a good life? Who should have power, and how much power should they have? What does it mean to be free? A close reading of the texts is suggestive of many problems that we see today regarding rights, duties, and obligations, and problems of populism.

The Class
This class is a seminar-style class, i.e. close readings of the texts, then discussion on the understanding and meaning of these texts, and so class participation is vital. I will spend a few minutes at the beginning of the class introducing the philosophers and the themes of the class and then I will open the class up for discussion. It is obviously very important that all students do their reading assignments BEFORE coming to class and are prepared to contribute.

Class Attendance Policy
Class attendance at ASU is mandatory and a class roll will be taken twice. If you miss three consecutive classes the ASU registrar will be informed. If you miss more than five classes during the semester you may receive a fail for the course overall (depending on the circumstances). The only legitimate reasons for missing classes or leaving classes early are sickness or medical appointments, or a domestic emergency (i.e. ‘car trouble’ is not a domestic emergency). Exceptions to this will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Class Preparation
Bring your textbook to class
Bring a notebook and pencil to class
Do your reading assignment before class
Be prepared to answer questions
If it helps, record the class

Class Prohibitions (*unless I am presented with an accommodation)
NO SLEEPING (if you are too tired to stay awake in class you
probably shouldn’t be in class)
NO PHONES
NO
EARBUDS
NO DIPPING
NO VAPING
*NO
LAPTOPS NO
HOT FOOD
PLEASE DON’T PASS MESSAGES
DO NOT LEAVE CLASS AFTER SIGNING IN WITHOUT PERMISSION
DO NOT ENGAGE IN DISTRACTING BEHAVIOUR

Multiple Choice Tests
You will take TWO multiple choice tests. These tests will be on the subject matter of the previous three
or four weeks of class, these are not cumulative. Each test is usually 30 multiple choice and true/false
questions, and you will have 30 mins to take the test. This test is NOT designed to be open book. It is
assumed that you have completed the reading assignments and attended class before taking the test. The
test will be taken in class with a scantron sheet.

Class Contributions
Almost 25% of the grade for this class will be awarded for class contributions: quality is more important
than quantity.

Final In-class Blue Book Exam
25% of your final grade will be based upon the final exam. The final class exam is NOT open book. A
detailed rubric of how these papers are assessed is posted on Blackboard. You will be expected to write
an answer of about 1000-1200 words (roughly four or five sides of the Blue Book). You will be given an
exam paper with several optional questions based upon the last weeks of the course. In my experience
the main reason why students under-perform with regard to finals is that they do not engage with course
material. Papers often tend towards stream of consciousness without reference to what has been studied.
It is expected in a (4000 level) philosophy class that you have learned some of the philosophers names,
and can accurately point to what ideas are associated with these philosophers and how to deploy these
ideas in a coherent fashion. Higher grades will be awarded to those who can do some of this.

Assessment
2 Multiple Choice Quizzes 25%
Class Participation Grade 25%
Final Bluebook In class Paper 25%

Grading Scale
A 90% and over Outstanding
B 80% Very good
C 70% Satisfactory
D 60% Minimum required
F less than 60%
Students who receive an F on any assignment should come to see me during my office hours to discuss what might have gone wrong and what can be done to improve the situation.

Outline of Course

The Angelo State University Honor Code
Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook. In other words, when you submit your work, you claim that the work is yours. If someone else wrote it for you or you got it from someone else (internet, other student’s class…), then you are not the author and thus will get a zero for that assignment. Any idea that is not yours should be properly referenced.

Disabilities
Persons who require accommodations should contact the Student Life Office. I am extremely sympathetic to such accommodations and I am happy to work with individual students to meet any particular learning need. Once a letter of accommodations has been granted students are encouraged to let me know early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Assessment
ASU Student Learning Objectives
(Reporting anonymous student data back to Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, SACS, ASU’s accreditation body)

Critical Thinking Skills (CT)
CT1. Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.
CT2. Develop and demonstrate a logical position (i.e. perspective, thesis, hypothesis) that acknowledges ambiguities or contradictions.

Communication Skills (CS)
CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication. CS2. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective oral communication.

Social Responsibility (SR)
SR1. Demonstrate intercultural competence.
SR2. Demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.
SR3. Demonstrate the ability to engage effectively in the campus, regional, national or global communities.

Personal Responsibility (PR)
PR1. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.
ASU Mission Statement
Angelo State University, a member of the Texas Tech University System, delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines. In a learning-centered environment distinguished by its integration of teaching, research, creative endeavor, service, and co-curricular experiences, ASU prepares students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers.

The Course

(Student should note that this is a rough estimate of what we will cover and that this plan depends entirely upon the reading and comprehension of the class. Sometimes the class moves faster or slower than expected. Also I reserve the right to change the readings from time to time).

Week 1
Glassford, Introduction to Political Philosophy: Text and Context. Hiero: Tyrannicus (both PDF on Blackboard)

Week 2
Begin Socrates
Euthyphro
Apology
Crito

Week 4
Begin Plato & The Republic

Week 5
The Republic

First Multiple Choice Quiz

Week 6
Begin Aristotle & Nicomachean Ethics
The Politics

Week 7
The Politics

Week 8
Begin Cicero & Roman Stoicism, Seneca

Week 9
Begin Mediaeval Political thought
Augustine & the City of God
Week 10
Thomism & the *Summa Theologica*

Week 11
Statesmanship

Week 12
Machiavelli & *The Prince*

Second Multiple Choice Quiz

Week 13
Machiavelli, *The Discourses*

Week 14
Machiavelli, *The Discourses*

Week 15
Dead Week

Week 16

Final In-Class Bluebook Paper:
Tuesday, May 8, 1:00-3:00