

## **Introduction to Political Thinking**

PS 115

Olin 202

T/TH 10:30-11:50

Spring 2010

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### **Introduction to Political Thinking**

From Plato to Nietzsche, great thinkers in the Western tradition have asked about the nature and practice of political action. Thinking about politics is, knowingly or not, conducted against the background of this shared tradition. This is no less true of political thought that aims to break away from “the classics” than of political thought that finds in them a constant resource for both critical and constructive thinking. This course explores fundamental questions of politics through a core body of writings. At its center (about 7 weeks of a 14 week semester) will be a sustained and close reading of Plato’s *Republic*. Thinking with Plato and also with complementary texts, we reflect upon key political concepts such as justice, democracy, authority, and “the political.” We also explore such enduring questions as the relationship between the state and the individual; the conditions for peaceful political order; and the connection between morality and politics. This course is required for all political studies majors.

#### Reading and Preparation

This class is an introduction to political thought. The texts will be difficult, and we will proceed slowly. You are required and expected to attend every class meeting and to be prepared. Reading the texts is only the bare minimum preparation, and is, on its own, not sufficient. While I will lecture for part of every class, you are expected to ask questions and participate in discussions. The format requires that you not only read, but also engage with these texts *before* you come to class.

### Participation

You are expected to engage actively in the readings and the class discussions. You will be evaluated on your classroom participation.

### Lateness

As a matter of respect for your fellow students, you are to arrive on time.

### Assignments

There will be two exams. One on March 11th. The second will be a take home exam on, May 18th.

You will also be expected to write a series of approximately 4 short papers, usually between 1-3 pages.

Finally, every class member is required to take responsibility for preparing and presenting the reading for two classes. You will work with one other person and meet before class to discuss the assigned material. You will then, individually, write a short expository essay (no more than 400 words) stating the main argument of the reading. This essay is to be handed in at the end of class and will be graded. On the days you are “on call,” you will be expected to contribute to the class discussion.

### Books

Please buy and read the following books in the specified edition.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist*  
(Penguin)

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates* (Penguin)

Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Allan Bloom (Basic Books)

Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* (Dover or any edition)

Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* (Hackett)

J. J. Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality* (Penguin or any edition)

### Greek

You are to familiarize yourself with the Greek alphabet. There is a sheet of the Greek alphabet available for you on Reserve Web.

**I. Class One**  
**Introduction. What is Political Philosophy?**

**II. Weeks One and Two:**  
**The Athenian Polis and the Concord Woods**  
Sophocles: Ode to Man (Reserve Web)  
Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*.

Robert Richardson, Henry David Thoreau: The Life of the Mind.  
William Paley, "Duty of Submission to Civil Government." In *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*.

**III. Weeks Three and Four**  
**The Problem of Socrates**

Plato's *The Apology*  
Plato's, *The Crito*  
Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Problem of Socrates"

Additional reading:  
Aristophanes, *The Clouds*.

Paideia, vol. 2, chapter 2, by Werner Jaeger.  
"Socrates the Teacher" in the book *Paideia*, by Werner Jaeger. It is in Volume 2.

Leo Strauss, "On Plato's Apology of Socrates and Crito." In "Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy" by Leo Strauss

Shinro Kato, "The Apology: The Beginning of Plato's Own Philosophy".

Hannah Arendt, "Socrates," *The Promise of Politics*.  
[Michael Zuckert](#), Rationalism & Political Responsibility: Just Speech & Just Deed in the "Clouds" & the "Apology" of Socrates  
Socrates in Plato and Aristophanes: In Memory of Ludwig Edelstein (1902-1965)

[Harry Neumann](#)  
*The American Journal of Philology* > Vol. 90, No. 2 (Apr., 1969), pp. 201-214

IV. **Weeks Five through Twelve:  
Politics, Thinking, and Paideia**  
*Plato's Republic*

Garland, Robert, **The Piraeus : from the fifth to the first century B.C.** 1987

**Rhetoric and the Ring: Herodotus and Plato on the Story of Gyges as a Politically Expendient Tale**

Gabriel Danzig

*Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Oct., 2008), pp. 169-192  
John Kayser's "Prologue to the Study of Justice: Republic".

Mary P. Nichols , *Glaucon's Adaptation of the Story of Gyges & Its Implications for Plato's Political Teaching* , *Polity* > Vol. 17, No. 1 (Autumn, 1984), pp. 30-39

Christopher Dustin and Denise Schaeffer, **Looks Matter: Beholding Justice in the "Republic"** *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Summer, 2006), pp. 449-473

Lawrence W. Beals , *On Appearing Just and Being Unjust* . *The Journal of Philosophy* > Vol. 49, No. 19 (Sep., 1952), pp. 607-614

Stable URL: [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-362X%2819520911%2949%3A19%3C607%3A0AJABU%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4)

[362X%2819520911%2949%3A19%3C607%3A0AJABU%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-362X%2819520911%2949%3A19%3C607%3A0AJABU%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4)

**Patrick Coby, On Warriors and Artisans: The Case for Moral Virtue in Plato's Republic.**

<http://www.jstor.org/pss/3234454>

Plato's "Republic" and Feminism

Author(s): Julia Annas

Source: *Philosophy*, Vol. 51, No. 197 (Jul., 1976), pp. 307-321

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3749607>

Plato's Feminism

Harry Lesser

Source: *Philosophy*, Vol. 54, No. 207 (Jan., 1979), pp. 113-117

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3750199>

Dobbs, Darrell, *Choosing Justice*.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2944702?&Search=yes&term=music&term=politics&term=socrates&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dsocrates%2BAND%2Bpolitics%2Bof%2Bmusic%26gw%3Djtx%26prq%3Dsocrates%2BAND%2Bpolitics%2Bof%2Bmusci%26Search%3DSearch%26hp%3D25%26wc%3Don&item=5&ttl=2493&returnArticleService=showArticle>

Socrates and the Politics of Music, by C.P. Long in Polis, V. 24 2007. pg. 70-91.

Jill Frank, Wages of War.

<http://ptx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/35/4/443>

here is an article. It concerns the dividing line at the end of book 6. I want you to do three things.

- 1) give a short account of the divided line in Plato's text.
- 2) Outline the different interpretations of Ekasia that the article offers.
- 3) Present the argument of the article regarding Ekasia.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0073-0688%281933%2944%3C193%3ATMOEIT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q>

V. **Week Thirteen**

**Political Science: Materialism and Idealism**

Karl Marx: *On the Jewish Question* (Reserve Web)

Jean Jacques Rousseau: *Discourse on Inequality*

VI. **Week Fourteen:**

**The Critique of Political Science**

Max Weber: Politics as a Vocation