

Political Science 340
Dr. Charles Hersch
Spring 2012
MWF 9:45-10:50/MC 306B
Office Hours (1740 RT): MW 12:30-1:30 and by app't

FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

The following books are required:

Plato, THE TRIALS OF SOCRATES (Hackett)
Thucydides, ON JUSTICE, POWER, AND HUMAN NATURE (Hackett)
Plato, REPUBLIC, trans. Reeve (Hackett, 2004)
Aristotle, POLITICS trans. Barker-Stalley (Oxford)
Aristotle, NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS, trans. Thomson (Penguin)
Cicero, THE REPUBLIC/THE LAWS, (Oxford)
Cicero, ON OBLIGATIONS (Oxford)
Augustine, CITY OF GOD (Penguin)

(There are other translations of many of these books. I suggest you use the ones I have assigned because I think they are good and if we all have the same edition we can follow along together in class. However, you may use another translation if necessary.)

In this course we look at the work of some of the first and most important Western thinkers to write systematically about politics. Historically, this course encompasses the period from the "golden age" of the Greek polis (city-state) in the 5th Century BC to the Middle Ages. Our goals are (1) to understand these rich analyses of fundamental political questions (2) to consider ways of thinking and political systems very different from our own, in order to open our eyes to new possibilities; and (3) to engage in dialogue with these books: to criticize them from our present-day perspective, and to question our own assumptions and institutions in light of the insights the older authors offer.

I believe these goals are best met when students read and respond to the primary sources rather than using secondary analyses of them. I therefore strongly suggest that you do not use secondary sources (commentaries on the primary texts) -- they will prevent you from forming your own views of the works. ("Secondary sources" includes the introductions to the assigned books.) We will shed light on the ideas of the thinkers and the implications of those ideas through a combination of lecture and discussion. You will learn the most and the course will be most effective if you come to class with an idea or question about the reading. (Try jotting some brief notes when you read.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The most important requirement is that you attend class prepared to discuss the reading. Always bring the book or article under consideration to class.

I will post assignments and study questions on the course blog at psc340.blogspot.com. You are not required to answer the study questions but they will help you understand the material better and be prepared for class, since those are the questions we will discuss in class.

Formal assignments consist of **three papers and 10 blog posts**. Paper topics will be handed out at least two weeks in advance. Typed papers are due at the beginning of the class period in which they are due. All papers must also be turned in electronically to turnitin.com. (I will explain how this works in class.)

Blogs

A blog post consists of a one paragraph response to the reading. You may only write about readings we have not yet talked about in class – i.e., upcoming readings. Please do not write about readings more than two classes ahead of where we are. In your paragraph, first summarize a point in the reading (the reading for that class) that you found interesting (3-4 relatively short sentences). Then respond to that point in some way (3-4 relatively short sentences). You may explain why you found it interesting, apply it to a contemporary situation, raise a question about it, give an argument against it, or respond in some other reasoned fashion. Make sure that your post relates to political themes, particularly the themes of the course. This is a “thought piece” that should not take a large amount of time but shows me you have done the reading and given it some thought. The total should be not more than 6-7 sentences. I will hand out a sample.

Blog posts will be given grades of 0-4. Grading for blog posts:

4 = Clear, accurate statement of the writer’s idea. Focus on one idea without digressions into other ideas. Thoughtful and well reasoned response to the writer’s idea. The post will be concise, staying within the limits of a paragraph of reasonable length (no more than 6-7 relatively short sentences). Structured clearly according to the instructions. In short, the post will be characterized by unity, accuracy, and clarity.

3 = Reasonably accurate statement of the writer’s idea and a thought out response. However, there may be a minor digression and/or points that are less than fully clear. Response may contain a flaw in the reasoning. Generally well done but missing a little focus, clarity, or structure.

2 = The writer’s idea is conveyed in recognizable form but is not clearly stated. Digressions from the main idea lead to a lack of focus. Your response may also be less than totally clear, have gaps in logic or may be not clearly related to the writer’s idea. The main points are there but they are obscured through lack of clarity and focus. Structure less than fully clear.

1 = A hint of the writer’s idea is present but only a hint. The writer’s idea is not stated with any clarity. The response is unclear, unfocused, and/or unrelated to the writer’s point. Response has large gaps in logic and persuasiveness.

0 = Not turned in or showing no effort.

Your total grade for blog posts will be calculated as follow:

38-40	A	19-21	C
35-37	A-	16-18	C-
32-34	B+	12-15	D+
29-31	B	9-11	D
26-28	B-	6-8	D-
22-25	C+	0-5	F

To set up a blog, go to www.blogger.com and follow the instructions to “create a blog.” Email me the URL of your blog when you set it up so I can find it. (The URL is address that appears in the box at the top of the screen when you are on the blog. It will be in the form of “http://[name of your blog].blogspot.com.” This is not necessarily the same as the title that appears on the web page of your blog.) I post comments and a grade in response to your posts.

If you wish, you may set up your blog so that only I can read it. To do so, under “Blog Readers,” choose “Only People I Choose” and enter my email address as the reader.

Class participation

You will also receive a class participation grade. I believe we all enjoy a given class period and learn more when many or all students contribute to discussion. You learn more by being prepared for class and verbally formulating your ideas; other students learn by hearing the information you present and the perspective you bring.

Here are some of the criteria for particular participation grades. Not all statements listed under a grade need to be true to get that grade.

A: Consistently prepared for class. Answers questions about readings accurately and fully. Contributes regularly to class discussion by thoughtful comments focused on the reading. Responds to other students’ comments in a way that keeps the discussion going in a focused and interesting manner.

B: Mostly prepared for class. Answers questions about readings in a way that is mostly accurate but might be incomplete or not fully clear. Contributes to class discussion fairly often, including thoughtful responses to other students’ comments. Or speaks a lot but sometimes the comments are not directly relevant to the topic at hand.

C: Prepared for class about half the time. Answers to questions are on the right track but vague, unclear, or incomplete. Occasionally contributes to class discussion by making relevant comments and responses to other students, or speaks often but says things that are not directly relevant to the discussion.

D. Prepared for class occasionally but mostly unprepared. Rarely is able to answer questions about a case accurately. Rarely speaks in class.

F. Consistently unprepared. Never speaks in class or only says things that are unrelated to the reading and topics under discussion.

You may ask me at any point what your class participation grade is and how it may be improved. If your class participation grade is in the D or F range I will speak to you about it periodically.

Your final grade will be decided as follows:

First paper (5-7 pages)	20%
Second Paper (5-7 pages)	20%
Third Paper (6-8 pages)	25%
Blog	20%
Participation	15%

Improvement is rewarded, so if there is an upward trend, later papers will be counted more heavily.

No papers will be accepted more than one week after they are due. Papers less than a week late will be penalized up to one letter grade. Use a 12 point font and one inch margins.

Attendance is required. You can have five unexcused absences without penalty. After that, your final grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a grade. It will be lowered an additional 1/3 of a grade for every 3 subsequent unexcused absences. (E.g., missing 9-11 classes lowers your final grade by 2/3 of a grade; 12-14 classes, 1 grade, and so on.) Coming to class late counts as one-half of an absence. *If you are late, it is your responsibility to tell me after class so I can change your absence to a lateness.* If you miss class because of illness or emergency, let me know after you have returned to class and your absences will be erased. *Please do not call me before class to tell me you will not be present.* On the other hand, excellent participation (thoughtful contributions to class discussion) can raise your final grade.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION

This course meets the Writing Across the Curriculum Skill Intensive area. It requires students to write a minimum of 3,000 words in writing assignments (which may include drafts) and the final version of the term paper should total at least 2,000 words. This course will teach students writing-to-learn strategies that foster students' experiences in learning and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students' respect of readers' experiences. The writing assignments are sufficiently complex to require substantive revision for most students. I will provide feedback to assist students in preparing subsequent papers. My feedback will not consist entirely of mechanical correction of punctuation and grammar. I will provide instruction in discipline-appropriate forms of texts, arguments, evidence, style, audience, and citation. The writing assignments will be done so throughout the semester. Where appropriate, I will address the needs of students regarding library competency. In order to receive a C or better in the course, a student must write at a satisfactory skill level (C or better). If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course.

SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Overture: What is political theory?

Week 1 (January 16)

- W Introduction: what is political theory?
- F Plato, "Apology," 26-45, in THE TRIALS OF SOCRATES

Week 2 (January 23)

- M Plato, "Apology," 46-61
- W Plato, "Crito" (entire) in THE TRIALS OF SOCRATES, 62-78

II. Thucydides: Speech versus violence, fate versus human power

- F Thucydides, 1-13 (Book I, sections 1-22)

Week 3 (January 30)

- M Thucydides, 15-37 (Book I, sec. 23, 68-88, 140-46 and summaries)
- W Thucydides, 39-58 (Book II, sec. 35-65)
- F Thucydides, 66-95 (Book III, sec. 37-68, 81.2-85; Book IV, sec. 47.3-48)

Week 4 (February 6)

- M Thucydides, 102-34 (Book V, sec. 84-116; Book VI, sec. 8-26; Book VII, sec. 42-6 and summaries)
- W Thucydides, 141-60 (Book VII, sec. 69-87; Book VIII, sec. 1 and summaries)

III. Plato: Politics, knowledge, and justice

- F Plato, REPUBLIC, 1-35 (327a-355 [Book 1]) [Numbers in parenthesis refer to the numbers in the margins of all editions of the REPUBLIC. They should be used to locate the exact point each reading assignment begins and ends; students with other translations can also use them to find the assignment] (nature of justice)

Week 5 (February 13)

- M REPUBLIC, Book 1 (cont.)

W REPUBLIC, 36-58, 96-108, 112-21 (357-378b, 412b-423, 427e-434c) (justice, education of guardians, class system, excellences of the polis)

FIRST PAPER DUE

F REPUBLIC, 121-157, 164-67 (434d-465c, 472b-474a)
(nature of the psyche, role of women, abolition of family, communism)

Week 6 (February 20)

M HOLIDAY

W REPUBLIC, 167-88, 199-207 (474b-494b, 504d-511)
(epistemology [theory of knowledge]: knowledge vs. opinion, metaphor of the sun, model of the divided line)

F REPUBLIC, 208-15, 227-30, 238-40, 251-76 (514-521b, 532-534d, 544-545a, 555b-576b) (epistemology: cave analogy, kinds of regimes: democracy and tyranny)

Week 7 (February 27)

M REPUBLIC, 276-96, 319-26 (576c-592, 614-end)
(best regime, rewards of justice after death)

IV. Aristotle I: *Ethics*

W Aristotle, NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS (NE), 3-9, 13-16, 18-25, 27-30 (Book I: i-vii, viii-x, xiii)

F Aristotle, NE, 31-46, 48-9, 64, 66-81 (Book II: i-vii, ix; Book III, v[part], vi-xii)

Week 8 (March 5)

M Aristotle, NE, 112-15, 118-20, 128-32, 139-41, 149-52, 153 (last paragraph)-55, 162-64 (Book V: I, iii, vi-vii, x; Book VI: iv-vi, vii-viii[parts], xii)

W Aristotle, NE, 200-2, 203-8, 209-23, 239-49 (Book VIII: i, iii-iv, vi-xii; Book IX: vi-ix)

F Aristotle, NE, 264-84 (Book X: v-ix)

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 11-18

V. Aristotle II: *Politics*

Week 9 (March 19)

- M Aristotle, POLITICS, 7-20 (Book I, ch. 1-7)
- W Aristotle, 33-51 (Book I, ch. 12-13; Book II, ch. 1-5)
- F Aristotle, 84-102 (Book III, ch. 1-8)

Week 10 (March 26)

- M Aristotle, 102-19, 133-35, 156-60 (Book III, ch. 9-13; Book IV, ch. 1, 11)
- W Aristotle, 229-42, 251-60 (Book VI, ch. 1-5; Book VII, ch. 1-3)
- F Aristotle, 279-317 (Book VII, ch. 13-17; Book VIII)

VI. Cicero: Roman Political Thought

Week 11 (April 2)

- M Cicero, ON OBLIGATIONS, Book 1
SECOND PAPER DUE
- W Cicero, ON OBLIGATIONS, Book 2
- F Cicero, ON OBLIGATIONS, Book 3

Week 12 (April 9)

- M Cicero, REPUBLIC/ LAWS, 3-34
- W Cicero, REPUBLIC/ LAWS, 35-84
- F Cicero, REPUBLIC/ LAWS, 85-120

VII. Augustine: Christianity and politics

Week 13 (April 16)

- M Augustine, Preface; Book I: 1-3, 7-9, 11, 15-16, 18-21, 33-36 (**NOTE: Augustine assignments are listed by book and chapter number, not page numbers**)
- W Augustine, Book II: 1, 7, 17-21, 26, 28-9

F Augustine, Book IV, 3-4, 15; Book V: 8-22, 26 (pp. 223-24 only); Book VI: Preface

Week 14 (April 23)

M Augustine, Book X: 6; Book XI: 1-2, 22, 27; Book XII: 3, 8, 23; Book XIV: 1, 5, 6, 9-26, 28; Book XV: 1, 4, 5

W Augustine, Book XVIII: 1-2 (pp. 761-2 only); Book XIX: 4-13

F Augustine, Book XIX: 14-21, 24-28; Book XX: 1-3; Book XXII: 16-19, 22, 30

Week 15 (April 30)

M Huizinga, THE WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES (selections on electronic reserve)

W Huizinga, THE WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES (selections on electronic reserve)

F Huizinga, THE WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES (selections on electronic reserve)

FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 9 IN MY OFFICE (RT 1740) BY 12PM. If I am not there slip it under the door or give it to the secretary in RT 1744.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT: I know that this might be intuitive to some, but I would like to make my expectations clear.

1. *Please put away all cell phones before class.* A ringing phone is disruptive, and texting is rude. **If I see you texting you will be given two absences.** I will not tell you I have done this, and it's easier to see you texting than you think, so . . . beware or you'll have a ton of absences at the end of the semester, lowering your grade. I'm not doing this to be punitive but when I'm in front of the class lecturing and I look out and see you texting I feel disrespected.
2. Please do not read anything other than the course materials we are discussing during class. This includes reading for our class that you are behind on. It is fine (and helpful) to look for relevant passages from the reading we are discussing.
3. Please make a concerted effort to *come to class on time* because coming into the classroom late is disruptive.

4. If you have not done the reading, please refrain from speaking about it. I assume that what you say in class is informed by your encounter with the reading, even if you do not understand it entirely. Even if we are not discussing the text directly, I assume that your remarks are anchored in knowledge of the reading. I am not discouraging class discussion, which I welcome. However, spontaneous remarks not based on having done the reading do not advance the conversation.

5. Strive to keep the tone of class discussion friendly and respectful, even if you passionately disagree with what someone else has said.

6. Please raise your hand to speak. In order to have a balanced conversation, I will call on the person who has spoken the least. Even if you are the first to raise your hand, I may not call on you for this reason; no personal slight is intended.

7. *Laptops may only be used for taking notes.* Admittedly, I have no way of enforcing this. However, web surfing during class is correlated with lower grades. It also distracts other students. *Therefore, anyone using a laptop must sit in the back row of the room.* (Or the back row of students.) Anyone using a laptop not in the back row will be asked to turn it off.

8. *Plagiarism is cheating and therefore completely unacceptable.* The first instance will result in an F for the assignment and a second instance will result in an F for the class. I will give you a handout explaining in detail what plagiarism is; thus “I didn’t know it was plagiarism” is not a valid excuse.