

PHI/POL 314
Classical Political Theory
Spring 2022

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Office: Chapel Philosophy Department

Class Meets: T, Th 2:30-3:50
Classroom: Chapel (MPK) 101
Office Hours: Tuesday 3:50-4:30, Th 12-1
(or by appointment)

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course examines central concepts in political philosophy, including authority, liberty, justice, and rights. How do political orders and civil societies arise? How do those orders balance individual liberties and social obligations? What makes people citizens? What rights and obligations attach to that role? What is the legitimate scope of political authority, and what powers may or should a legitimate political body exercise? Under what circumstances do political authorities exceed their proper powers, and to what extent may citizens oppose such extensions of political power? Considering such questions, our goals are (1) to identify the historical foundations of political orders, (2) to explore how powers are legitimately distributed within political bodies, and (3) to examine competing accounts of how rights and responsibilities are distributed throughout such political orders. Throughout the course, we will examine how these considerations have evolved historically, and how competing political traditions have characterized and proposed to resolve these debates. Given this emphasis, this course is designated as a **Global Connections** component of Albright’s General Education Curriculum.

GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATION: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS-HUMANITIES

Connections courses embody the College’s goal of preparing students for “Engaging the World,” and becoming responsible, well-informed citizens. To that end:

The Connections portion of the General Education curriculum asks students to connect the range of knowledge they have acquired in [their] Foundations courses to the wider contexts of difference and interdependence within which knowledge is constructed and used. Students will also learn to situate their understanding and their actions within an increasingly interconnected world that routinely puts them into relation with other persons and communities, both locally and globally. By fostering an understanding of these issues among our students, we prepare them for their lives beyond Albright—making informed choices in their jobs and in their roles as responsible citizens.

In this course, we will emphasize two core elements of the Connections requirement: (1) examining “different perspectives on ways of relating to the world,” and (2) recognizing “the importance of social and ethical engagement in a local and global context.” In this way, we will pursue the three primary aims of the Connections requirement by: (1) exploring distinct traditions of political theory, (2) identifying how these diverse perspectives interact and thereby inform contemporary political debates, and (3) identifying how these perspectives have interacted historically to shape these debates in their contemporary forms.

COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

1. Introduce historically influential political philosophers (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, etc.)
2. Introduce theoretical tools for the political analysis of individual and group behavior (e.g. rights, justice)
3. Apply the theoretical tools of goals 1 and 2 to traditional political questions (e.g. what the best form of government is, etc.)
4. Evaluate proposed resolutions to those debates

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students completing this course should be able to:

1. Define and summarize the key political theories introduced in the course (e.g. Plato's Republic), and use these concepts to evaluate, for example, how different governments establish just relations among distinct groups, e.g. through classes, castes, etc. [Assessed via essay exams]
2. Apply the political theories introduced (criteria 1) to traditional controversies, and use them to evaluate, for example, how civil societies distribute rights and liberties, how they define citizenship and distribute legal rights, and how decision-making powers are distributed [Assessed via essay exams]
3. Write cogent, well supported essays evaluating applications of those theoretical resources to traditional controversies, for example, how Plato's account of censorship and free speech might apply to contemporary speech codes and debates concerning diversity of ideas and thought on college campuses [Assessed via essay exams]
4. Develop and defend alternative proposals, addressing, for example, which theoretical account of justice covered in class might best resolve current debates over how best to distribute economic and social resources [Assessed via 4th hour project]

DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES:

While this class is designated as a **Connections** course within the College's General Education Curriculum, it is further designated as a **Global Connections-Humanities** course. The **humanities** are academic disciplines that study human history and culture: its languages and literatures, its philosophical and religious systems, its values and ideals, and its artistic creations. As such, the humanities include ancient and modern languages and literature, religion and philosophy, classical studies, and the visual and performing arts. The **humanities** use methods that are primarily **analytical** – e.g. the close reading of texts, the logical analysis of arguments, the careful definition of disciplinary concepts and categories – and **constructive** – e.g. the writing of cogent, well-supported essays developing distinct theses and arguments, the development of novel theories for explaining broad, foundational human questions, and the creation of artistic works (e.g. paintings and sculptures; novels and films). This course resides within the discipline of **Philosophy**, which seeks to answer some of the most basic questions posed by all humanities subjects: e.g. what is the world really like, what are we doing here, how might we lead good lives, and what if anything might happen to us when we die?

As a course within the discipline of **Philosophy**, this class includes several objectives which complement those prescribed by the Connections requirement. As an academic discipline, Philosophy is reading and writing intensive, and aims to instill in its practitioners certain habits of mind, among them: (1) **accuracy** in reading, assessing, and applying abstract theories, (2) **fairness and balance** in reading, summarizing and evaluating ideas with which they may significantly or completely disagree, and (3) **constructiveness** in evaluating, responding to and possibly offering

alternatives to the ideas, positions or theories with which they may disagree.

Thinking philosophically requires the ability to ask the right questions, as well as skill in answering those questions in a precise, balanced manner. To these ends, this course aims to develop students' facility in three core disciplinary competencies:

1. Close reading, including defining each reading's key terms, identifying that reading's main questions, and summarizing how the author answers those questions. This core competency will be evaluated via Learning Outcome 1 above:

Define and summarize the key political theories introduced in the course (e.g. divine right, democracy, autocracy, etc.), and use these concepts to evaluate, for example, how different governments establish and enforce power relations among distinct groups, e.g. Plato on the roles of distinct classes, Aristotle on the limits of democracy [Assessed via essay exams]

2. Balanced evaluating, including assessing how well the author supports his or her main claims and responds to potential disagreements and counter-considerations. This core competency will be evaluated via Learning Outcome 2 above:

Apply the political theories introduced (criteria 1) to contemporary controversies, and use them to evaluate, for example, how civil societies protect property rights, how they distribute rights and liberties, such as free speech, how they define citizenship and distribute voting rights, and how decision making powers are distributed [Assessed via essay exams]

3. Concise, well-supported proposing of alternative ideas and ideals in light of your main questions and potential counter-considerations. This core competency will be evaluated via Learning Outcomes 3 and 4 above:

Write cogent, well supported essays evaluating current applications of those theoretical resources to contemporary controversies, for example, how Plato's account of civil liberties and free speech might apply to contemporary speech codes and debates concerning diversity of ideas and thought on college campuses [Assessed via essay exams]

Develop and orally defend alternative proposals, addressing, for example, which theoretical account of justice covered in class might best resolve current debates over how best to distribute economic and social resources [Assessed via 4th hour class project]

TEXTS (available at the Bookstore):

(B) Anthony Black, *A World History of Ancient Political Thought*, 2016.

(K) George Klosko, *History of Political Theory: An Introduction: Volume I: Ancient and Medieval*, 2012.

Primary Sources (available on Canvas):

Plato, *Apology* (available on Canvas)

Plato, *The Republic* (available on Canvas)

Aristotle, *Politics*

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. 3 Exams (650 points / 65%) (200 points / 20% each. I will count your best exam for 250 points / 25%)

2. 4th hour assignments (220 points / 22%— see below)

3. Attendance and class participation (130 points / 13%)

FOURTH HOUR: This requirement will be satisfied through a series of short essays completed in preparation for class discussion. On the syllabus, readings indicate topics for these essays by identifying key terms in brackets. **The assignments are due on Canvas by class time on the day they are discussed.**

The assignments divide into **High Stakes** and **Low Stakes**.

Low Stakes (Total 120 points / 12%). Write a short essay (200-300 words) which (1) defines the term (or terms) and how/why it was developed, and (2) Write an original thought about it (what makes it interesting, is it a good/bad idea? Why?).

- **You must do one of these each week (unless you are doing a High Stakes essay that week).**
- **These will be graded as**
 - o **Check+ = 10 points (this is for extraordinary work)**
 - o **Check = 7.5 points (this is the normal grade)**
 - o **Check - = 5 points (this is for unsatisfactory but completed work)**

High Stakes (Total 1000 points / 10%). You will be individually assigned **two** of these (one in each half of the semester) from the same list. For each such term, please write a 2-3 page essay (500-750 words) which (1) defines the term and how/why it was developed, (2) indicates how this term and the political system or theory it inhabits relates to (compares/ contrasts with) other such systems that we have looked at, and (3) explains how/why this term is relevant to contemporary political considerations.

- **I will assign each of you a topic randomly.**
- **If you want to change topics (i.e. write about a different topic), you must get permission from me beforehand.**
- **High Stakes assignments will be grade on a 1-100 scale.**
- **Each High Stakes assignment is worth 5 points (5% of your grade), totaling 10 %**

Grade Assignment (based on percentage of total points earned in the course):

A	93%+	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	<60%

COVID-19 Absence Policies

Students are encouraged to work directly with their instructors regarding any absences. For absences related to COVID-19, please adhere to the following:

- **Do not come to class if you are sick.** Please protect your health and the health of others by staying home. Contact your healthcare provider or the [Gable Health Center](#) if you believe you are ill. In particular, if you have any [symptoms of COVID-19](#), please do not come to class.
- If you are absent from class as a result of a COVID-19 diagnosis or quarantine, as instructor we will do the following to help you continue to make progress in the course: You must email us to notify us of the absence and we will assign an alternate assignment to count for participation credit. The final decision for approval of all absences and missed work is determined by the instructor.
- If your psychological health is compromised due to the pandemic and how it may affect other family members and other close associates, you are encouraged to contact the [counseling services](#) on campus and to discuss options for a modified assignment schedule similar to that outlined above.

Masks/face shields:

Wearing a mask/shield is **required at all indoor events, including classes**, for the time being. If the College reassess this decision, the mask policy in our class is also subject to change.

Course format and changes:

This course will meet fully in person until further notice. Please note that if we move online for some class meetings, there may be adjustments to the nature of our class meetings.

Student Services:

Gingrich Library: The Gingrich Library provides resources to assist Albright students with their class projects and research needs. Located in the Center for Computing and Mathematics, the library offers access to its entire catalog of print materials and DVDs as well as an extensive collection of e-books, electronic journals and databases all available from on-campus, in residence halls or off-campus. A small browsing library and college computers are located in the

building. Reference librarians are available to answer questions and help students use resources and find appropriate materials. Students are encouraged to contact a librarian at any stage of the research process. Real-time chat services are available through the library's portal at the library's main page (<http://library.albright.edu>).

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center (ALC) offers various resources to assist Albright students with their academic success at no charge. The ALC offers course-specific peer tutoring for many general education classes at the 100-200 level. You can schedule to meet with a tutor in person or online by selecting the 'ALC Subject Tutor Schedule' at this link: <https://alb.mywconline.com/>. For upperclass students, the ALC offers one-on-one academic coaching on study skills, time management, note-taking, and learning strategies. (The Office of Student Success offers academic coaching for first-year students.) To schedule a meeting with a staff member in the ALC, contact by phone at #610-921-7662 or email: academiclearningcenter@albright.edu. Visit the ALC main office in Teel Hall 309A.

Writing Center: You are encouraged to work with the Writing Center early and often to help build a strong foundation for writing in this course and in all of your courses. The center's peer tutors and director will work with you at any stage of the writing process, from developing and organizing ideas to revising and editing drafts. Tutors are also available to discuss and practice approaches to managing the college reading workload and reading more effectively. The center is located in the student Campus Center on the lower level near Jake's Place and can be reached at 610-921-7540 (phone) or writingcenter@albright.edu. (Note: For Fall 2021, the Writing Center will be in Teel 309-B until the Campus Center construction is completed). For the current schedule or to make an appointment for an in-person or online session, use our appointment system at <http://alb.mywconline.com>.

Office of Student Accessibility and Advocacy: Consistent with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Albright College welcomes students with disabilities into the college's educational programs. If you need impairment-related academic adjustments in this course, please contact Sherry Young, Director of Student Accessibility and Advocacy, by email at SAA@albright.edu or by phone at 610-921-7503. Our office is located in the Student Center Conference Room. Students should contact the office to schedule an appointment. Students who use accommodations should meet with course instructors privately and in a timely manner to discuss their Academic Accommodation Letter (AAL). *Please note that IEPs and 504 plans do not apply to college-level courses.*

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) will not be tolerated and may result in either failing the exam or assignment, failing the course, and/or being reported to the academic affairs office. Please be attentive to these issues when you are taking exams and completing assignments for this class. Please also review college policy for additional information. The policies of the College regarding academic integrity can be found on the College's website at <https://www.albright.edu/student-life/compass/academic-responsibility/> listed under Academic Responsibility in the Student Handbook. Please read these policies as it applies to all facets of this course and become aware as to what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Course Schedule and Readings
(All Readings Subject to Revision)

1. Tuesday Jan 25 Course Introduction
2. Thursday Jan 27 (B) Chapters 1-3: Egypt [Maat] and Mesopotamia [kittum]
3. Tuesday Feb 1 (B) Chapter 4-5: the Middle East [Chapter 4:farnah] [Chapter 5:nationalism]; Chapter 12: Cultural Comparisons
4. Thursday Feb 3 (B) Chapters 6: India [castes]
5. Tuesday Feb 8 (B) Chapter 7: China [mandate]
6. Thursday Feb 10 (B) Chapter 8: section 1: the Polis; Socrates *Apology*
7. Tuesday Feb 15 (K) Chapters 1-2: Polis and Socrates [ethical intellectualism]
8. Thursday Feb 17 (B) Chapter 8: section 2: Plato; (K) Chapter 3: Plato
9. Tuesday Feb 22 Plato Republic, Book III: Music, Poetry and Sport [censorship]
10. Thursday Feb 24 **EXAM 1**
11. Tuesday March 1 Plato, *Republic*, Book IV: Education [tripartite soul]
12. Thursday March 3 Plato, *Republic*, Book VIII: Forms of Government [timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, tyranny]
13. Tuesday March 8 Plato, *Republic*, Book IX: Forms of Government [aristocracy vs. tyranny]
14. Thursday March 10 (B) Chapter 8, section 3; (K) Chapter 4, Aristotle

Midterm (Friday March 11)

- ~~15. Tuesday March 15 (Spring Break)~~
- ~~16. Thursday March 17 (Spring Break)~~
17. Tuesday March 22 Aristotle, *Politics*: Book I: parts 5-7; Book III: parts 9-12 [justice]
18. Thursday March 24 Aristotle, *Politics*: Book 6: all parts [democracy]
19. Tuesday March 29 (B) Chapter 9: Rome; Cicero <https://www.iep.utm.edu/cicero/> [Republic]
20. Thursday March 31 **EXAM 2**
21. Tuesday April 5 (B) Chapter 10: Graeco-Roman [Pax Romana]; (K) Chapter 5: Hellenistic era
22. Thursday April 7 (K) Chapter 7: Augustine [The Two Cities]
23. Tuesday April 12 (K) Chapter 8: Aquinas [Natural Law]
24. Thursday April 14 (K) Chapters 9-10: Medieval era [feudalism]
25. Tuesday April 19 (K) Chapter 11: Reformation
26. Thursday April 21 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Part I [Principalities]
27. Tuesday April 26 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Part I
28. Thursday April 28 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Part II [fortuna]
29. Tuesday May 3 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Part II [political science]
30. Thursday May 5 **SPILLOVER**

Finals: May 10-13