1/15. Read the following selections from the Course Packet: Declaration of Independence; Joseph Ellis, “Who Owns the Eighteenth Century?”; George Levine et al., “Speaking for the Humanities”; Leo Strauss, What Is Political Philosophy? p. 12; Massachusetts Constitution, 1780, selections. Topics: (1) Today’s rejection of philosophy, science, and natural right. (2) The founders’ embrace of science, philosophy, and natural right. (3) Why a return to the classics may be necessary before we can evaluate the founders.

1/20. Aristophanes, Clouds, in Four Texts on Socrates, 115-151. Topics: (1) What is liberal education? (2) Are philosophy and science good or bad?


OPTIONAL: West’s introduction to the Clouds, in Four Texts, 29-37.

1/27. Plato’s Apology of Socrates, in Four Texts on Socrates, up to 28b. Aristotle, Nic. Ethics, bk. 1, ch. 1-2. Topics: (1) The primacy of politics in the classical philosophers; (2) Was Aristophanes right?

OPTIONAL: West’s introduction to the Apology, in Four Texts, 16-24.

1/29. Plato’s Apology, the rest. Topics: (1) What is human excellence? Socratic nerdy nobility versus the manly Homeric alpha male. (2) Philosophy becomes compatible with the political order—or does it?

2/3. Plato’s Republic, up to 336a; excerpts from Locke’s First Treatise in the Packet. Topics: (1) Traditionalist conservatism (Cephalus). (2) Patriotic conservatism (Polemarchus). (3) Socrates’ “dialectical whirlpool.”

2/5. Plato’s Republic, 336b-347e. Aristotle, Politics, bk. 3, ch. 6 and 7. Topics: (1) The cynical public intellectual (Thrasymachus) and his claim that justice is the advantage of the ruling class. (2) Aristotle’s view.

2/8, Sunday, 5:00 pm. FIRST PAPER DUE, 800 to 1,000 words (about 2 to 3 pages, double-spaced). Please send me an electronic copy (any word processing format) attached to an email by Sunday at 5:00, and a printed copy by Monday at noon in the mail slot outside my office in Kendall 313. You may print on both sides of the paper. Print either 1.5 spaced or double spaced. Topic to be announced.


2/17. *Republic*, 368e-374e; West, “Economic Principles of America’s Founders,” 6-17 (in Packet). Topics: (1) Plato on economics (how does production of goods and services work?); (2) the advantages and disadvantages of free markets.


3/3. *Republic*, *Republic*, book 4, 419a-432a; Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 7, ch. 2 (foreign policy); Mass. Const., Preamble and the passage on governor’s commander-in-chief duties (foreign policy). Topics: (1) conflict between private and public good; (2) foreign policy; (3) why education is more important than ordinary legislation.


Spring Break—no class on 3/10 and 3/12.


**3/19. MIDTERM EXAMINATION.**


3/31. *Republic*, bk. 5, 462a-466d, 471c-480a; excerpt from Plato’s *Laws* (in Packet); Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 3, ch. 15 and 16. Topics: (1) the “community of pleasure and pain”; (2) rule of wise
kings versus rule of law.

4/2. *Republic*, book 6, 484a-492c, 503b-511e. Topics: (1) the nature of the philosopher/scientist; (2) the idea of the good (the “sun”) as the source of intelligibility and the ultimate ground of philosophy; (3) the divided line as an image of how we learn.


4/9. *Republic*, bk. 8, 543a-557a. Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 7, ch. 7. Topics: (1) comparative politics (aristocracy and oligarchy); (2) obstacles to the rule of wisdom and virtue; (3) suitability of a people for particular forms of government.

4/12, Sunday, 5:00 pm. SECOND PAPER DUE, 1,700 to 2,000 words (about 5 to 6 pages, double-spaced). Topic to be announced. Same instructions as first paper.


4/16. *Republic*, bk. 9, 571a-580c. Topics: (1) the nature of the tyrant; (2) two kinds of tyranny in the *Republic*; (3) the best way of life.

4/21. *Republic*, bk. 9, 580d-592b. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, bk. 10, ch. 7 and 8. Topics: (1) justice and happiness, 3 proofs; (2) restatement on the soul; (3) the limits of politics.

4/23. *Republic*, bk. 10, 606a-621d only. Topics: (1) poetry; (2) immortality of the soul; (3) the afterlife; (4) why morality is not enough.


5/4, Mon., 1:00 pm. Final exam for Classical Pol Phil.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Midterm examination. 20% of the final grade.

Final examination. 25%.

Short paper, 800 to 1,000 words. 15%.

Longer paper, 1,700 to 2,000 words. 25%.

Attendance, participation, preparation, short comments/questions. 15% of the grade. More than three unexcused absences will affect this part of the grade. So also will consistent failure to show preparedness in class discussions. The quality of the 12 short “comments,” and how many of them are missing, will also be a factor. (I do not accept late “comments,” but two or fewer
missing “comments” will not be counted against you.)

“Comments.” Once a week (with two exceptions noted on the course plan), students are required to hand in short comment(s) and/or question(s) about the assigned readings (100 to 200 words). Half the students will have a Tuesday due date, and the other half Thursday. For your topic, you might get help from the course plan, which mentions some of the themes of each day’s reading. The point is to say or ask something informative and insightful about the main point(s) of the readings assigned. Please send me a copy as an email attachment by midnight on the night before the due date. Then hand in a printed copy at the beginning of class.

We will typically begin to discuss the assigned reading on the day it is assigned and continue on the class day after that. Therefore, for any given class day, students should prepare not only the reading assigned for that day, but also review the reading assigned for the previous class day.

Late work will be accepted, but the grade will typically be lowered. The amount is at the discretion of the instructor.

BOOKS REQUIRED:
   West, Thomas G., ed. Course Packet for Classical Political Philosophy.

TO CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR:
   Email: twest@hillsdale.edu. Cell phone 972-849-8515, 8:00am to 10:00pm. Leave a message or text me and I will respond. Office hours (Kendall 313): TuTh 11:00-11:15, 1:00-2:15, 3:45-4:00. I am often in the office at other times. Email, text, or phone for an appointment.

OTHER MATTERS
   Students are bound by all relevant College rules and regulations, including the Policy on Academic Honor.
   Computers and other electronic devices must be silenced and put away. This article gives one of the reasons: http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159 (“Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking”).
   Food and drinks are permitted if consumed silently and cleaned up afterward.
   Reasonable disability accommodations will be granted with appropriate documentation.