

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?

1/22. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, in *Four Texts on Socrates*, 151-176. Topic: (1) Is traditionalism an adequate response to the dangers of philosophy and science? (2) Dangerous practical consequences of the superior rights of the wise.

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.

2/10. Plato’s *Republic*, 348a to the end of book 1. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, bk. 1, ch. 7. Topics: (1) The wise man (Socrates) shows the professor (Thrasymachus) how to talk about justice. (2) Aristotle on virtue, happiness, and man’s proper “work.”

2/12. *Republic*, book 2, up to 368e. Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 1, ch. 1 and 2. Topics: (1) The attractions and problems of conventional justice. (2) Aristotle on the roots of the polis.

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.

2/19. *Republic*, book 2, remainder of book 2, 374e-383c. Locke, *Letter on Toleration*, selections in Packet. Topics: (1) Spiritedness; (2) education and lying; (3) the gods; (4) Locke’s disagreement and partial agreement with Socrates.

2/24. *Republic*, book 3, 386a-391e, 400e-404e. Review Mass. Constitution, sections on education and virtue. Topics: (1) Poetry, liberal education, and the fine arts. (2) What virtues should citizens be taught to admire and cultivate?

2/26. *Republic*, book 3, 410b-417b. Also a passage from book 4 on prudence, 428a-429a. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, Interpretive Essay, “The Problem of Prudence,” 282-283. Topics: (1) overview of the guardian education; (2) prudence; (3) the noble lie and communism.

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.

3/5. *Republic*, book 4, 432b-445e (the rest of bk. 4); Mass. Const., Decl. of Rts., Art. 3 and 18, and the section on “Encouragement of Literature.” Strauss, “The Problem of Socrates,” *Interpretation* (Winter 1996): 190-193 (in Packet). Topics: (1) the virtues of the city and of the citizen. (2) The 3 parts of the soul. (3) Comparison with American founders on virtue.

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

3/17. Catch-up and review for midterm. No comment/question due.

3/19. MIDTERM EXAMINATION.

3/24. *Republic*, book 5, 449a-461e. Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 1, ch. 12 and 13 (look for discussions of male-female differences). Topics: (1) the equality of women; (2) abolition of the family (3) Aristotle v. Plato on women.

3/26. Aristotle, *Politics*, review bk. 1, ch. 1-2; then read bk. 2, ch. 1-5; bk. 3, ch. 9; Topics: (1) Aristotle v. Plato on the family; (2) Aristotle’s critique of the Republic; (3) Aristotle on the best regime and its virtues.

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.

4/7. *Republic*, book 7, 514a-521d, 533b-534c, 536d-541b. Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 7, ch. 1 and 2. Topics: (1) the “cave,” the education of the philosophers, and the two educations; (2) “dialectic.” (3) Why does the philosopher care about politics (return to the “cave”)? (4) Is there a practical substitute for philosopher-kings? (5) Why political philosophy is “first philosophy.”

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.

4/14. *Republic*, bk. 8, 557b-569c. Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. 4, ch. 9 (first paragraph only), ch. 11. Review Locke, *Letter on Toleration*. Topics: (1) democracy and its vulnerability to tyrannical socialism; (2) the politics of virtue versus the politics of democratic freedom.

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.

4/28. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, bk. 10, ch. 9. No comment/question due.

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:

Aristotle’s Politics. Trans. Carnes Lord. 2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. ISBN 0226921840.

Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics. Trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. ISBN 0226026752.

Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Trans. Allan Bloom. 2nd ed. New York: Basic Books, 1991. ISBN 0465069347.

West, Thomas G., ed. *Four Texts on Socrates*. Rev. ed.; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998. ISBN 0801485746.

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.