Ancient and Medieval Political Thought
POLS 371, PHIL 436
Fall 2013

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Ofc hrs: T 1:15-3:15 pm
W 4-5 pm
& by appointment

Required Reading

Available in campus bookstore and libraries:
Plato, Symposium, Waterfield, trans. (Oxford)
Plato, The Republic, Bloom trans. (Basic Books)
Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Irwin trans. (Hackett)
Aristotle, The Politics, Ellis, trans. (Prometheus)
Thomas Aquinas, Aquinas on Law, Morality and Politics, ed. Regan and Baumgarth (Hackett)
Christine de Pizan, The Book of the City of Ladies, Brown-Grant trans. (Penguin)

For the major texts above, students should not rely on the internet, because it will be important for students to have a hard copy them available for reference during class for discussions and written exams. Also it is desirable for students to use the same translation. It is particularly important for students to use Bloom’s translation of The Republic.

Shorter readings listed on the schedule are available online, in Pius Library electronic databases, or on electronic reserve (ERes). The password for electronic reserve is “friendship.” It is not case sensitive. Online readings should be printed out for use in class.

Description

The class will examine seminal works in ancient and medieval political thought from a predominantly theoretical perspective, analyzing them as systems of thought, or more-or-less coherent frameworks for understanding politics. This semester we will focus on friendship and the ways in which these historical thinkers and some contemporary thinkers think of friendship as a model for a just political community.

We will consider these questions: Are citizens friends? Should they be? What kind of friendship is possible among citizens? If citizens are friends, what is their attitude toward noncitizens?

Course objectives are:

- To become familiar with ideas in ancient and medieval political thought that have influenced Western cultures and institutions
- To be able to explain different notions of friendship, politics, and justice, as they emerged in the work of selected thinkers from Plato’s time through the Middle Ages.
- To understand how different theoretical approaches are reflected in different political and social institutions and practices.
- To read and interpret primary sources in political theory
- To use these primary sources to make coherent, well-supported arguments.

Format and Requirements
Because this course is about ideas, which are to be understood and applied critically rather than memorized, the format emphasizes opportunities to process theories of politics through discussion and writing. The class format is a structured discussion. Students will be expected to complete reading assignments on time and participate regularly in class discussions. Students should bring texts to class. At each class session, designated students will serve as “expert” discussants, responsible for raising questions about the reading assignment and commenting on questions raised by other students and by the instructor. In addition, each student will write two brief essays and take a mid-term exam and a final exam. An additional requirement is that students fill out a course evaluation at the end of the semester.

Attendance and Participation. Because learning in this course depends heavily on everyone participating in class discussion, attendance is required at every class session. Students are responsible for signing the attendance sheet at the beginning of class. Absences are excused only if students 1) provide a good reason—e.g. illness, required university activity—preferably in advance and 2) turn in written responses to the study questions for the missed class.

Students who attend all sessions, participate regularly, do well as expert discussants, and show that they have reflected on the reading materials earn an “A” in class participation. Students who fall short on any of these aspects of participation can expect lower grades. For instance, students who attend all sessions and participate well only when it is their turn to be a discussant earn a “satisfactory” rating (C) in class participation, as opposed to a “good” (B) or “excellent” (A). For every two unexcused absences during each half of the semester, the class participation component of the grade will be lowered one letter. (Ex. If a student who normally participates at a “B” level has two unexcused absences, the participation grade automatically falls to a “C.”)

Grading. Grades will be determined as follows: class participation - 1/3, essays - 1/3, exams - 1/3.

Midterm and final grades will be reported in terms of the College of Arts and Sciences grading scale: A (4.0), A- (3.7), B+ (3.3), B (3.0), B- (2.7), C+ (2.3), C (2.0), C- (1.7), D (1.0), F (0.0). However, grades given on assignments and the manner of calculating grades are up to individual professors.

Writing assistance at Student Success Center

I encourage you to take advantage of the Student Success Center’s services; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. The Center offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-3484 or visit http://www.slu.edu/x34508.xml. There are specific writing services for graduate students, http://www.slu.edu/x18511.xml.

Student learning, disability statement:

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center.
Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

**Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy**

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment. A report of academic dishonesty may be sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: [http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml](http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml).

**Tentative Schedule**

8/27 Introduction: Love, Friendship, and Political Community; class will view an excerpt from *The Drinking Party*, a 1965 film adaptation of Plato’s *Symposium*, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKTOvr-FqN4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKTOvr-FqN4)

8/29 No class. Mass of the Holy Spirit. Read first half of Plato’s *Symposium*—through the end of Agathon’s speech (pp. 3-36 in our text). Email responses to study questions posted on Blackboard to moskopww@slu.edu, by 6 pm.

9/3 Plato, *Symposium*. Finish reading the *Symposium*. In class, turn in typed responses (one or two paragraphs) to the study questions posted on Blackboard. You may email these to me at least one hour before class, or you may bring hard copies to class.


9/5 Mary P. Nichols, Excerpt from *Socrates on Friendship and Community* (2009), 57-89, ERes


9/12 Plato, *The Republic*

9/17 Plato, *The Republic*
9/19  Plato, *The Republic*

**Draft of Paper #1 due by 6 pm Sunday, 9/22,** by email to moskopww@slu.edu and all students in your tutorial group. This will be a short paper, 750-word maximum. The first draft will be graded S or U depending on whether the student has met basic criteria for the paper (available in handout on “paper requirements”). To guard against the possibility of careless drafts that waste the time of other students and the instructor, a grade of “U” on the draft will result in a penalty of a full letter grade on the final version of the paper.

9/24  Class will not meet. Tutorial groups of 3 will be scheduled instead. Students are responsible for bringing to the tutorial session a hard copy of your own paper and the other papers in your group. Each member of a tutorial group is expected to critique each of the other papers (using the criteria in the handout), to ask questions that might help clarify the paper, and to suggest how each paper might be improved. A written version of your critique should be turned in to the author of the paper and the instructor. On the basis of critics in the tutorial, you will revise your paper and turn in a final version. **Revision of paper #1 is due by email to moskopww@slu.edu by 6 pm on 9.27.**


10/1  Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

10/3  Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

10/8  Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*


10/17  Midterm oral exam. Midterm take-home exam due at beginning of class.

10/22  Fall Break. No Class.


10/29  Aristotle, *The Politics*


11/5  Thomas Aquinas, *Aquinas on Law, Morality and Politics*

11/7  Thomas Aquinas continued

11/12  No Class. **Paper #2 is due by email to moskopww@slu.edu by 8 pm;** I am glad to meet with you to discuss your ideas or progress. Please email for an appointment. **I am also glad to comment on any drafts sent to me on or before Saturday, 11/8.**


11/21  Christine de Pizan, *Of the Book of the City of Ladies*

11/26  Christine de Pizan, *Of the Book of the City of Ladies*

11/28  Thanksgiving break


12/5   Review

12/12  Oral Final Exam, Thursday, 12-1:50 pm. Take-home written component due at beginning of oral exam.