

**Political Science 290:
History of Political Thought I
Fall 2013**

Instructor: Dr. John French

Meeting Time: M, W, F 9:00-9:50

Email: jfrenc2@uic.edu

Room: BSB 1115

Office: BSB 1126A

Office Phone: (312) 413-3873

Office Hours: M,W,F 11-12:00
(and by appointment)

Course Description:

Our thinking about the rules by which our societies should be governed— and the best way of enforcing those rules— has changed dramatically across the centuries of recorded history. Ideas that once seemed self-evident, like the divine right of kings to hold power, now strike us as both absurd and unjust. At the same time, the democratic participation of the whole population in their government— which thinkers as recently as the eighteenth century saw as a recipe for the violent disintegration of society— is now often thought of as the only just and stable form of political organization.

This course will explore the development of (mostly) Western political thought from roughly the 5th century BCE to the early 1300s CE. This period, which encompasses the golden age of Greek philosophy, the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the subsequent Dark Ages, and the earliest stirrings of the Renaissance, is one of great variety and change— in the world, as well as in political thought. We will trace the development of political thought through the writings of several of the most important thinkers, while paying significant attention to the historical contexts in which they were writing.

Required Texts:

The following books are required, and are available in the campus bookstore. It is very important that we all have the same translations of these texts, so if you do not purchase them from the bookstore please make sure to get the same editions.

Thucydides: *History of the Peloponnesian War*. trans. Martin Hammond. Oxford, 1999.
ISBN: 978-0192821911

Plato: *The Republic*. trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford World Classics, 2008 ISBN: 978-0199535767

Aristotle: *Politics*. trans. Ernest Barker. Oxford, 2009. ISBN: 978-0199538737

Polybius: *Rise of the Roman Empire*. trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert. Penguin, 1979. ISBN: 0140443622

Cicero: *The Republic and the Laws*. ed. Jonathan Powell, trans. Niall Rudd. Oxford World Classics, 2009. ISBN: 978-0199540112

St. Augustine: *Confessions*. trans. H. Chadwick, Oxford World Classics, 1992. ISBN: 0192833723

In addition, we will read excerpts from the work of several other authors, which will be available on Blackboard:

Assignments and Grading:

Exams: The bulk of your grade for this course will come from three in-class exams and a comprehensive final exam. All exams will consist of short answer and essay questions; blue books will be provided. Each in-class exam is worth 20% of your final grade, and the final exam is worth 30%. Dates for all of the exams are listed in the schedule below. Make-up exams will be allowed only in case of an excused absence.

Participation: The remaining 10% of your grade will come from attendance and participation. Attendance will be taken every day, and for each unexcused absence beyond two, you will lose ten percent of your participation points. You are also expected to have all readings done on the day for which they are assigned, and be prepared to contribute to class discussion about them. Note that this does not mean you are expected to *understand* everything the first time you read it; some of this material will not make sense to you until we have discussed it. Your responsibility is to contribute to that discussion, and pointing out what is not clear to you is a perfectly valid contribution.

Ethics and Conduct

Behavior that is distracting or disruptive is unacceptable. That includes the use of cell phones or other mobile devices (talking, texting, ringing, etc.). It also includes the inappropriate use of a computer (i.e. looking at Facebook instead of paying attention). Most fundamentally, it includes creating noise or other disturbances. You are also expected to treat me and your fellow students with respect at all times. Failure to abide

by these standards will result in your being asked to leave the classroom, with attendant consequences for your participation grade.

Plagiarism:

All of your work in this class—and in every class—must be your own. This means that using the work or words of another person without giving clearly them credit, or copying the work of another student (*with or without* their permission) is unacceptable. At a *minimum*, any plagiarized work will automatically receive a grade of zero for the assignment in question, and may also result in a failing grade for the course or disciplinary action by the University. It is possible to be expelled for plagiarism. Do not do it. If you have any doubt whatsoever about what does or does not constitute plagiarism or copying, *ask*.

Grade Summary

Exam #1 20%
Exam #2 20%
Exam #3 20%
Final Exam 30%
Participation 10%

Grading Scale

90-100%: A
80-89%: B
70-79%: C
60-69%: D
0-59%: F

Course Schedule:

Aug. 26	Course Introduction
Aug. 28	Thucydides, <i>Peloponnesian War</i> , editor's Introduction, pp. ix-xv, xxv-xlvi and Book I.1-23 (pp.1-13), I.139-146 (pp.68-73)
Aug. 30	Thucydides, <i>Peloponnesian War</i> , Book II-III, pp.74-188
Sept. 2	LABOR DAY, NO CLASS
Sept. 4	Thucydides, <i>Peloponnesian War</i> , Book II-III cont.
Sept. 9-13	Thucydides, <i>Peloponnesian War</i> , Book IV.1-41 (pp.189-209) and IV.66- 88 (pp.220-232); Book V.84-116 (pp.301-307); Book VIII. 45-98 (pp.436-467).
Sept. 16	Thucydides, cont.
Sept. 18	Review
Sept. 20	Exam #1
Sept. 23-27	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
Sept. 30-Oct 4	Plato, <i>Republic</i> cont.
Oct. 7-11	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Books 1-3, 7
Oct. 14	Aristotle, cont.
Oct. 16	Review
Oct. 18	Exam #2
Oct. 21-25	Polybius, <i>Rise of the Roman Empire</i> , pp. 41-54, 302-352, 535-541
Oct 28-Nov.1	Cicero, <i>The Republic</i> and <i>The Laws</i>
Nov. 4	Cicero, cont.
Nov. 6-8	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Books 1-9

Nov. 11	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , cont.
Nov. 13	Review
Nov. 15	EXAM #3
Nov. 18-22	Islamic Political Thought: Al-Farabi: <i>The Political Regime</i> Ibn Bajja: <i>The Governance of the Solitary</i> Ibn Tufayi: <i>The Living Son of the Vigilant</i> Ibn Rushd: <i>Decisive Treatise on the Connection between Religion and Philosophy</i>
Nov. 25-27	Thomas Aquinas, “On Kingship” and other selected political writings (Blackboard)
Nov. 29	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, NO CLASS
Dec. 2	Aquinas, cont.; Marsilius of Padua, <i>Defensor Pacis</i> (selections—Blackboard)
Dec. 4	Marsilius of Padua, cont.
Dec. 6	Conclusion and Review

Final Exam Tuesday, December 10, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM