



# CLASSICAL POLITICAL THEORY

**Political Science 381, Fall 2022**

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*Physical Student Hours:* T and TH, 11 am – noon (just stop by!)

*Online Student Hours:* W noon – 2 pm (email for Zoom link!)

*Student Hours Don't Work?* Individual Appointments Available (let me know!)

*Class Meeting Time & Place:* 9:30-10:45 am, T&TH, Morgan Hall 308

In this course we will examine the political thought of major figures from the classical world, spanning from ancient Greece to medieval Europe. These thinkers remain important today, most obviously because they form the basis for what is considered the “Western Canon,” the books traditionally thought essential for one’s education. But reading these books can also help us to both appreciate and interrogate our own place in history and to better understand and critique the wide range of assumptions and ideas about humanity that have existed over time.

The study of classical political thought also has immediate relevance for us. For these philosophers, thinking about politics required attention to a variety of other human problems, such as ethics, psychology, epistemology, religion, social structure, and so on. This semester, we’ll think about topics ranging from the ideal political regime to questions of good and evil, from the role of the family to the relationship between care for one’s soul and politics. We’ll analyze the authors’ discussions of these problems together in class. These readings should help you think about your own responses to these questions and how those responses might change the way you view your world. In short, you will be engaged in political theorizing.

Over the course of this semester, you should:

- Hone your own understandings of the contemporary political world through an engagement with classical thought.
- Practice “analytical thinking” about politics. This requires you to provide reasons for what you believe and to consider counterarguments.
- Develop abilities to interpret texts and use textual evidence to support your claims.
- Develop your writing skills. The assignments in this course stress critical analysis based on defensible interpretations and textual support, along with careful organization.

The format of this class includes lectures, large whole-class discussions, and small group discussions. Lectures will provide you with background information as well as fleshed-out conceptual frameworks for understanding the thinkers we will be studying. Discussions will allow us to explore these philosophers in greater detail, enhancing our understanding and allowing us to evaluate their ideas. Finally, small group discussions will not only give those of you who are shy a chance to participate in a less intimidating setting, but will also allow you to work together in puzzling out some of the problems and questions left to us by these thinkers.

## **Course Prerequisites**

You should have completed POLS 101, POLS 122, or have my permission to be enrolled in this course.

## Requirements

Two Essay Exams:	100 points each
Two Multiple-Choice Exams:	50 points each
Reading Quizzes:	100 points

## Grades

A:	373 points and above	C:	293-306 points
A-:	360-372 points	C-:	280-292 points
B+:	347-359 points	D+:	267-279 points
B:	333-346 points	D:	253-266 points
B-:	320-332 points	D-:	240-252 points
C+:	307-319 points	F:	239 points and below

### Essay Exams

Two four-to-five-page take-home essay exams will be assigned during the semester. Instructions and prompts will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date for each essay exam. You will have the opportunity to rewrite your first essay exams; if you decide to rewrite, your grade will be calculated as the average of the scores from your original version and your rewritten version. Essay exams will be due in Western Online by a specific date and will incur a ten-point penalty for each day they are late unless **prior arrangements** are made with me. Late essays are ineligible for the rewrite option.

### Multiple-Choice Exams

Two open book, open note 25-question multiple-choice exams will be administered during class, one mid-semester and one during the final exam period. The final will cover only the material from the second half of the course. Each of these exams will be worth 50 points. No make-up exams will be available without prior permission and no final exams can be rescheduled, except in accordance with university policy.

### Reading Quizzes

Each day during class, a five-question quiz will be administered in Western Online; you will need a phone, tablet, or computer with you to take the quiz. These quizzes will be open note, meaning that you may use your text along with any notes that you have taken on the readings. After each quiz, we will flip a freakishly large coin to determine whether the quiz will count; the average of all of these quizzes taken together will be worth 100 points. (Except for **Thursday, September 29**, when the quiz will definitely count!) Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped from the calculation of your quiz average. No make-up quizzes will be available.

### Attendance

Regular attendance is the **biggest** predictor of success in this course. Attendance will be taken daily. If you need to miss class for **any reason** and would like to earn credit for that day's missed quiz, please just contact me via email **before the end** of the class you will be missing (by **10:45 am**). If the quiz counts that day, I will send you a writing prompt related to the topic discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to complete a 600-word assignment to make up for the missed quiz. This make-up assignment will be due via email before the next class period unless we make alternate arrangements. Please note that if you do **not** email me **before the end** of the class you are missing, this make-up option **will not be available**. No matter why you miss class and whether or not you choose to notify me or do the make-up assignment, it is **your responsibility** to find out what you missed from me or one of your classmates.

### Required Reading

The required texts are below with ISBNs. Translations differ, so please make sure that you buy these versions:

- Sophocles, *Theban Plays* (9780872205857)
- Plato, et al, *The Trials of Socrates* (9780872205895)
- Thucydides, *On Justice, Power, and Human Nature* (9780872201682)
- Plato, *Republic* (9780872201361)

We will also be using the following texts. The readings from these texts are required, but they will be available on Western Online, and are designated as (WO) in the course calendar. Thus, purchase of these books is **optional**; if you would prefer to **download the readings** from Western Online you do **NOT need to buy** these texts.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (9780872204645)
- Seneca, *Moral and Political Essays* (9780521348188)
- Aquinas, *On Law, Morality, and Politics* (9780872206632)
- Aristotle, *Politics* (9780872203884)
- Augustine, *City of God* (9780385029100)

Two additional readings will be available only on Western Online; they are designated (WO only) in the calendar.

Because this class will largely be based on our discussions together, it is **crucial** that everyone has prepared the readings. This means that you should read carefully, take notes as you read, and review your reading notes before class. Reading and taking notes is one of the best ways to ensure success on your reading quizzes and in this course more generally. To help with your reading and note-taking, I'll often provide a list of reading questions before we begin each thinker to help you focus on important sections or problems in the text.

### **Email**

During the workday (8 am to 5 pm), I usually respond to email within hours, but it does take me longer in the evenings and on weekends, when I try to spend time away from screens. For this reason, you should just assume that a) if you email me in the evening, you will hear back from me the next day and b) if you email me over the weekend, you will hear back from me on Monday. It will help me get back to you more quickly when you include the number or name of the course (POLS 381 or Classical Political Theory) in your subject heading.

### **Lateness & Classroom Etiquette**

When class begins, the door will be closed and locked. Each of you will get one "Get Into Class Late" card at the beginning of the semester (attached); to be allowed late entry, hold your card up to the window and I will open the door for you and take your card. If you do not have a card in your possession, you will not be admitted into class late. If you do not use, lose, sell, or give away your card by the end of the semester **and** have not missed more than two quizzes, your card can be redeemed for ten extra credit points being added to your final point total. Remaining "Get Into Class Late" cards will be collected on the last day of class and must be submitted to earn the extra points.

Please show respect for me and your classmates by avoiding the following: leaving class early, taking frequent or daily trips to the restroom, holding conversations with your neighbors when someone else (me or a classmate) is talking, sleeping during class, and using tobacco during class. Students who habitually engage in these or other disruptive behaviors will receive one kind and gentle email warning and, if the behavior continues, a second public and potentially embarrassing in-class warning. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave.

### **Cellular Phones, Laptops, & Tablets**

You will need a phone, laptop, or tablet with you in class to take our daily quizzes, but these devices should be put away after quizzes are complete. At the beginning of the semester, there will be a bank of five extra credit points available. Each time I see a phone, laptop, or tablet after quizzes are complete, I will deduct one point from this bank. At the end of the semester, the number of points left in the bank will be added to each student's final point total.

### **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact Disability Resources at 309-298-1884, [sdsc@wiu.edu](mailto:sdsc@wiu.edu) or in 125 Memorial Hall. Please notify me as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

### **Sex Discrimination and Sexual Assault or Misconduct**

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at:

[www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php)

If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator, no matter when or where the incident occurred. The complete policy is available at:

[www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php](http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php)

## Student Rights and Responsibilities & Academic Integrity

You are required to familiarize yourself with the university's Student Rights and Responsibilities and Academic Integrity Policies, which are available at the following URLs:

<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students/>

<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>

Pay special attention to the Academic Integrity Policy. Violations of this policy will be handled in accordance with the policy; all assignments submitted containing any plagiarism will automatically earn zeroes.

### Calendar

This schedule may be changed if the needs of the class change. Changes will be announced in class and online, via email and/or on Western Online. It's your responsibility to come to class and to check your email and the course's Western Online page regularly. **Please reach out to me at e-taylor@wiu.edu if you have questions.**

Readings should be done by the date next to which they are listed. **Always have your readings during class.**

DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
<b>Intro: Why Read the Classics?</b>		
T Aug 23	Course Syllabus	
TH Aug 25	Shorris: "In the Hands of the Restless Poor" Allen: "Democracy and the Power of Education" (both on WO only)	
<b>Part I: Themes in Ancient Greece</b>		
T Aug 30	Sophocles: <i>Oedipus</i> , pp. 62-88	
TH Sep 1	Sophocles: <i>Oedipus</i> , pp. 88-124	
T Sep 6	Sophocles: <i>Antigone</i> , pp. 2-60	
TH Sep 8	Plato: <i>The Trials of Socrates</i> Introduction & <i>Euthyphro</i> , pp. vii-25	
T Sep 13	Plato: <i>Apology</i> , pp. 26-61	
TH Sep 15	Plato: <i>Crito &amp; Phaedo</i> , pp. 62-83	
T Sep 20	No Class Meeting – Watch "The Greeks: Crucible of Civilization" and Take Quiz (both on WO)	
TH Sep 22	Thucydides: <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> Origins of War, pp. 15-37 Pericles and the Plague, pp. 39-58	<i>Essay Exam 1 Questions &amp; Instructions Distributed</i>
T Sep 27	Thucydides: <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> Mylenean Debate, pp. 66-76 Revolution in Corcyra, pp. 89-95 Melian Dialogue, pp. 102-109	
TH Sep 29	First Essay Exam Questions & Instructions	Quiz Definitely Counts Today!
T Oct 4	Midterm Exam Review – No Assigned Reading	
TH Oct 6	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>Essay Exam 1 Due Oct 10 by 11:59 pm</b>
<b>Part II: Classical Political Thought</b>		
T Oct 11	Introduction to Plato's <i>Republic</i> – No Assigned Reading	
TH Oct 13	Plato: <i>Republic</i> , Book II, pp. 32-59	
T Oct 18	Plato: <i>Republic</i> From Books III & IV, pp. 86-96 & 102-121	
TH Oct 20	Plato: <i>Republic</i> From Book V, pp. 122-141 & 146-156 From Book VI, pp. 170-177	
T Oct 25	Plato: <i>Republic</i> From Book VII, pp. 186-193, 204-205, 211-212 From Book X, pp. 282-292	

TH Oct 27	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (WO) Book I, pp. 1-18	
T Nov 1	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (WO) Book II, pp. 18-30 Book III, Ch. 1-7, pp. 30-42	
TH Nov 3	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (WO) Book VI, Ch. 1-9 & 12-13, pp. 86-94 & 96-99 Book X, Ch. 9, pp. 167-171	
T Nov 8	ELECTION DAY – NO CLASS	
TH Nov 10	Aristotle: <i>Politics</i> (WO) Book I, Ch. 1-7 & 12-13, pp. 1-12 & 21-25 Book III, Ch. 1 & 4-13, pp. 65-67 & 70-91 Book IV, Ch. 1, 6-9 & 11-12, pp. 101-103, 112-117, 118-123 Book V, Ch. 1-2 & 7-8, pp. 134-137 & 149-156	
<b>Part III: Hellenistic Thought</b>		
T Nov 15	Seneca: <i>On Anger</i> (WO) From Introduction, pp. 3-13 From Book I, pp. 17-31 & 35-38 From Book II, pp. 42-55 & 61-62	
TH Nov 17	Seneca: <i>On Anger</i> (WO) From Book II, pp. 65-75 From Book III, pp. 81-90 & 98-116	<i>Essay Exam 2 Questions &amp; Instructions Distributed</i>
<b>Part IV: Christian Thought</b>		
T Nov 22 TH Nov 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS	
T Nov 29	Augustine: <i>City of God</i> (WO) From Introduction, pp. 7-11 From Book I, pp. 39-49 From Book XI, pp. 206-208 & 236-238 From Book XII, pp. 244-255 From Book XIV, pp. 295-304 & 320-322	
TH Dec 1	Augustine: <i>City of God</i> (WO) From Book XV, pp. 323-331 From Book XIX pp. 436-446, 449-452, 456-460, 463-466, 479-482	
T Dec 6	Aquinas: <i>On Law, Morality, and Politics</i> (WO) pp. xiv, 10-15, 16-24, 26-36, 38-40, 42-44, 48-55, 61-75, 182-185	
TH Dec 8	No Assigned Reading – Final Exam Review	<b>Essay Exam 2 Due by 11:59 pm</b>
TH Dec 15	<b>Final Exam at 8 am</b>	