



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *HISTORY OF CLASSIC POLITICAL THOUGHT - 56111*

*Last update 23-01-2015*

*HU Credits: 4*

*Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)*

*Responsible Department: Political Science*

*Academic year: 1*

*Semester: 2nd Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Jeffrey Macy*

*Coordinator Email: [Jeffrey.Macy@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:Jeffrey.Macy@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-11:30*

*Teaching Staff:*

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Dr. Jeffrey Macy

Course/Module description:

*This required class provides an introductory survey of the most important sources for the political thought of the ancient Greek and hellenistic worlds and the medieval world (including selections from Jewish, Moslem and Christian thinkers). Special attention will be devoted to central issues such as law and nature ("nomos" and "physis"), religion and politics, human nature and perfection. Particular emphasis will be placed on the writings of Plato and Aristotle in the ancient Greek world.*

Course/Module aims:

*The goals of the course are to provide the student a basic understanding in the central questions raised by Western political thought, from its earliest development in ancient Greece, and to gain an appreciation of the various answers or resolutions of those questions that have been proposed by various types of thinkers in the ancient and medieval (Jewish, Moslem and Christian) worlds. Another aim of the course is to teach the students how to read and evaluate texts in political thought, with special emphasis on critical reading of philosophic texts.*

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

*Ability to define the central issues in pre-modern political thought; Ability to identify and describe the key political ideas and positions of the central political thinkers in the pre-modern period in the Western world; Ability to read, appraise and analyze primary texts in political thought, including texts from classical Greece, the Hellenistic world, and medieval Jewish, Islamic and Christian sources; Ability to evaluate and compare different and sometimes conflicting positions regarding the central issues of political thought; Ability to design and write a short paper in the field of political thought based on critical appraisal and interpretation of primary sources.*

Attendance requirements(%):

*At least 75%*

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The method of instruction in this course is based on lectures and discussion of primary texts (in translation) that emphasizes critical reading, interpretation and evaluation of those primary sources. Through the analysis of the writings of the ancient and medieval political thinkers, the central issues in political thought will be uncovered as well as creating awareness of the different positions that have been held towards these issues by*

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various thinkers in different cultures and historical periods -- from ancient Greece until the end of the middle ages. The teaching method will encourage class discussion and not only lecturing by the teacher.

Course/Module Content:

1. Political Thought and its Development: Introduction and Overview
2. Political Regimes and Comparisons between them in Classical Greek Historians
3. Disputes about the Essence of Nature ("Physis"), Law ("Nomos") and Justice in the Sophists and in the Athenian Assembly of Citizens
4. Socrates and his Trial
5. Introduction to Plato's Republic and Discussions about the Accepted Ideas of Justice
6. The Republic: Education and Myths
7. The Republic: Justice, the Equality of Women and Men, the Elimination of Private Property, the Elimination of the (Nuclear) Family, and the Community of Children
8. The Republic: The Philosopher-King and the Just Regime
9. Critique of the "Corrupt Regimes" in the Republic and the Possibility of Second-Best Regimes under the Rule of Law in Plato's Statesman
10. Introduction to Aristotle: "Telos" and Teleology; The Essence of Politics (Political Science), its Worthy Students and their Role in the Political Regime; The Difference Between the Practical Life and the Theoretical Life
11. Aristotle: Justice, Law and Friendship
12. Aristotle: Nature and its Different Meanings
13. Aristotle: Who is (or Should Be) a Citizen; the Good Citizen and the Good Human; Comparisons of Political Regimes
14. Political Thought in Rome and in Hellenistic Jewish Thinkers: The Stoics, Polybius, Philo and Josephus Flavius
15. Political Thought in the Medieval Arabic Speaking World (I): A) The Transmission of the Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle to the Medieval Arabic Speaking World. B) The Influence of Plato on the Political Thought of Islamic Philosophers and on their Conceptions of the Proper Relationship between Religion and Politics
16. Political Thought in the Medieval Arabic Speaking World (II): A) The Use of Interpretations of Plato's Writings by Islamic Philosophers to Hide Critiques of the Existing Political and Religious Laws [Averroes' Commentary of the Republic]. B) The use of Philosophic Interpretation of Religious Scripture to Introduce Philosophic Concepts into the Religious Tradition [Passages from the Writings of Maimonides]
17. Early Christianity: A) Introduction to the New Testament and to Early Christianity. B) The Political, A-Political and Anti-Political Conceptions in the New Testament and the New Testament's Social Conception of the Community of Believers. C) The Attitude to Politics in the Writings of the Church Fathers Before and After the Rule of Constantine
18. Augustine: A) Introduction to Augustine and his Historical Times. B) Central Concepts in the City of God. C) Augustine and the Superiority of the Spiritual Life over the Temporal Life
19. Thomas Aquinas: A) The Rediscovery of Some of the Writings of Aristotle and

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*the Influence of these Writings and the Writings of Islamic Philosophers on Christian Political thought from the Early 13th Century. B) Aquinas and the Central Doctrines and Principles of his Political Thought*

*20. Marsilius of Padua and the Principles of his Political Thought: 1) Harbinger of Modern Political Thought; Theory of Ascending Political Sovereignty from the People/Citizens – The People (or their "Weighty Part") as Sovereign and Legislator' and the Ruler(s) as "Public Servants". First of the Important Medieval Political Thinkers to Deny any Connection between Politics and Metaphysics; The Possibility of Happiness in This World. 2) Extreme Criticism of the Pope (and the Church) as a Central Factor that Causes War and Divisiveness in Human Affairs; Clear Statement of the Need for Separation of Religion and Politics and Limitation of the Spiritual Sphere (under the Control of the Church) to Matters Directly Related to Life After Death*

*Required Reading:*

*The following is a tentative list of the required readings for this course. The final list of required readings will appear prior to the beginning of the course.*

*Herodotus, The Histories, Book 3, §§ (sections) 79-83, Book 5, §§ 91-92.*

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, Book 2, §§ 34-46 and §§ 59-65, Book 5, §§ 84-105.*

*Selections from the Sophists: Protagoras, Gorgias, Callicles, Antiphon and Thrasymachus.*

*Plato, The Apology of Socrates.*

*Plato, Republic, Selections from all 10 books.*

*Plato, Statesman (Stephanus 291-303).*

*Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book 1, Chapters 1-4; Book 5, Selections from Chs. 2, 3 and 4; Book 8, Selections from Chs. 1, 3, 9, 10 and 11; Book 9, Selections from Ch. 6; Book 10, Chs. 7-9.*

*Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, Chs. 1, 2 and Selections from Chs. 3-6; Book 3, Chs. 1, 4-7 and 11; Book 4, Selections from Ch. 11*

*Polybius, Histories, Book 6, Selections from Chs. 2-10, Chs. 15-18 and 56-57.*

*Philo (of Alexandria), On Creation of the World, §§ 1-3; Joseph, §§ 28-36; Life of Moses, Book 1, §§ 1-2, 20-24; Book 2, §§ 8-24; Abraham, §§ 1-6 and 89-98.*

*Josephus Flavius, Against Apion, Book 2, §§ 14-41 (or in alternative numbering, paragraphs 145-183, 217-235, 280-286 and 291-296).*

*Al-Farabi, The Political Regime, in Lerner and Mahdi, Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook, pp. 31-41. JA82/L4 (020565)*

*Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Averroes on Plato's Republic, translated by Ralph Lerner, pp. 21-25, 57-59, 71-75 and 148-149. JC71/P6/A83 (198705)*

*Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, Book 1, Chs. 1-2.*

*Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Book of Knowledge, Laws of Repentance, Chs. 8-9.*

*Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Book of Judges, Laws of Kings and Their Wars, Chs. 11-12.*

*New Testament, Comparisons between various Gospels:*

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Matthew, ch. 5 // Luke 6:17-38;  
Matthew, ch. 10:32-39 // Luke 12:22-53;  
Matthew, ch. 16:13-20; 226 T531  
Mark 12:13-17 // Matthew 22:15-22 // Luke 20:20-26;  
Mark 13 // Matthew 24:1-44 // Luke 21:5-34;  
Matthew 26:51-52 // Luke 22:47-53;  
Mark 15:2-5 // Matthew 27:11-14 // Luke 23:2-5 // John 18:29-38;  
Luke, 24:13-49

N.T. Acts, 1:4-8, 2:42-47, 4:32-35.

N.T. Romans, 13:1-7.

N.T. The Revelation of John, Chapters 17, 18:21-24, 19:1-10, 21:1-8 and 22.

Selections from early Church Fathers (Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, St. Basil and Ambrose) - copies to be passed out.

Augustine, City of God, Book 4, Chs. 4 and 32; Book 5, Chs. 17 and 24-25; Book 13, Ch. 14; Book 14, Chs. 1, 9 (end), and Selections from 28; Book 15, Chs. 1-2 and 4; Book 19, Selections from Chs. 4, 14-17, 21, 23 and 27.

Aquinas, On Kingship (De Regimine Principum), Selections from Chs. 1, 6, 12 and 14.

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I-I, Question 96, § 4.

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I-II, Selections from Questions 90, 91, 94, 95 and 97.

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae II-II, Selections from Questions 10 (§ 10), 66 (§§ 1-2), and 104 (§§ 1 and 5-6).

Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Book 1, Selections from Chs. 3 and 7.

Marsilius of Padua, Defender of the Peace, Discourse 1, Selections from Ch. 1 (§§ 3 and 8), Ch. 4 (§ 1 and the first half of § 3), Ch. 5 (§§ 10-14), Ch. 12 (§§ 2-3 and §§5-9), Ch. 13 (§§7-8), and Ch. 19 (§§ 8-9 and §§11-13).

### Additional Reading Material:

The course is based on required readings from primary sources. Nevertheless, on occasion the teacher will suggest additional, optional readings from secondary sources. These readings will relate to issues that have been raised in class discussions or they will be general background readings that can provide a broader context for students interested in enriching their general knowledge of the historical periods and political or cultural setting that existed at the time when the primary sources were written.

### Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 50 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 35 %

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Assignments 15 %  
Reports 0 %  
Research project 0 %  
Quizzes 0 %  
Other 0 %

Additional information:

*There are two required submissions of written work during the course (and any student who does not submit both of those requirements will not be eligible to take the final exam). These required written submissions are one brief assignment (targil) and one lengthier paper (avoda). There will be two different dates for submission of both the brief assignment and the lengthier paper. A student who desires to submit both of the brief assignments may do so, but in that case only the grade on the second assignment will count towards his/her final grade in the course. Students are permitted to submit only one lengthy paper.*

*The lecturer reserves the right to give a limited bonus to the final grade for active participation that makes a special contribution to class discussions.*