

DIRECTED STUDIES: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT, SECTION 6

Yale University
Fall 2021

Course Information

Time/Place: M 11:35-12:25 in HQ L02, TTH 2:30-3:45 in HQ 133
Professor: Daniel Schillinger
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Office: HQ 162
Office Hours: M 2:00-3:30 and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

“A study of works of primary importance to political thought and intellectual history. Focus on the role of ideas in shaping events, institutions, and the fate of the individual. In the fall term, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas. In the spring term, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Tocqueville, Emerson, Marx, Nietzsche, and Arendt.”

In other words, this course surveys the history of Western political thought with the aim of illuminating fundamental texts and questions. While we will observe characteristic differences between Greeks and Romans, philosophers and historians, ancients and moderns, defenders of religion and those of politics, our primary aim is neither to tell a story about the evolution of ideas nor to identify transhistorical truths. Rather, we want to inhabit the mind of each thinker, to see as he or she sees, from the inside. This approach to the texts will allow us to engage the history of political thought as an ongoing conversation animated by fundamental questions about human experience and purposes—that is, as a kind of Platonic dialogue writ-large. Questions that we will take up include the following: What is the best regime? How does political activity contribute, if it all, to human flourishing? Is wisdom title to rule? What is the role of power in domestic and international politics? What are the arguments for and against democratic citizenship? Should the state tolerate a variety of religious ideals and practices? What is freedom? If modern political life is characterized by alienation and injustice, then what has gone wrong, and what would constitute progress? Should we reconsider ancient political ideals or practices?

By immersing ourselves in our chosen texts, and by working through the texts in both conversation and writing, we will cultivate excellence in textual analysis and interpretative argument. In fact, these texts require immersive reading, writing, and reflection, because they are as carefully written as they are philosophically rich. Finally, through our engagement with the untimely and alien political thought of the past, we may hope to gain critical distance on our own political horizons and beliefs.

Required Texts

Please purchase personal copies of the following texts. While copies are available at the Yale University Bookstore, it may make sense for you to buy the texts online. Powell's, Bookshop, Abe Books, and Book Depository are good options. All other readings will be posted to the course's Canvas site.

- 1) *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. 5th edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- 2) Herodotus. *The History*. Translated by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- 3) Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Rex Warner. New York: Penguin, 1971.
- 4) Plato. *Republic*. Translated by C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004.
- 5) Aristotle. *The Politics*. 2nd edition. Translated by Carnes Lord. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- 6) Polybius. *The Histories*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- 7) Livy. *The Rise of Rome: Books 1-5*. Translated by T.J. Luce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- 8) Tacitus. *Annals*. Translated by Michael Grant. New York: Penguin, 2013.
- 9) Augustine. *City of God*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- 10) Aquinas. *Treatise on Law*. Translated by Richard D. Regan. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.

Course Expectations and Practices

By far the most important expectation and requirement for this course is that you read the assigned texts carefully and prior to class. You should expect to read for at least two hours, and perhaps for much longer, in preparation for each session. Read and read again! Take notes! In this course, the only way out is through—through the text with pen in hand. You should also strive to attend every session. There are no excused absences except in the event of a documented illness or emergency. Most importantly, during class, please try to discuss the texts and to engage with your classmates in a spirit of questioning, openness, and friendship. This seminar hinges on your conversation, careful study, and attention. Students who read carefully and participate enthusiastically will have every chance of success. For my part, I promise to be flexible, open, and available, especially in light of the pandemic. Please don't hesitate to talk to me or email me about anything related to the course.

Marking Scheme

1) Paper 1 (5 pages, due Sep. 17)	20 %
2) Paper 2 (5 pages, due Oct. 15)	20 %
3) Paper 3 (5 pages, due Nov. 12)	20 %
4) Final Exam	25 %
5) Attendance and Participation	15 %

Essays and Assessment Criteria

Each essay that you write for this course should satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) The essay directly responds to a prompt or question.
- 2) The essay contains a clear yet appropriately complex argument.
- 3) The essay displays careful engagement with relevant texts, ideas, and questions.
- 4) The essay eschews basic errors and achieves a polished writing style.

The third criterion is most important. Even so, “A” essays will satisfy each criterion listed above by exhibiting mastery of both the texts and of the elements of the academic essay. “B” essays will fall short of mastery while attaining competence. “C” essays will satisfy these criteria to a minimal extent. “D” essays will not meet these criteria, though they will suggest some effort. “F” essays will suggest an unacceptable lack of engagement and effort. In addition, essays should be double-spaced, written in 12 pt. font, and formatted according to an accepted style of citation. Please submit all written work directly to me via email in the form of a Word document.

With each essay assignment, I will offer more specific advice and encourage you to involve me in your writing process, if you think that doing so would help you. I would be very glad to talk through your ideas, look at an outline, or read a draft.

Participation and “Starters”

Participation in class discussion is crucial. While participation should be consistent and energetic, it will be graded on its judiciousness and quality. I will often circulate discussion questions before class meetings. Use these questions to guide your reading and to prepare to contribute to the conversation.

As a part of your participation in the course, you will be asked to initiate and guide the conversation during a Thursday session. You should arrive to this session with a few big questions or puzzling passages on which you would like to focus our attention. My own discussion questions can serve as models. We will establish a schedule for these “starters” during the first week of the course.

Extensions and Lateness

No extensions will be permitted in the absence of official documentation of a serious illness or an emergency submitted to me prior to the deadline. Late papers will be penalized one quarter letter grade for each day late. To be clear, a late paper that would have received an A- will receive a B+ if it is one day late, a B if it is two days late, and so on. If you anticipate that you will find it difficult to complete an assignment on time, please talk to me as soon as possible.

Honor System and Academic Integrity

I am serious about promoting academic integrity in this course; any kind of unauthorized assistance will not be tolerated. Please consult the definition of academic integrity in the Yale University Student Handbook. Of course, if you have questions about academic integrity, please ask me.

Accessibility and Religious Observance

I am committed to accessible and inclusive learning. Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact me as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams. If you will need accommodation for religious observance, please also notify me right away.

Schedule of Readings

1. The Hebrew Bible: Exodus

Lecture (Garsten): Friday, Sep. 3 (note special time, due to Labor Day on Mon., Sep. 6th)

Discussions:

- i) The Hebrew Bible, Genesis, chapters 37-50; Exodus, chapters 1-15
- ii) The Hebrew Bible, Exodus, chapters 16-40

2. Herodotus, *History*

Lecture (Smith): Monday, Sept. 13

Discussions:

- i) Herodotus, *History* I.1-91; II.35-41; III.27-38; III.61-89; VI.94-120
- ii) Herodotus, *History* VII.1-60; 99-105; VII.129-63, 184-87; VII.201-VIII.125; VIII.140-144

3. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

Lecture (Schillinger): Monday, Sept. 20

Discussions:

- i) Thucydides, *Pel War* I.1-1.23 (pp. 35-49); I.66-1.97 (pp. 72-93); I.125-1.146 (pp. 108-23).
- ii) Thucydides, *Pel War* II.1-2.65 (pp. 124-64); III.36-3.50 (pp. 212-23); III.81-3.84 (pp.241-45); V.84-5.116 (pp. 400-8)
- iii) Thucydides, *Pel War* VI.6-6.32 (pp. 412-29); VI.47-6.61 (pp. 439-49); VI.89-6.93 (pp. 466-70); VII.50-7.87 (pp. 510-537)

4. Plato, *Republic*

Lecture (Wilford): Monday, Sept. 27

Lecture (Smith): Monday, Oct. 4

Discussions:

- i) Plato, *Republic* I-II
- ii) Plato, *Republic* III-IV
- iii) Plato, *Republic* V-VI
- iv) Plato, *Republic* VII-VIII

5. Aristotle, *Politics*

Lecture (Schillinger): Monday, Oct. 11

Discussions:

- i) Aristotle, *Politics* I, II:1-5
- ii) Aristotle, *Politics* III

6. Polybius, *The Histories*

Lecture (Semmel): Monday, Oct. 18

Discussion:

- i) Polybius, *Histories* I.1-6; III.1-6, 10-11, 30-32, 77-81; VI.1-18, 25-26, 36-39, 41-58; X.2; XI.19

7. Livy, *The Rise of Rome*

Lecture (Garsten): Monday, Oct. 25

Discussions:

- i) Livy, *The Rise of Rome*, (Author's) Preface; I.1-21, 46-60; II.1-13, 23-40, 54-61; III.44-58, 64-69
- ii) Livy, *The Rise of Rome*, IV.1-7, 58-61; V (entire)

8. Plutarch, *Parallel Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*

Lecture (Almeida Nevin): Monday, Nov. 1

Discussions:

- i) Plutarch, *Lives*, “Caesar”
- ii) Plutarch, *Lives*, “Brutus”

9. Tacitus, *Annals*

Lecture (Smith): Monday, Nov. 8

Discussions:

- i) Tacitus, *Annals* I (entire); IV.32-35
- ii) Tacitus, *Annals* XIII.1-28; XIV.1-21, 29-39; XV.36-39, 44, 47-64

10. Augustine, *City of God*

Lecture (Freedman): Monday, Nov. 15

Discussions:

- i) Augustine, *City of God* I.4, 14-21; II.4-7; IV.3-4; V.1-25; VIII.9-11; XI.1; XII.1-14, 21-23; XIII.21
- ii) Augustine, *City of God* XIV.1-6, 11-28; XV.1-6; XVIII.49-53; XIX. 7, 10-28

11. Al-Farabi and Maimonides

Lecture (Franks): Monday, Nov. 29

Discussions:

- i) Al-Farabi, *The Political Regime, The Attainment of Happiness* (selections, handout)
- ii) Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* (selections, handout)

12. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*

Lecture (Herdt): Monday, Dec. 6

Discussions:

- i) Aquinas, *Treatise on Law* Q 90-94 (pp. 1-43)
- ii) Aquinas, *Treatise on Law* Q 95-97 (pp. 44-69)