Course Syllabus

Fall 2018
(Tentative syllabus August 2018. Please consult the official version on MyCourses.)

Professor: Catherine Lu
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Phone: 398-3077
Course lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:30 pm
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:30 pm, Ferrier Building Room 466, or by appointment.

Course Aims and Pre-requisites

This course is the first part of a cycle of courses on the history of political thought offered by the Department. This year we will explore key texts by ancient Greek authors, including Aeschylus, Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle. Themes include the relationship between Greek tragedy/poetry and political philosophy; between philosophy and politics; between human nature and convention; between law and constitutions; between justice and the virtues; and between democracy and its alternatives. As a pre-requisite, you must have taken at least one university-level course in political theory (preferably POLI 231) or a comparable course in philosophy.

Required Texts

Texts are available from Paragraphe Bookstore at 2020 McGill College Ave.


*Please bring the relevant text to all lectures.*

The best way to understand the texts is by reading them carefully and repeatedly. There are no compulsory secondary texts for this course and you will not be rewarded extra marks just for citing additional books or articles in your essays.
Teaching Arrangements
The course will consist of two one-hour lectures every week, followed by a half-hour discussion after each lecture. Attendance of lectures and discussions is mandatory. There is also a one-day workshop of student presentations on Monday, November 5. Attendance of this workshop is a mandatory component of the course.

Assignments and Grade Distribution
1. 2 short papers (max. 1500 words) = 60% (30% each)
2. Midterm = 30%
3. Course presentation (November 5) = 10%

Policies
1. Please ensure that you have done the readings by the beginning of the week in which they will be discussed, as I will lecture on the assumption that you have done the readings for the week.
2. Each of the essays should be a maximum of 1500 words in length. Marks will be deducted for essays that are too long. Essay topics and further instructions will be provided later. Late penalties: The papers will be penalized 2/3 of a letter grade per day late. For example, if your paper was worth an A, but was one day late, you would receive a B+ instead. If your paper was worth a B, but was two days late, it would receive D. This policy does not apply if you are seriously ill or distracted by a serious emergency, but in the event of such circumstances it is your responsibility to inform me before the assignment is due so that we can make other arrangements. Being ill for one or two days before the paper is due, however, will NOT be a sufficient reason to waive the entire late penalty.
3. Midterm – November 13. Further instructions will be provided.
4. In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).
5. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).
6. © Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of
copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

6. **Policy on technology use during lectures and conferences**
This is a manual note-taking lecture and discussion course. The use or display of any mobile computing or communications devices (including computers, recording devices, phones, iPads, or iPods) is strictly banned during class, except with the explicit permission of the instructor in exceptional cases. **Exceptions:** Explicit permission for the use of a computer may be granted by the professor in particular circumstances for students for whom its use is justified to facilitate in-class note-taking or learning. You must receive explicit permission from the professor in such a case.

**Reading and Lecture schedule**

**Week 1**

Sept 4 (1.5 hour): Course Introduction: Major Themes in Ancient Political Thought.

Sept 6 (1.5 hours): Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (entire play): tragedy and political theory; tragedy and democracy.

**Week 2**

September 11: Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (entire play): justice and reconciliation; the emotions and politics.


**Week 3**

Sept 18: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 5 (sections 84-116), Book 6 (sections 1-32), Book 7 (sections 42-87): agency, contingency, and morality; rhetoric and politics; what kind of tragedy?

Sept 20: Thucydides wrap-up

**Week 4**


**Sept 27:** Plato, *Gorgias*: shame and the democratic conscience, Callicles, Socrates and democracy.
**Week 5**

Oct 2: Plato, *Republic*: Book I (the challenge of Thrasymachus)

Oct 4: Plato, *Republic* Books II-IV (education, virtues of the individual and city, defence of justice)

**Week 6**

Oct 9 Plato, *Republic*: Books V (community, unity, women)


**Oct 11 – Short paper #1 due**

**Week 7**

No classes this week (Oct 16, 18)

**Week 8**


**Week 9**


Nov 1: Aristotle, *Politics*: Book I (nature, political animals, slavery)

**Week 10**

*November 5 Course presentations (10:00-12:00, 1:00-4:00 pm, location TBA)*

Nov 6: Aristotle, *Politics*: Book II (family and property)


**Week 11**

Nov 13: Midterm

Week 12 * No class on Nov 22


Week 13


November 29: Short paper #2 due
Nov 29 Course wrap-up