

History of Western Political Thought

PSC 110, NO3 Fall 2004

T/Th 9.25-10.40, SC 201

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Office Hours: T/Th 7.45-9.15 & 1.00-1.30; W 5.00-6.00; or by appointment

Introduction:

This course is an introduction to the major themes treated in the history of Western political thought. Throughout the course, we will examine such concepts as the self society, freedom, justice, equality, and democracy. The course is divided into two major parts. The first section covers the three central traditions (Greek, Biblical, and Roman) which have historically set the parameters for the development of the Western political tradition. The central themes of these traditions have very much remained the same for thousands of years. Through a close reading of selected texts, we will uncover how these traditions have influenced three very different understandings of these concepts. The second section of the course covers the ways in which these three traditions have informed multiple strains in modern political thought. Understanding traditional political thought will give you a foundation for then understanding contemporary political discourse.

Readings:

The following books/readings are required for the course:

- Marcus Aurelius, Meditations.
- The Bible.
- Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice, (reading on reserve)
- John Stuart Mill, On Liberty.
- Plato, The Republic.
- Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, (reading on reserve).

Contact Information:

Office hours and location are as listed above. If you cannot come to office hours, you can arrange to meet me by appointment. If you need to contact me, emailing me is your best bet. I generally check my email at least once a day Monday through Friday.

Requirements:

- Exam #1 =10% of overall grade
- Exam #2 =15% of overall grade
- Final Exam =20% of overall grade
- Quizzes =20% of overall grade
- Paper =20% of overall grade
- Class Participation =15% of overall grade

Exams: You are required to bring a Blue Book to each exam. There will be one make-up exam offered at the end of the semester to those students who have a valid excuse (I determine what qualifies as valid) for missing an exam.

Quizzes: There will be random in-class quizzes based on the reading assignments. If you are prepared for class, you will be prepared for the quiz. There will be NO make-ups given. I will drop the lowest grade.

Paper: Your paper assignment is a five-page, double-spaced critical thought paper. You will complete this in multiple parts throughout the semester and hand in one final completed paper as indicated on the schedule below. Late papers will lose a letter grade per class session. Any papers not received by the start of class on Thursday, December 9, 2004, will receive a grade of zero.

Class Participation: This course is heavily text-based, thus you should be prepared to discuss readings in class. Certainly, much of the reading will be difficult; it is your responsibility to come prepared with questions if you have trouble understanding the readings. It is **imperative** that you read and prepare the assigned readings for the class during which we will discuss them. Your contribution to the class discussions will largely determine your class participation grade. Participation grades are based on the **quality** of your participation, not solely the **quantity**. I keep track of not only how often you participate, but take note of what you contribute.

1) In-Class Discussions

As it is not possible to participate if you are not in class, it is in your best interest to attend class. And for the record, participation goes beyond showing up for class and breathing.

2) Blackboard Thread Discussions

I will post questions on Blackboard at <http://learnonline.nku.edu/> for discussion. This provides an additional way for participation for those of you who might feel less comfortable with in-class participation. Responses are not a substitution for in-class participation, but can enhance your participation by showing me you are interested and are keeping up with the reading. You will not lose participation points for not posting discussion points on Blackboard.

Additional Grading Information:

Late Assignments will cost you. Paper sections and your final paper will only be accepted on the due date as indicated on the schedule below, unless you have a valid excuse (as determined by me).

Extra credit projects are not an option.

All University policies apply, including the honor code. The work you will do in this course is subject to the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code is a commitment to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct, a commitment that, individually and collectively, the students of Northern Kentucky University will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements.

Students with disabilities who require accommodation(s) should make an appointment with the Student Support Services (572-5138) to discuss their specific needs as well as inform me of those needs.

If you encounter any problems throughout the semester regarding this class or your ability to participate, please let me know **ASAP**. It is not advisable to wait until the end of the semester to inform me of difficulties you are having, as it is then after the fact.

Schedule & Reading Assignments

We will discuss the readings on the days as indicated on the schedule. It is possible, however, that we may need to revise the schedule any number of times throughout the semester, depending on the length of class discussions.

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
T 8/24	General Introduction	
TH 8/26	Introduction to Political Theory Introduction to the Greek Tradition	
T 8/31	Plato introduction and discussion of reading	<u>The Republic</u> : Chapters X-XII
SEPTEMBER TH 9/2	<i>No Class</i>	
T 9/7	Plato	<u>The Republic</u> : Chapters XIII-XV • <i>Abstract due for Paper Project</i>
TH 9/9	Plato	<u>The Republic</u> : Chapters XVI-XIX

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
T 9/14	Plato	<u>The Republic</u> : Chapters XX-XXII
TH 9/16	<i>No Class</i>	
T 9/21	Plato	<u>The Republic</u> : Chapters XXIII-XXIV
TH 9/23	Plato	<u>The Republic</u> : Chapter XXV
T 9/28	Finish Greek tradition	
TH 9/30	Introduction to Biblical Tradition	
OCTOBER T 10/5	<u>The Bible</u>	Book of Exodus
TH 10/7	<u>The Bible</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Greek paper section due</i>
T 10/12	Finish Biblical tradition, compare with Greek tradition	
TH 10/14	Exam #1	
T 10/19	<i>Fall Break-No Classes</i>	
TH 10/21	Marcus Aurelius	<u>Meditations</u> : Books I-III
T 10/26	Marcus Aurelius	<u>Meditations</u> : Books IV-VI
TH 10/28	Paper Day	Optional sign-up time between 8-10:30 to discuss your paper
NOVEMBER T 11/2	<i>Election Day-No Classes</i>	Exercise your right to vote
TH 11/4	Marcus Aurelius Introduction to John Stuart Mill	Social Contract Theory link on your course page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bible paper section due</i>
T 11/9	John Stuart Mill	<u>On Liberty</u> : Chapter 1
TH 11/11	John Stuart Mill	<u>On Liberty</u> : Chapter 2
T 11/16	John Stuart Mill	<u>On Liberty</u> : Chapter 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Roman paper section due</i>
TH 11/18	Carol Gilligan	Gilligan reading on reserve
T 11/23	Carol Gilligan	
TH 11/25	<i>Holiday-No Classes</i>	
T 11/30	Iris Marion Young	Young reading on reserve
DECEMBER TH 12/2	Iris Marion Young	<i>Paper Project due</i>
T 12/7	Exam #2	
TH 12/9	Tying it all together	
T 12/14 10:10-12:10	Final Exam	

