Justice, the Best Regime, and the Good Life

This course provides an introduction to the comprehensive political questions: justice (Who deserves what?), the best regime (Who should rule?) and, ultimately, what constitutes a good, worthwhile, or fulfilling human life—the kind of life a good regime should support. We will examine these questions by reading some of the best texts ever written about them: Plato’s Republic, selections from Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologica and his On Kingship, Machiavelli’s Prince, Locke’s Second Treatise of Government, and Tocqueville’s Democracy in America. These texts present powerful but competing views the questions of justice, the best regime, and the good life, in the light of which we will attempt to reassess our own views. Every text we study is of the highest quality, and we will try to give them the careful reading they merit. In exploring them, this course should provide the student with the beginnings of an understanding of the enduring philosophical problems toward which our everyday political disagreements point. It should also provide them with an opportunity to reflect on the question of how to live as an individual and a member of a political community.

BOOKS FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE

Plato, Republic, tr. Allan Bloom (Basic Books)

St. Thomas Aquinas, Political Writings, ed. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge)

Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince, tr. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago)

John Locke, Political Writings, Ed. David Wootton (Hackett)

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (2 Vol.), ed. Eduardo Nolla (Liberty Fund)

DAILY SCHEDULE

January 14-February 6: Plato’s Republic and Classical Political Philosophy

January 14: Introduction/ Begin Book I

January 16: Plato, Republic, Books I and II (through 368b only). Paper I Due in Class.

January 21: Republic, Books II-III.

January 23: Republic, Books IV-V (through 465d only).

January 28: Republic, Books V-VI.


January 30: Republic, Book VII.

February 4: Republic, Book VIII.

February 6: Republic, Book IX.

February 7: Paper II due by 4:30 PM.
February 11-27: Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Political Philosophy

Note: For day-by-day Aquinas readings, refer to the Aquinas Packet on Moodle.

February 11: Aquinas, Class 1.


February 13: Aquinas, Class 2.

February 18: Aquinas, Class 3.

February 20: Aquinas, Class 4.

February 25: Aquinas, Class 5.


February 27: Aquinas, Class 6.

February 28: Optional Paper A1 due by 4:30 pm.

March 4-20: Machiavelli’s Prince and Modern Political Philosophy

March 4: The Prince, Dedicatory Letter, chapters I-VI; Discourses (Moodle), Dedicatory Letter, Book I, Preface, Chapters 9-10, 19-20. Compare the dedicatory letter of The Prince to that of the Discourses and the preface to Book I; Prince Chapter II to Discourses I 19-20; Prince Chapter VI to Discourses I.9-10.

March 6: The Prince Chapters VII-X; Discourses I, 18 (last two paragraphs only), 26-27, and 58. Compare Prince Chapter VIII to Discourses I.18, 26-27; Prince chapter IX to Discourses I.58.

March 11, 13: No class (Spring Break)

March 18: Prince chapters XI-XVIII, Discourses I.11-12 and II.2; 1 Samuel 17:12 to 18:9 (Moodle). Compare Chapter XI to Discourses I.11-12 and II.2, and Prince chapter XIII to 1 Samuel 17:12-18:9.


March 21: Optional Paper A2 due by 4:30 pm.

March 25-April 3: John Locke’s Liberal Political Philosophy

March 25: Second Treatise of Government, chapters I-V.

March 27: Second Treatise of Government, chapter VI-IX.

April 1: Second Treatise, chapters X-XV.


April 3: Second Treatise, chapters XVI-XIX; Declaration of Independence (Moodle).

April 4: Optional Paper B1 due by 4:30 pm.
April 8-29: Alexis de Tocqueville’s Political Philosophy and American Democracy

April 8: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, I.1, Introduction, chapter 2 (p. 3-32, 45-73).
April 10: No class (Furman Engaged).
April 15: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, I.1.3-5 (through “Of Town Spirit in New England” only); I.2.7 (p. 74-114, 403-426).
April 17: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.1.1-3, 5-8 (p. 697-736, 742-762).
April 22: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.1.9-11, 15-17, 20, II.2.1-2, 4, 8 (p. 763-794, 815-843, 853-860, 872-884, 918-926).
April 24: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.2.9-20; II.3.8, 12 (p. 926-995, 1031-1041, 1062-1067).
April 29: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II.4.6-8 (p. 1245-1285). Optional Paper B2 due by 4:30 pm.

Monday, May 5, 12:00 noon: Final Exam.

ASSIGNMENTS, PARTICIPATION, AND GRADING

Breakdown of Course Grades:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Paper</td>
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<td>2nd Paper</td>
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<td>4th Paper</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Participation and Quizzes:

This element of your grade will be composed of three elements: attendance, active participation in class, and four to five pop quizzes given over the course of the term.

- Attendance at every class meeting is expected; after 2 unexcused absences, every further absence results in the loss of one partial letter grade (B becomes B-, B- becomes C+, and so on).
- You are expected to be present not only physically but mentally: perfect attendance without active class participation amounts to a C for this portion of your grade; the addition of regular participation earns a B; frequent, helpful, intelligent participation earns an A.
• Quizzes: On quiz days, you will be asked to take five to ten minutes to summarize that day’s reading. I recommend preparing for quizzes by doing the reading carefully and then taking a few minutes to summarize what you have read.

Papers: The first and second papers—a summarization exercise on books I and II of Plato’s Republic, and an interpretive essay on the Republic—are required. After that, you must choose to write two of the four optional papers: you must write on either St. Thomas or Machiavelli (options A1 and A2), and you must write on either Locke or Tocqueville (options B1 and B2). You must email your fourth paper (on Locke or Tocqueville) to both me and PS Department Assistant Lori Schoen (lori.schoen@furman.edu) for assessment purposes.

Exam: The final exam will ask you to write an essay comparing several of the authors we have read this term on one of the course’s major themes.

Academic Integrity: In your papers, you must cite our primary texts frequently; more precise instructions on how to do so can be found on the page below entitled “Citation Format.” If you consult any source beyond the assigned reading for an assignment, you must also cite that source. This includes electronic resources. Quotations or paraphrases from any source that are not accompanied by proper citations constitute plagiarism and will be treated as academic integrity violations.

Grade Scale:

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<th>Grade Values</th>
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<td>A</td>
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Grade Values: A 4.0, A- 3.7, B+ 3.3, B 3.0, B- 2.7, C+ 2.3, C 2.0, C- 1.7, D+ 1.3, D 1.0, D- 0.7, F 0.0

Grade Ranges: A 3.83-4.00, A- 3.50-3.83, B+ 3.17-3.50, B 2.83-3.17, B- 2.50-2.83, C+ 2.17-2.50, C 1.83-2.17, C- 1.50-1.83, D+ 1.17-1.50, D 0.83-1.17, D- 0.50-0.83, F 0.00-0.50
Writing and Grading Guidelines

I. First Paper: Summarize the opinions about justice stated by Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasydamus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus in the first two books of Plato’s *Republic* (327a-368b).

In this paper, your task is simply to summarize the arguments about justice made by each of the major characters (except Socrates) in the first book and a half of Plato’s *Republic*. You should paraphrase the general position taken by each character on the question of justice, and quote specific sentences, phrases, or words that seem to you particularly important. Your summary should have an introductory paragraph that briefly states the content of your paper as a whole from the outset (you will probably write this paragraph after you have written the body of the summary). The thesis of each succeeding paragraph should be *italicized*. You should devote one or more paragraphs to each interlocutor, and aim to capture the distinctive contribution each character makes to the discussion.

Specific Grades:
A. An outstanding summary, which captures the point of each character’s argument accurately and succinctly. Makes clear the distinctive contribution of each character to Plato’s discussion of justice. Scholarly, free of wasted words or errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or citation. Makes a summary interesting by choosing material well and shaping it clearly.
B. A solid summary, that correctly accounts for the position taken by each character in the first two books of Plato’s *Republic*. Scholarly, clearly structured and cleanly written; not outstanding, but lacking major or obvious defects.
C. Performs the assignment with basic competence, but not excellence. Usually fails to meet one of the basic goals of the assignment. Defects in scholarship, structure, or writing.
D. A perfunctory effort.
F. Either an exceedingly perfunctory effort or failure to turn in the assignment.
II. Interpretive Essays

Interpretive essays will show that the student (1) understands the text to be interpreted and appreciates its significance; (2) has formulated a concise, definite, contestable thesis; (3) has organized his or her answer by stating a thesis at the outset, drawing a conclusion at the end, and proceeding through a logical sequence of paragraphs in the middle that advance an argument from the thesis to the conclusion; (4) has marshaled specific evidence from the text to support his or her thesis in a manner that demonstrates independent engagement with the text; (5) has carefully edited and proofread his or her writing to produce a compact and compelling style.

Specific Grades:
A: An outstanding essay, marked by unusual clarity of description, force of argument, richness and precision of language, inventiveness, or wit. Formulates a thesis that demonstrates thoughtful integration of material. Carefully organized and well-written. Makes detailed reference to the text in question. Usually the result of mastering particular points, and then stepping back and composing an interesting and compelling essay.
B: A good essay that has a solid thesis and disciplined argument, but is competent rather than distinguished. Clear organization, clean writing, and evidence of substantial specific knowledge of the text.
C: Lacks a true thesis and shows only marginal appreciation of the text’s significance. Usually, deficient in textual specificity, organization, or quality of writing. May show some competence, but not sufficient to compensate for the paper’s defects.
D: Fails to offer a true thesis and shows little appreciation of the text’s significance. Poorly organized, lacking in textual specificity, badly written, or all of the above.
F: No evidence of serious work.

*Suggested themes for interpretive essays appear at the end of the study guide for each section of the course.*

For all papers written in PSC-103, please underline the overall thesis of your paper and italicize the thesis of each paragraph. This requirement is intended to help you organize your writing and discipline your argument.

Make ample use of the Oxford English Dictionary Online (ned.com), and the Chicago Manual of Style Online (chicagomanualofstyle.org) while writing. You will need to access both through the library’s webpage (library.furman.edu); the class moodle site has links.
Citation Format for Papers in PSC-103

I. For our primary sources, use parenthetical citations. Parenthetical citations should appear at the end of a sentence, after any quotation marks, but before the period. Several examples:

- In Plato’s Republic, Socrates argues that justice is “the minding of one’s own business” (433a).
- Socrates argues that “[u]nless . . . the philosophers rule as kings or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize . . . there is no rest from the ills of the cities,” even though he is aware that the change he speaks of in politics is exceedingly unlikely (472d; see also 499b-c and 541a).

II. Pagination for each source:

- For Plato’s Republic, give the Stephanus numbers and letters in the margin for your citations (443a, 457c-d, etc.)
- For St. Thomas, give the article number from the Summa Theologica (i.e., I-I.5) or, for On Kingship, the title and page number from the assigned translation (i.e., On Kingship, 37).
- For Machiavelli, give the brief title and page number from the assigned translations (Prince, 17; Discourses, 112).
- For Locke, give the page number for the assigned edition (265).
- For Tocqueville, give the volume, part, chapter, and page number (i.e., II.1.1.698).

III. Your paper should include a bibliography. The relevant bibliographic information for Plato’s Republic is as follows:


Citations of our other primary text should follow this format.

IV. If you use other resources when writing your paper, provide a parenthetical citation that includes the author, date, and page number for that resource. Then include a citation of that resource in your bibliography that includes the author, title, publisher, translator or editor (if applicable), place of publication (except for e-resources), and publication date.
• Example of a parenthetical citation of a secondary resource:

As Eva Brann comments, “Socrates refuses to explicate the Good directly because it is not to be attained and conveyed in speech” (Brann 2004, 97).

• Examples of bibliographic entries for secondary research items:

1. Book:


2. Article:


3. Electronic Resource:


If you have questions about proper citation format, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style Online.*

Correct citation format is a graded element of your written work for PSC-103.