

PS 50: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Office Hours: MW.4:30-5:20;Thurs.2:30-4
and by appointment

This course is a broad introduction to the field of Political Philosophy. People from every society have asked fundamental questions concerning the nature of the universe, the character and purpose of human life, and the determination of just political and social orders. Answers to these questions have varied profoundly over time and across the world. The course will compare responses by selected political thinkers from different societies. There are many rich traditions of political discourse. The comparisons will serve as an introduction to a number of these traditions as well as highlighting and providing a deeper understanding of concepts that we take for granted in our own tradition.

The course is designed as a discussion class. It is expected that assigned readings will be completed by class time and that students will participate actively in the conversations. Students are also expected to complete two papers (7-10 pages each) and a final examination. From time to time, short (1-2 pages) position papers will be assigned to help facilitate discussions. Grading will be based on an equal weighting of the above components: 25% participation, 25% for each of the papers and 25% for the final examination.

Assigned books are available at Huntley Book Store.
Other assigned readings are available on Sakai

Lao Tzu, The Tao Te Ching

Plato, The Apology and Crito

Plato, The Republic

Aristotle, The Politics

Machiavelli, The Prince

Hobbes, The Leviathan

Locke, The Letter on Toleration

The Bible: Old and New Testaments

The Koran

Parel and Keith, Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies:Under the Upas Tree

Confucius, The Analects

Han Fei Tzu, Basic Writings

Descartes, Discourse on Method

READING ASSIGNMENTS

- September 5 Introduction
- September 10 The Comparative Perspective
Parel and Keith, *Comparative Political Philosophy*, chpt. 1-3
Arendt, "Introduction" to Between Past and Future (Sakai)

NATURE AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

- September 12 The Bible (Genesis 1-29, Exodus 1-21, 28-34, 1 Samuel 8-11,
Isaiah 1-7, 21, 45, John 1-8, 13-14)
- September 17 The Koran (selections)
- September 19 Lao Tse, The Tao Te Ching (selections)
- September 24 Descartes, The Discourse on Method
- September 26-
October 1 The Questions of King Melinda (Sakai) p. 1-136, 190-95,
202-13

PHILOSOPHY AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

- October 3 Plato, The Apology and the Crito
- October 8 Plato, The Republic, Part 1, Part 2 chpt. 5-8; Part III, chpt 23-25
- October 10-15 Aristotle, The Politics, Bk I, III chpt 1-4, Bk VII
- October 17 Confucius, The Analects, Bk 1-8, 11-17
- October 22 Fall Break (no class)
- October 24 Hsun Tzu, Basic Writings (Sakai)

Friday, October 26 **First Paper Due**

REASON VERSUS REVELATION: RELIGION AND STATE

- October 29-31 St. Thomas Aquinas Introduction to St. T. Aquinas (Sakai)
 p. 3-15, 435,609-22, 646-50
 St. Augustine, Political Writings of St. Augustine (Sakai)
 p.1-21, 28, 118-133. 195. 203-228
 Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah (Sakai) p. 154-166, 170-178,
 183-188, 333-346, 388-90, 398-405
 Alfarabi, “The Letter Concerning the Intellect” in Walsh & James,
 Philosophy in the Middle Ages (Sakai)
 Averroes, “The Decisive Treatise Determining the Nature of the
 Connection Between Religion and Philosophy” in Walsh &
 James (Sakai)
 Umar, “Farabi and Greek Philosophy in Parel and Keith,
 Comparative Political Philosophy (optional)
 Lao Tzu, Hua Hu Ching (Sakai) no. 15, 16, 43, 47-51, 78

Religion and the State

- November 5 Hobbes, Leviathan , Intro., Chpt 1,5, 10-13; Part II, Chpt. 17-18,
 21, 29-30.
 Locke, Letter on Toleration

MORALITY VERSUS EXPEDIENCY

- November 7 Machiavelli, The Prince
- November 12 Kautilaya’s, Arthasastra (Sakai, under T.N. Ramaswamy,
 Essentials of Indian Statecraft: Kautilya’s Arthasastra)
 Pages 45-147.
 K.J. Shah, “Of Artha and The Arthasastra” in Parel and Keith
 (optional)
 Confucius, The Analects, Bk 12-17 review

GOVERNMENT: AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY

- November 14-19 Aristotle, The Politics Bk IV, chpt 1-12; V, VI
 Marx, The Communist Manifesto (Sakai)
 Chuang Tzu (Sakai)

November 21-26 **The Law and Society**
Hobbes, The Leviathan, Part I 14-16; review 17, 18, 21; Part II
Chpts. 22-31.
Han Fei Tzu, Basic Writings
Keith, “Law and Society in Confucian Thought” in Parel
and Keith (optional)

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY

November 28- Hobbes, The Leviathan (selections)
December 3 J.S. Mill, On Liberty, chpt. 3 (Sakai)
Confucius, The Analects (selections)
Gbadegesin, “Eniyan: The Yoruba Concept of a Person” (Sakai)
Plato, “The Myth of Er”, The Republic, Part VI

December 5 **Equality and Hierarchy**
Plato, The Republic Part II, chpt. 10, 12-14
The Bhagavad Gita (Sakai) chpts. 1-4, 6, 13,18

December 7
(Friday) **Second Paper Due**

THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: GLOBALIZATION AND DIALOGUE

December 10 Nationalism/Decolonialization/ Neocolonialism
Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Sakai)
Mao Tse Tung (Sakai)
Keith, “Mao Zedong and his Political Thought” in Parel and Keith
Ware, “What Good is Democracy? The Alternatives in China and
the West”, in Parel and Keith

December 12 Moral Critique of the West
Gandhi (Sakai)
Parel, “M. Gandhi’s Critique of Modernity” in Parel and Keith
Tehranian, “Khomeini’s Doctrine of Legitimacy” in Parel and
Keith (optional)
Dialogue/review

Final Examination: Take home exam due Friday, December 21, 5 PM