

## PS 50: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Ms. Sharon Snowiss  
Fall 2009

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Office Hours: MW 4:15-5:30PM;  
Tues. 4:30-5:30 PM 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

T.N. Ramaswamy, Essentials of Indian Statecraft: Kautilya's Arthashastra (ereserves)

Confucius, The Analects

Han Fei Tzu, Basic Writings

Descartes, Discourse on Method

## READING ASSIGNMENTS

- September 2            Introduction
- September 7            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 9            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 14            The Koran (selections)
- September 16            Lao Tse, The Tao Te Ching
- September 21            Descartes, The Discourse on Method
- September 23- 28        The Questions of King Melinda (Sakai) p. 1-136, 190-95,  
202-13

### PHILOSOPHY AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

- September 30            Plato, The Apology and the Crito
- October 5                Plato, The Republic, Part 1, Part 2 chpt. 5-8; Part III, chpt 23-25
- October 7                Aristotle, The Politics, Bk I, III chpt 1-4, Bk VII
- October 12                Confucius, The Analects, Bk 1-8, 11-17
- October 14                Hsun Tzu, Basic Writings (Sakai)
- October 19                Fall Break (no class)
- Friday, October 23            **First Paper Due**

## REASON VERSUS REVELATION: RELIGION AND STATE

- October 21-26      St. Thomas Aquinas Introduction to St. T. Aquinas (ereserves)  
p. 3-15, 435,609-22, 646-50  
St. Augustine, Political Writings of St. Augustine (ereserves)  
p.1-21, 28, 118-133. 195. 203-228  
Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah (ereserves) 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 (ereserves)  
Averroes, “The Decisive Treatise Determining the Nature of the  
Connection Between Religion and Philosophy” in Walsh &  
James (ereserves)  
Umar, “Farabi and Greek Philosophy in Parel and Keith,  
Comparative Political Philosophy (optional)  
Lao Tzu, Hua Hu Ching (ereserves) no. 15, 16, 43, 47-51, 78

### Religion and the State

- October 28      Hobbes, Leviathan , Intro., Chpt 1,5, 10-13; Part II, Chpt. 17-18,  
21, 29-30.  
Locke, Letter on Toleration

## MORALITY VERSUS EXPEDIENCY

- November 2      Machiavelli, The Prince
- November 4      Kautilaya’s, Arthasastra (ereserves, 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 9-11      Aristotle, The Politics Bk IV, chpt 1-12; V, VI  
Marx, The Communist Manifesto  
Chuang Tzu ( Sakai)

- November 16-18      **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 23- 25      Hobbes, The Leviathan (selections)  
 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
- November 30            **Equality and Hierarchy**  
 Plato, The Republic Part II, chpt. 10, 12-14  
The Bhagavad Gita (Sakai) chpts. 1-4, 6, 13,18
- December 4            **Second Paper Due**

### **THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: GLOBALIZATION AND DIALOGUE**

- December 2            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 7            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
- December 9            Dialogue

**Final Examination: Thursday, December 17, 2009, 2PM**