

# Political Leadership and Statesmanship

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Office Hours: TBD, or by appointment

Office: Coor Hall 6636

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Class Hours: 9:00–10:15AM

Class Room: Farmer 212

## Course Description & Learning Objectives

The idea of political leadership seems at odds, or, even, in outright contradiction with the idea of democracy. On the one hand, the very idea of a leader suggests a great man, or woman, who by charisma and authority can shape and form mobs of individuals into a coherent whole. On the other hand, democracy seems to presuppose that no one man, or woman, is in charge—there are no princes or aristocrats. Moreover, many contemporary commentators think all leadership, not merely political leadership, is dead. In its place, so the argument goes, lies AI decision-making and social media influencing.

This course investigates the characteristics, qualities, and personalities of leadership in politics. Students will consider whether, or not, political leadership is still possible in a world which seems exponentially more complex than only a few years ago. In doing so, students will confront several major questions, including, but not limited to,

1. Does leadership have moral content?
2. Is there a difference between leadership and authority?
3. What makes a good leader?

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have acquired a firm grasp of leadership, and will be able to apply the insights of the course to contemporary issues which require strategic problem solving. They will have familiarity with

- (a) leading texts and figures of political and civil leadership from antiquity to the present,
- (b) the dilemmas and challenges political and civil leaders face, and
- (c) the leadership record of at least one historical political and/or civil leader.

The main approach to this class will through a close reading of core texts in the Western canon from Ancient Greece to the Cold War.

## Books

**Note Bene.** Students must purchase physical copies of the required texts (i.e., no ebooks). Although buying new books is strongly encouraged for all the required books, only Ryan Holiday's *The Daily Stoic Journal* must be purchased brand new.

## Required

Aurelius, Marcus. *Meditations*, G.M.A. Grube, trans. Hackett Publishing, Co., 1983.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Holiday, Ryan and Stephen Hanselman. *The Daily Stoic Journal: 366 Days of Writing and Reflection on the Art of Living*, New York, NY: Portfolio (Penguin), 2017

Kaufman, Robert G. *Henry M. Jackson: A Life In Politics*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Woodruff, Paul. *The Essential Thucydides: On Justice, Power, and Human Nature.*, Second Edition, Expanded and Revised\*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett 2021.<sup>1</sup>

## Recommended

**Note Bene.** Although this is not a writing course and, therefore, students will not receive much feedback on their writing, the following books are strongly encouraged for students who want to improve their writing. Since most of the student evaluation will come from written assignments, I wanted to provide a few key resources for those seeking to hone their craft.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory B. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. 4th edition. University of Chicago Press

Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th edition. Longman Publishers

Turabian, Kate L. 2018. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* 9th edition. University of Chicago Press

## Technology Policy (Or, “why must I buy physical books”)

**Laptops, tablets, smartphones, or any other electronic device are not permitted in class.**<sup>2</sup> Ample scientific research has demonstrated that it actually makes it harder to learn. Some of the research suggests students have lower rates of retention. And almost of it shows that when students use laptops or tablets in the classroom, they often have lower overall course grades.

Additionally, because this course depends on free and open discussion, the prohibition on electronic devices ensures that students can feel free to share their ideas on politics, on the course readings, and so forth without concern that someone else might be recording. This course strives for civil discussion, and civil debate. The technology policy serves that aim.

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1. Only those students who read the previous version of Woodruff *in my class* may use a previous edition; though even for them, it is recommended that they use the new version.

2. Students who require an accomodation should consult the [relevant section in the appendix](#).

## Course Outline

### Introduction: What does a leader know?

In this short prologue, students will read Isaiah Berlin's *The Hedgehog and the Fox* and some short contemporary writings on modern leadership. Berlin's work suggests that there are really only two modalities of thinking about problems: knowing one big thing, or knowing a lot of little things. Students will consider whether it is better to be a hedgehog or a fox in the 21st century, and if there is any benefit to being the other.

### Unit 1: Political Leadership and Statesmanship Crisis, pt. 1

In the first unit of this course, we will focus on the first five books of Thucydides', *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The twenty-seven year-long war between Athens and Sparta in the fourth century BC is, arguably, the first great power war in Europe. The Athenian general, Thucydides, recorded the war so that it would be a "possession for all time." The five books covered in this unit capture the majority of the major speeches, the strategic visions of both Athens and Sparta, as well as the moral decay of Athens from its apogee as a leader among the Greek city-states, to a tyrannical and vicious empire.

### Unit 2: Statesmanship in self reflection

The second unit will focus on Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, the diary of a Roman emperor at the height of his power and rule. The work known as *Meditations* were Marcus Aurelius' own reflections, written down not for publication, but for his own self-reflection. We will, therefore, consider whether what he thought was essential for leadership is still apt today or whether, twenty-first century leaders need different mental tools for solving complex problems.

### Unit 3: Contemporary Statesmanship

Unit three will focus on the biography of Senator Henry Jackson. Jackson spent forty-years in Congress, first in the House and then Senate, from 1953 until his death in 1983. He was active in both domestic and foreign policy issues, and was twice a serious contender for the Democratic nomination for president. But although he was a Democrat, he was reportedly offered the job at Secretary of Defense by Richard Nixon, a Republican. By focusing on his biography, this unit will consider how one particular statesman navigated the enduring and recurring political debates of his day.

### Unit 4: Political Leadership and Statesmanship Crisis, pt. 2

In the final unit of the course, we return to Thucydides' *History*, and finish Books VI–VII. We resume just after the Athenian's massacre of the Melians, when they begin their disastrous invasion of Syracuse. In this unit, we consider the themes of the term in their totality, asking whether the lessons of Marcus Aurelius, Henry Jackson, and others, are applicable to Thucydides, and how we might learn from Thucydides in order to solve the problems facing contemporary statesmen.

## Assignments

### The Journal

Students, and the professor, will keep a daily journal using Ryan Holiday's *Daily Stoic Journal*.<sup>3</sup> Great leaders keep a journal and reflect on it regularly. One of early readings will be the *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius, a Roman emperor who kept his personal diary while he was the ruler of the known world. Reading about the idea of writing and reflection is one thing. Learning to do it ourselves is quite another.

We will devote ample class time to the project. Students should begin their journal entries on January 10th, the first day of the spring semester.

### Leadership Paper

Students will write a paper of approximately 15 pages on some aspect of *political* leadership. The scope of the paper is flexible but the purpose of the assignment is to give student a chance to deep dive into leadership as a political problem. Some examples could include character studies of fictional or real leaders (e.g., Shakespeare's Coriolanus or Abraham Lincoln), a book review of political leaders akin to the one of Henry Jackson we are reading in class, or something else. The only main requirement is that the paper must be political. (E.g., a paper on Winston Churchill is acceptable, but one on Steve Jobs is not.)

Papers will have "standard" formatting: 1-inch margins, Times New Roman Font, double-spaced text. Citations must follow the Chicago Manual of Style, preferably the author-date system (although notes-bibliography style is acceptable). Students who are unfamiliar with Chicago style should consult Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*, Ninth Edition (the seventh and eighth are also good and more easily found used or in the library).

### Class Participation

As this is a small seminar, the real substance of the learning only happens if students come to class prepared. In this context prepared means that students will have read the readings, prepared comments and notes, and share their thoughts in a respectful, civilly engaged manner. It means, further, that they are actively keeping their daily journal (rather than, say, writing quick, thoughtless entries the morning of class).

In addition to the above expectation, students will periodically write short reflection pieces on the assigned texts and circulate them to the class no later than 5pm the night before class. During the first half the semester, students should expect that at least one paper will be circulated per class session, and every student will circulate *at least* two papers. In the second half of the semester, the professor will revise the frequency according to the class needs.

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3. The recently deceased George Schultz recounted that during his stint as Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration, he would carve out time at least twice per week to write and reflect on big picture stuff. See, Elliott Abrams, "George Shultz, 1920-2021," *Commentary*, February 1, 2021.

## Course Evaluation

You are expected to complete all readings **before** attending class. Class time will be divided between lecture and robust discussion, including regular questioning of students by the professor. Lectures will only situate the readings in the larger context of the course, introduce ideas and themes which might not be immediately obvious to first time students, and address questions left from previous class sessions. The primary vehicle for students to master the material will be in-class discussions, with regular use of the Socratic method. The purpose of this format is to help students acquire the skills to develop their own ideas, articulate and defend them, and engage with other students' intellectual development.

## Grades

Grades will follow the university grading scale using plus and minuses. Arizona State University does not have grades C-, D+, D-, or F. Therefore, the following percentages will be used for grading:

A+ = 98–100%  
A = 94–97.99%  
A- = 90–93.99%  
B+ = 87–89.99%  
B = 84–86.99%  
B- = 80–83.99%  
C+ = 77–79.99%  
C = 70–76.99%  
D = 60–69.99%  
E = 00–59.99%

## Appendix A: SCETL, College, and University Policies

### Covid-19

Arizona State University is returning to the classroom prudently and will require masks in most classrooms. Unless and until the university changes its policies, this will include our classroom. Students will be expected to wear a face mask in class. Although at times the university may provide extra masks for students who lost or forgot one, students should not expect them. Any student not wearing a mask will be asked to leave to get one (if none are available). Students who do not return until after halfway through the class hour will be considered absent for the class. See the [attendance policy](#) for more details on missing class. \*\*Please note I am required to notify the Dean of Students (<https://eoss.asu.edu/dos>) if any student refuses to wear a mask in the classroom.

Any student who feels ill or develops symptoms should stay home. Students who miss class because they are ill or because they have been identified through university contact tracing will be excused the absence provide they contact me to setup a time to get caught up. In short, do not worry if you miss class for these reasons. I will ensure that no student falls behind if they miss class due to illness or quarantine.

Students can find more information on the university policy here:

- <https://provost.asu.edu/fall-2021-learning-expectations>
- <https://www.asu.edu/about/fall-2021#face-coverings>
- <https://www.asu.edu/about/fall-2021>
- <https://eoss.asu.edu/health/announcements/coronavirus/faqs>

### Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers and laboratory work, academic transactions and records. Any suspected violations will be investigated and confirmed violations will be punished severely, including (but not limited to) automatic failure of the course. This means that you receive a grade of XE which means you failed for academic dishonesty on your transcript. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

### Accommodations

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the [Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services](#) (SAILS) office should contact SAILS immediately. The SAILS Tempe office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. SAILS staff can also be reached at (480) 965-1234 (V) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: [www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc)

Your professor cannot grant any accommodation, even with a doctor's note, unless you visit SAILS first.

### Expected Behavior

Be sure to arrive on time for class. Excessive tardiness will be subject to sanctions. Under no circumstances should you allow your cell phone to ring during class. Any disruptive behavior,

which includes ringing cell phones, listening to your mp3/iPod player, text messaging, constant talking, eating food noisily, reading a newspaper will not be tolerated. The use of laptops (unless for note taking), cell phones, MP3, IPOD, etc. are strictly prohibited during class.

## Policy against threatening behavior

In keeping with university policy, all incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student whether on or off campus must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances. Additional Details can be found in the [Students Services Manual](#).

## Additional Safety

Students may also use the [ASU Livesafe App](#) to access updated emergency and non-emergency safety information for the university. Guidelines for in-class emergencies may be found [here](#).

## Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university.

If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at [ASU Sexual Violence Awareness FAQ](#).

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

## Policy on Sexual Discrimination

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), or [retaliation](#) for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

## Copyrighted Materials

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work, unless the

students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.



## Appendix B: (Professor's Additional Policies)

### Technology Self-Responsibility

Although most of our readings are in books and students are required to bring a copy of the text to each class, you will still use technology regularly during the semester. Students will need a reliable computer and Internet connection, an application to read PDF documents, and some form of a text or word processor.

**Back up your files regularly.** This article from 2015 ([here](#)) from CNET covers some of the basics. Just know that using Google Docs, Dropbox, or similar service is not technically a backup.

If you have any technology-related difficulties, please contact the ASU Help Desk at 480-965-6500. Remember: keep copies of all your assignments; back up all of your work!

### Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend class, to arrive on time, to have prepared assigned reading and writing, and to participate in all in-class sessions. Should you miss the equivalent of five class days, you will fail the course. If you find that an unavoidable problem prevents you from attending class, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible, preferably ahead of time, to let him or her know.

Please note that there is no such thing as an “excused or unexcused” absence. You do not need to ask permission to miss a class. It is recommended, however, that you do not consider these as freebies. You are responsible for any materials covered in class. Do not email me asking to cover whatever was important if you miss class (see the [email policy](#)). When you must miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate.

In accordance with Federal law, Arizona State University does not penalize you for missing class on religious holy days, jury duty, and military service. It is your responsibility to notify me—in advance and in writing—at the beginning of the semester of your religious practices and holy days. Servicemembers who need to miss class for Drill Duty, TDY, or other obligations must notify me in advance and provide a copy of your orders.

### Email Policy

Do not expect me to respond to email sent, received, or read between the hours of 6:00pm–8:00am, Monday through Friday nor over the weekends. Although at times I will occasionally work early or late and reply to emails during these times, it is important to know that as a rule, I do not check email when at home.

*NB* Please keep in mind that the following categories of emails will not receive a reply.

1. The student could answer his/her own inquiry by reading the syllabus.
2. The student missed class for which there was no exam and would like to know if anything that was missed was important. *An e-mail is unnecessary unless the impromptu absence involved missing a midterm or final.*
3. The student is protesting a grade without reference to specific points of objection. Students interested in improving their knowledge of material should see me during office hours: it is

why professors have them! ALSO, FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS FACULTY FROM DISCUSSION GRADES OVER EMAIL.

4. The students wants to know how many classes s/he missed at some point during the semester.
5. The student is requesting an extension on a major assignment for which the syllabus already established the deadline. The answer is always no. (Major emergencies require documentation.)
6. The student is “grade grubbing” (See also, the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).)
7. The student is asking for extra credit. The answer is always no. If I decide to offer extra credit, I will offer to the entire class and announce it in advance.

## Political Literacy

Although this course is devoted to reading about great debates in the history of politics and ethics, we will regularly discuss how these themes apply to contemporary life. A central component to that discussion is keeping up with current events. Students are therefore encouraged to read the news regularly.

Arizona State has partnered with The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal to provide free access to students and faculty. You are *strongly* encouraged to make reading these an integral part of your Marshall brief, since doing so requires nothing other than reading the international politics sections of these papers. But you are also encouraged to read broadly in other sections as well, especially national politic and economics news.

You can find details for access at:

- [www.nyt.com/asu](http://www.nyt.com/asu).
- <https://WSJ.com/ArizonaState>

Below are some other resources for news.

- [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com). Britain’s top weekly newspaper on global affairs
- [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com). Curated links from around the world. See also the sister websites:
  - [www.realcleardefense.com](http://www.realcleardefense.com)
  - [www.realclearpolicy.com](http://www.realclearpolicy.com)

This is a course in grand strategy, we will ocaasionally take time to discuss contemporary issues in foreign affairs. Here are some links for websites which focus on these issues:

- [www.warontherocks.com](http://www.warontherocks.com)
- [www.realcleardefense.com](http://www.realcleardefense.com)
- [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com) (Ocaasionally they have a paywall, but recently all their articles have been free.)

Many other sources can be found, including podcasts, blogs, and social media. The aforementioned sites are only a beginning. In time each of you will begin to develop your own tastes covering a range of news, commentary, and ideological perspectives. The only bit of advice here is to read

broadly and force yourself to read at least as much from perspectives opposite from those which share your ideological commitments.