

Morality and Politics

GOV 351L/CTI 325
Spring 2023

Unique #38110 and 30010

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00AM-12:15PM

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Teaching Assistant:

Course Description

This course examines the views of two philosophers who offer particularly influential and compelling arguments about the relation of moral virtue to politics and to the human good more broadly: Aristotle and Machiavelli. We will read selections from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* and all of Machiavelli's *Prince*. We will spend roughly the first two-thirds of the semester on these authors. In the final third, we will read plays and novels that present political actors confronted with particular political dilemmas. These plays and novels help us to see the application of the ideas of Aristotle and Machiavelli to specific situations. Some of the questions our readings prompt are as follows: What is the relationship of moral virtue to politics? Does decency strengthen a leader politically? Or is Machiavelli right that the only political leaders who survive are those with a certain flexibility in their morals? Do the ends justify the means? If they don't, what does?

Required Texts

1. *Darkness at Noon*. By Arthur Koestler. Translated by Philip Boehm. Scribner.
2. *Nicomachean Ethics*. By Aristotle. Translated by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan Collins. University of Chicago Press.
3. *Politics*. By Aristotle. Translated by Carnes Lord. University of Chicago Press.
4. *Prince*. By Niccolo Machiavelli. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. University of Chicago Press.
5. *Richard III*. By William Shakespeare. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon & Schuster.

Grading and Requirements

2 Short Response Questions: 10 each%
Midterm: 30%
Final Exam: 30%
Attendance: 10%
Class Participation: 10%

I DO use plus and minus grades as follows: 92.5 and up = A, 89.5 and up = A-, 86.5 and up is a B+, and so on.

Short Response Questions

The first short response will be an in-class mini-essay. You will have half the class period in which to write it. The second short response will be submitted via Canvas. You will have a week to write it. Answers will have a word limit of 600 words. These responses will be graded from 1 to 10. The stakes are not too high on each assignment – each is worth 10%--but they give you a chance to check in, serving as indicators of how well you are absorbing the material.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be an in-class essay. You will need to bring a blue book to the exam. I will give you at least 2 questions to choose from. You will not have the questions in advance; however, I will give you some idea in advance of what the questions will be about. There is no precise word range, since you will be writing out answers in class, but your answer should be at least two pages, and will probably be more like 5 pages. Answers will be graded for clarity, accuracy, textual evidence, writing quality, depth, and originality of analysis.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home essay exam. As with the mid-term essay, there will be more than one essay question to choose from. You may be asked to contrast various readings in the course, in addition to summarizing and interpreting specific texts. The final exam will be submitted through Canvas. It will have word range of 1100-1500 words.

Attendance

Attendance is a significant portion of your grade in this course. The first two weeks of classes are considered a grace period. We will begin taking attendance in the third week of classes. After that, if you have more than 5 unexcused absences in the class, your credit for attendance will begin to drop 1 point with each additional absence, up to 10 points maximum. If you are ill or miss class for religious reasons, that is considered an excused absence. Please send an email to the TA to let her know.

Class Participation and Online Discussion

In general, you should come to class prepared to ask and answer questions about the reading. Class participation in lecture is encouraged; my lectures are pretty interactive. But since not everyone can participate in a large lecture class, there are 3 ways to earn class participation credit throughout the semester.

- 1) Volunteer to be a class note-taker. We will ask for volunteers in the first few days of classes. This role entails posting your notes to Canvas after each class. This option has the added bonus of entitling you to your laptop in class (otherwise not allowed). If you take on this role, the rest of the class will be relying on you for notes. You must post

your notes at least 80% of the time or risk losing credit. We typically need about 3-4 voluntary note-takers. These positions are first come, first serve.

- 2) Gain credit through online discussion posts. **This is the primary way to for most people to gain full credit for class participation. For full credit, you must post 5 times throughout the semester.**

How online class discussion posts work:

I post discussion questions, at least one per week, throughout the semester, in Canvas. Sometimes the questions will be about a topic we are about to cover, and sometimes they will be about what we have already covered. Some weeks, I will post more than one question.

If you post a response to a discussion post, you get 1 participation credit. You can get 1 credit per discussion thread. You are welcome to post more than that if you want.

What counts as a participation-credit-worthy response? It does not need to be novel-length or incredibly profound. People tend to write longer posts than they need to. On the other hand, a credit-worthy post is more than a phrase or a sentence. "Yes" or "sometimes" is not a sufficient response. Most important, posts should be well-thought-out, considered responses to the question. All posts must be civil and respectful, and they must be your own original thoughts. You can also raise a question yourself, or respond to somebody else's response.

When do discussion threads close? I generally leave them open for about a week. After that, I close them unless there is still a lot of activity. In general, if you are in doubt about whether the post will close soon, err on the side of caution, and don't wait to post!

- 3) You can gain class participation credit through the tried-and-true method of talking in class. If you consistently participate in in-class discussion, you can gain full credit for class participation this way. This is not something that you can do by suddenly participating a ton in the last week of class.

Classroom Policies, Including Lateness and Technology Policies

We will employ a seating chart, beginning in the second week of class. When you come to class on 1/17, please choose a seat that you are comfortable with for the duration of the semester. Please sit in the same seat each time you come to class.

Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive and distracting. If you need to leave class early, please let me know before class starts. Students who are late more than twice, or who leave in the middle of class more than twice, will be counted absent instead of present with each additional late arrival or early departure.

Technology: With the exception of designated volunteer note takers, and/or those with a documented disability accommodation, the use of laptops, e-readers, tablets, or computers of any kind is prohibited in class. Cell phones must be silent and out of sight. **I reserve the right to confiscate, for the duration of the class, any phone that is visibly in use.**

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](#).

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered "Responsible Employees" or "Mandatory Reporters," which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. **We are Responsible Employees and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with us, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit titleix.utexas.edu or contact the Title IX Office at titleix@austin.utexas.edu.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

Notification of a need for disability accommodations must be given to the professor at least 14 days prior to a paper due date or exam.

Accommodations for religious holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Honesty

In all of your work for this course, you are expected to know and to adhere to University of Texas policies regarding academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other

form of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course. Please familiarize yourself with the University honor code.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited: No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. Any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Approximate Course Schedule

The readings schedule is a rough estimate of when each of the readings will be covered. I will post a Canvas announcement after each class specifying the exact assignment for the next class. Those announcements will override the approximate schedule found here. MAKE SURE TO SET YOUR NOTIFICATIONS IN CANVAS TO RECEIVE CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS. THOSE ARE MY PRIMARY METHOD OF COMMUNICATION.

January 10	Introduction
January 12	NO CLASS (I'll be at a conference)
January 17	Intro to the Good: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book I
January 19	Virtue and Habit: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II
January 24	The Mean: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II
January 26	Courage and Generosity: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book III-IV
January 31	Greatness of Soul: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book IV
February 2	Contemplation: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book X

In-class short response

February 7	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book I, Chapters 1-2
February 9	Book I (Acquisition), Chapters 8-11
February 14	Justice: Book III, Chapters 6-9
February 16	Justice Book III Chapters 10-13
February 21	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
February 23	Catch Up/Review
February 28	Mid-term Exam
March 2	<i>The Prince</i>

March 7	<i>The Prince</i>
March 9	<i>The Prince</i>
March 21	<i>The Prince</i>
March 23	<i>The Prince</i> ; second short response posted
March 28	<i>The Prince</i>
March 30	<i>The Prince</i> ; second short response due
April 4	Shakespeare, <i>Richard III</i>
April 6	<i>Richard III</i>
April 11	<i>Richard III</i>
April 13	Arthur Koestler, <i>Darkness at Noon</i>
April 18	<i>Darkness at Noon</i>
April 20	<i>Darkness at Noon</i>
April 26th	Take Home Final Exam Due in Canvas @ 6PM