

**The University of Texas at Austin  
GOV 351C; CTI 320  
Unique # 38620; 30000**

**THE CLASSICAL QUEST FOR JUSTICE**

**Spring 2021**

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**Course Description**

The questions at the heart of classical political philosophy are very simple, even if the treatments of them by the ancient philosophers are extremely complex. What is justice? What does it ask of us as individuals? What does it demand of political communities in their internal structures and in their interactions with other communities? Are the demands of political life in harmony with the radical questioning of philosophy? In this course, we will consider these and other such questions through a careful study of three masterpieces of classical antiquity: Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, Plato's *Republic*, and Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War. These works will be approached not only as crucial documents for our understanding of a distant age, but as works that speak directly to permanent questions of moral and political life.

**Prerequisite**

Completion of at least thirty semester hours of coursework.

Note: If you have taken Government 335M (Topic: Classical Quest for Justice), you cannot take 351C.

**Texts**

Plato and Aristophanes, *Four Texts on Socrates*, translated by West and West (Cornell)

Plato, *Republic*, translated by Bloom (Basic Books)

Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides*, edited by Strassler (The Free Press)

Please purchase the particular editions of the books ordered for this class.

**Requirements**

Reading

Careful reading is the most important requirement. The reading assignments in this course are not long, but they are difficult. The best approach is to read them slowly and take notes while you read. You should try to formulate questions, comments, and interpretations.

### Attendance and Participation

Each week, I will post three asynchronous lectures of roughly 20-30 minutes. Please watch each of these lectures before our synchronous Zoom meeting on Thursday. The Thursday meeting will be the only synchronous meeting each week. The TA will keep track of attendance at the synchronous Zoom sessions. If you miss more than three sessions, your grade for attendance and participation will drop by 10% for each additional absence. If you cannot make a session for a compelling reason (sickness, a religious holiday, a family emergency, etc.), please let me know so that the absence can be excused. Please keep your cameras on during our Zoom sessions!

The attendance and participation portion of your grade is for attendance *and* participation. The participation aspect will be based on your participation in the Thursday discussions and your contributions on the Canvas discussion board. Regarding the latter, I will post questions from time to time. You can earn credit by commenting on these questions, building on or responding to other students' posts, or raising questions or points of your own. Please keep all discussion on Canvas thoughtful and civil, but don't hold back! You do not have to participate in every discussion or write extremely long comments. But you should show your consistent engagement with the issues under discussion.

Here is a rough sketch of how participation will be graded over the course of the semester:

1-5 substantive comments over the course of the semester: C range  
6-10 substantive comments over the course of the semester: B range  
11-15 substantive comments over the course of the semester: A range

Since there are fifteen weeks in the semester, a good approach would be to make a comment or two each week.

Comments will be read, considered, and credited only if they are posted before 7:00 in the evening on Wednesday of the relevant week. That will also give me a chance to look them over before our Thursday meetings, which I intend to divide between general Q&A and discussion of your comments.

### Paper

You will write a paper this semester. It will be an analytical essay on a theme in one or two of the readings. I will hand out paper topics, with staggered due dates, several times

during the semester. You can choose when you would like to write your paper, but you would be wise not to wait until the last set of topics, since the end of the semester is a busy time and you might find one of the earlier topics more interesting. Late papers will be marked down 10% for each day of lateness.

### Exams

There will be two exams, one in the middle of the term (on Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Republic*) and the other at the end of the term (on Plato and Thucydides, but with greater weight given to Thucydides). The exams will be take-home essay exams, which you will be given at least 48 hours to write.

### **Grades**

Your grade will be calculated by the following method. Plus/minus grades will be used in the final grades.

Paper: 25%

First exam: 25%

Final exam: 35%

Attendance and participation: 15%

### **Note on EL Flag**

This course carries the Ethics and Leadership flag. Ethics and Leadership courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life.

### **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/>

### **Sharing of Course Materials**

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. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and 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**

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.

## **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's honor code.

## **Course Plan**

I will give the specific assignments (and some study questions) for each week as we go along, but this is a rough schedule:

Jan. 19 – 21	Introduction; Plato, <i>The Apology of Socrates</i>  Socrates on trial.
Jan 26 – 28	Plato, <i>The Apology of Socrates</i> ; introduction to Plato's <i>Republic</i>  The philosopher and the city.
Feb. 2 – 4	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book I  The setting of the Republic; the question of justice
Feb. 9 – 11	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Books I-II  Thrasymachus' challenge; Glaucon and Adeimantus' demand
Feb. 16 – 18	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Books II-III  The origins and character of Socrates' city-in-speech
Feb. 23 – 25	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Books III-IV  The education of the guardians; the noble lie, the problem of justice
Mar. 2 – 4	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Books V-VI

	The three “waves”: equality, communism, and philosophic rule
Mar. 9 – 11	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , VII
	Philosophy and the city; the ideas; the cave; the lessons of the city-in-speech
	MIDTERM EXAM
	SPRING BREAK
Mar. 23 – 25	Thucydides, Book I
	The archaeology; the cause of the war; the conference at Sparta; the question of justice and necessity
Mar. 30 – Apr. 1	Thucydides, Books I-II
	Athenian imperialism; Athens and Sparta; Periclean Athens
Apr. 6 – 8	Thucydides, Books II-III
	The plague; the character of the war; the Mytilenian debate
Apr. 13 – 15	Thucydides, Books III-IV
	Revolutionary politics and human nature; two great non-Athenians and one great Athenian
Apr. 20 – 22	Thucydides, selections from Book V
	The peace treaties; the Melian dialogue; justice, necessity, and piety
Apr. 27 – 29	Thucydides, selections from Books VI-VII
	Alcibiades and Nicias; the Sicilian expedition
May 4 – 6	Thucydides, selections from Book VII
	The tragedy of Athens
Exam week:	FINAL EXAM