

**CLASSICS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT  
CTI 302 / GOV 314  
FALL 2023  
DR. MAURIZIO VIROLI**

**NO TEXTING, NO CELL PHONES, NO COMPUTERS OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES ON DURING CLASS. SOCCER RULES APPLY: FIRST OFFENSE (YELLOW CARD), YOU LOSE ONE POINT FROM THE FINAL GRADE. SECOND OFFENCE (RED CARD) YOU LOSE TWO POINTS FROM THE FINAL GRADE**

UNIQUE 3005 38235

Location CBA 4.328  
TTh. 9:30-11:00

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### **Course Description**

We will be asking what human beings are, what they care most about, what they most deeply need and are moved by, and what the character is of their highest aspirations. We will consider what the features are of human nature that make human life both so rich and promising and so fraught with conflict. We will consider different accounts of where we came from, and of the potential that political life does or does not have to forge communities within which individuals can find happiness. We will examine in depth ideas of moral and social emancipation as well as reflections on the religious experience. Through all of this, we will consider what the answers to those questions suggest about how we should live, both individually and collectively.

The course will proceed by means of close readings of some of the most thoughtful and influential reflections on these questions, from ancient times to the present. By the end of the course, students should understand and be able

to assess some of the most compelling accounts of human nature that have been proposed and should also have a deeper understanding of the origin, appeal, and validity of many contemporary political and social assumptions.

This course counts towards the Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas, a 6-course sequence in the great books, ideas, and controversies that have shaped the modern world. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. For more information, visit <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/coretexts>.

This course may be used to fulfill the Social and Behavioral Sciences component of the University Core Curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility.

Prerequisites: none

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

These books are all available at the University Co-op and are required *in the following editions:*

- Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Oxford World's Classics.
- Aristotle, *The Politics*, Cambridge University Press (selection)
- Cicero, *On Duties*, Cambridge University Press
- Quentin Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the portrayal of good government', in *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, Cambridge University Press
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, Chicago University Press (selection)
- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Cambridge University Press
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality" and "Discourse on Political Economy," in Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, Hackett Publishing
- Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Harper & Row (selection)
- Dostoevsky, Fédor, *The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, Filiquarian Publishing
- Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace (selection)
- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Penguin Classics
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, New York Simon & Schuster, 1996
- Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, in *The Vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing
- Walzer, Michael, *Exodus and Revolution*, New York, Basic Books, 1985

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK I

Introductory Lecture

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

### WEEK II

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

### WEEK III

Aristotle, *The Politics*

### WEEK IV

Cicero, *On Duties*

### WEEK V

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, ‘Of Good and Bad Government’

### WEEK VI

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*

MIDTERM EXAM

### WEEK VII

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*

Machiavelli, *The Prince*

### WEEK VIII

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

### WEEK IX

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*

### WEEK X

Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*,

WEEK XI

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

WEEK XII

Hannah Arent, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

WEEK XIII

Max Weber, *Politics as Vocation*

Walzer, Michael, *Exodus and Revolution*

WEEK XIV

Review and conclusion

FINAL EXAM

**Assignments and Grading**

Class participation 20%

Midterm 30%

Final 50%

The class participation grades will be based on the quality of the comments you make and the questions you raise in discussion board posts, in class, and in office hours. Class participation grades will be raised by 5% for perfect attendance and will fall by 10% (one letter grade) for every unexcused absence after the second. There is no penalty for the first two absences, absences due to documented illness or family emergency, or absences due to religious holidays for which you have notified me in advance.

Papers will be graded for the quality of the writing as well as for their substantive content. For advice on writing political philosophy essays, see [https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/government/\\_files/lpangleweb/AdviceOnPaperWriting.pdf](https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/government/_files/lpangleweb/AdviceOnPaperWriting.pdf). For individual help with paper writing, come to office hours any time or visit the Undergraduate Writing Center, info at <http://uwc.utexas.edu>. Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 3% + 2% for each calendar day they

are late, unless you have a medical excuse or family emergency. Any paper may be re-written within two weeks of being returned for a revised grade, which will then be averaged with the original grade on that assignment.

Students who violate university rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, <https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability>.