

**Classics of Social and Political Thought**  
**Spring 2023**  
**CTI 302 (Unique #29965), GOV 314E (Unique #38030)**

**Instructor: Ms. Emily Davis**

**Day/Time: MWF 2–2:50pm**

**Room: WAG 308**

**My office hours: M 3–5pm, W 3–4pm, MEZ 3.220**

**My email: [emilyadavis@utexas.edu](mailto:emilyadavis@utexas.edu)**

**Course Description:** In this course, we will take up some of the most pressing questions of social and political life: What is justice? How can we foster it most effectively as individuals and within our political communities? How do our personal, economic, and familial attachments shape our views on these matters?

Our discussions will proceed through explorations of key texts that provide competing and compelling answers to these questions. After examining some of the main problems of justice through Sophocles' *Ajax*, we will turn to Augustine's religious approach to political virtue in his *City of God*, then to the works of modern political philosophers and social scientists who subtly (but severely) critiqued this approach: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, and Weber. We will conclude by considering the alternate perspective of ancient political philosophy as seen in Plato's *Republic*. Throughout the course, we will also enhance our understanding of these topics through short works of literature, poetry, rhetoric, and film. Though the thinkers we will study come from a variety of backgrounds and time periods, we will grapple with their ideas with the aim of learning how they continue to affect societies today.

**Required Texts:** Physical copies of the following books are required:

*Sophocles II* (third edition), ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore. University of Chicago Press.

*City of God*, by Augustine, trans. Henry Bettenson. Penguin Classics.

*The Prince* (second edition), by Niccolo Machiavelli, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield. University of Chicago Press.

*Leviathan* (revised student edition), by Thomas Hobbes, ed. Richard Tuck. Cambridge University Press.

*The First and Second Discourses*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters. St. Martin's Press.

*Republic*, by Plato, trans. Allan Bloom. Basic Books.

All other assigned readings will be available on Canvas.

**Grading and Requirements:** I use plus/minus grades as follows: 92.5 and up = A, 89.5 and up = A-, 86.5 and up = B+, and so on. Grade appeals (and the reasoning behind them) must be communicated to me in writing within 10 days after I have handed back an assignment.

Your grade will consist of the following parts:

*Weekly reading reflections (10%):* Each week, you will submit a one-paragraph reading reflection on Canvas. These reflections will be due on **Mondays by 11am**. They can take up anything about the reading for that day—things you didn’t understand, topics you’d like to explore further, disagreements you have with the author, etc. I will grade them for completion.

*Weekly reading quizzes (10%):* On either Wednesday or Friday of each week, you will complete a five-minute pop reading quiz at the beginning of class. These quizzes will be very easy if you’ve done the reading. If you have an excused absence on a day that I give a quiz, your quiz will be excused as well. However, I won’t offer makeup quizzes (if, say, you arrive late and miss the quiz, or if your absence on a quiz day is unexcused). At the end of the semester, I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

*Attendance (10%):* I will take attendance (via a sign-in sheet) at the beginning of every class, starting in the second week. **Three** unexcused absences are allowed before your attendance grade (which, if perfect, will be a 10/10) will begin to drop one point for every unexcused absence. That said, if you are sick, celebrating a religious holiday, or dealing with an emergency, please email me and I will excuse your absence.

*Participation (10%):* Since this course is mainly discussion-based, frequent participation is important. However, you shouldn’t worry about earning full points, as I will facilitate as active and inclusive a discussion as possible by asking everyone to contribute their thoughts throughout each class period.

*Practice essay (10%):* A few weeks into the course, you will write a two-page essay on one of our recent readings (I will distribute three or four prompts for you to choose from) and submit it on Canvas. This assignment is meant to help you practice writing a clear, organized, thesis-driven paper. I will grade these for completion, but return them with substantial feedback that you can carry forward into your next writing assignment.

*Essay meeting (5%):* After I hand back your practice essays, each of you will meet with me one-on-one to discuss my feedback, improvements for the next assignment, and any questions you may have about your essay and/or writing in general. I will circulate a sign-up sheet for these meetings when the time comes.

*Analytical essay (first draft) (15%):* Halfway through the course, you will write a four- to five-page essay comparing two of our readings (submitted on Canvas). I will distribute possible prompts, but you are welcome to come up with your own question as long as you clear it with me. I will grade these essays for clarity, organization, logical flow, use of textual evidence, and originality, and I will return them with substantial feedback.

*Analytical essay (final draft) (20%):* Based on my comments on your draft, you will revise it and expand it to include another of our later readings (submitted on Canvas). All in all, the essay will end up being six to eight pages. As you can see, the grade you get on this final draft will count for more than the one you get on your first draft, and the work you put into revising and expanding will ensure that it is better.

*Peer review (10%):* You will hand in your final draft not only to me, but also to another student with whom I have paired you. Once you receive your fellow student's essay, you will write a two-page review of it in which you will comment on the essay's clarity, organization, logical flow, use of textual evidence, and originality. I will distribute guiding questions to help you structure your review, which you will submit on Canvas on the last day of class. I will grade these reviews using the same criteria I used for your analytical essays.

**Technology Policy:** Unless you have a documented accommodation that requires you to use them, no electronics of any kind are allowed in class. Unauthorized use of an electronic device will cause one point to drop from your attendance grade. I reserve the right to confiscate, for the duration of the class, any device being used without permission.

**Late/Missed Work Policy:** In general, I am happy to grant extensions in situations relating to illness/injury, emergencies, and/or religious observance. If possible, however, you must communicate your request to me in writing as soon as you know that an extension may be necessary.

**University Requirements:** This course counts toward the Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas, a six-course sequence in the great books, ideas, and controversies that have shaped Western civilization. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts/> or email the academic director, Professor Lorraine Pangle, at [lorraine.pangle@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:lorraine.pangle@austin.utexas.edu).

This course may also 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.

**Course Schedule:** Below is an outline of which readings we will cover on each class day. This schedule is subject to change. Every Friday, I will post a Canvas announcement reminding you of the readings and assignments for the upcoming week.

January 9: introductions; in-class reading/discussion of Plato's *Republic* 359b6–360d7

January 11: syllabus discussion

January 13: Sophocles' *Ajax* lines 1-720

January 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; no class

January 18: *Ajax* lines 720-end

January 20: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (on Canvas)

January 23: Augustine's *City of God* Book I, Preface; Book II, Chapter 21; Book IV, Chapter 4 and Chapter 15 (paragraph 1)

January 25: *City of God* Book V, Chapter 11; Book XII, Chapters 22-23, 28; Book XIV, Chapters 4, 25, 28

January 27: *City of God* Book XV, Chapter 4; Book XIX, Chapters 12-14, 17

January 30: *City of God* Book XX, Chapters 1-3

February 1: discussion of how to write a strong analytical essay; **prompts for practice essay distributed**

February 3: clip from *Dangerous Liaisons* (link in announcement); Machiavelli's *The Prince* Dedicatory Letter, Chapters 1-3

February 6: *The Prince* Chapters 5-8

February 8: *The Prince* Chapters 9, 11, 12 (paragraphs 1-2), 13; **practice essay due**

February 10: *The Prince* Chapters 15, 17-18

February 13: *The Prince* Chapters 21, 24-26

February 15: Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (on Canvas); Hobbes' *Leviathan* Dedicatory Letter, Introduction; **practice essays handed back with comments; possible analytical essay prompts distributed; essay meetings (in person)**

February 17: *Leviathan* Chapters 10-11; **essay meetings (on Zoom)**

February 20: *Leviathan* 13-14, 15 (focus on pp. 100-103, bottom of 109-111); **essay meetings (in person)**

February 22: *Leviathan* Chapters 17-18, 19 (paragraphs 1-4); **essay meetings (in person)**

February 24: *Leviathan* Chapters 20-21

February 27: Duane Niatum's "The Disappearance of the Duwamish Salmon" (link in announcement); Rousseau's *Second Discourse* pp. 98-104

March 1: *Second Discourse* pp. 104-121; **first drafts of analytical essays due**

March 3: *Second Discourse* bottom of p. 126-p. 141

March 6: *Second Discourse* pp. 141-161

March 8: *Second Discourse* pp. 161-181

March 10: clip from *Game of Thrones* (link in announcement); Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* pp. 3-8 (on Canvas); **in-class completion of mid-semester feedback forms (anonymized through Google Forms)**

March 13-17: spring break

March 20: *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* pp. 9-19 (on Canvas)

March 22: Sarah Howe's "Relativity" (link in announcement); Weber's "Science as a Vocation" excerpt (on Canvas); **first drafts of analytical essays handed back with comments**

March 24: Weber's "Politics as a Vocation" excerpt (on Canvas)

March 27: Plato's *Republic* 327a-336a

March 29: *Republic* 336b-344c

March 31: *Republic* 344d-354c

April 3: *Republic* 357a-367e

April 5: *Republic* 368a-374e

April 7: *Republic* 375a-383c

April 10: *Republic* 386a-394d; **final analytical essays due (on Canvas and to peer reviewers); peer review guiding questions distributed**

April 12: *Republic* 394e-407c

April 14: class canceled (I will be at a conference)

April 17: *Republic* 407d-417b; **in-class completion of course evaluations**

April 19: *Republic* 419a-429a

April 21: *Republic* 429b-439e

April 24: *Republic* 440a-445e; final reflections; **peer reviews due**

**Students With Disabilities:** Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

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

**Accommodations for Religious Holidays:** By university 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. 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.

**Title IX Reporting:** Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX-related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, 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 would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email [advocate@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:advocate@austin.utexas.edu). For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu), or call 512-471-0419.