

Morality and Politics

GOV 351L/CTI 325
Spring 2021 - Online

Unique # 38630 & 30009
Mondays & Fridays (Asynchronous)
& Wednesdays 1:00PM-2:00PM (Synchronous)

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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 half of the semester on these authors. In the second half, we will read plays and novels that present political actors confronted with particular political dilemmas. These plays and novels help us to see the evolution of moral and political ideas over time, and they allow us to consider 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? How important is it to tell the truth in politics? What is the relationship of political power to the human good? Do the ends justify the means? If they don't, what does?

Required Texts

1. *Cato: A Tragedy and Selected Essays*. By Joseph Addison. Edited by Christine Dunn Henderson and Mark E. Yellin. Liberty Fund.
2. *Darkness at Noon*. By Arthur Koestler. Translated by Philip Boehm. Scribner.
3. *Four Major Plays, Volume II*. By Henrik Ibsen. Signet Classics.
4. *Julius Caesar*. By William Shakespeare. Bantam Classics.
5. *Nicomachean Ethics*. By Aristotle. Translated by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan Collins. University of Chicago Press.
6. *Politics*. By Aristotle. Translated by Joe Sachs. Hackett.
7. *Prince*. By Niccolo Machiavelli. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. University of Chicago Press.

8. *Richard III*. By William Shakespeare, edited by Barbara Mowat. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon & Schuster.

A note on the texts

In the case of texts 5, 6, and 7, the edition that you use matters quite a lot. I would urge you to get the precise edition listed here if at all possible. In the case of the other texts, it does not matter so much, and many of them, such as Shakespeare, are available in a zillion editions that would do just as well. If you are unsure about whether your edition of a text is suitable, feel free to ask me.

Grading and Requirements

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

Class Participation: 10%

Attendance: 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.

How the Class Will Work

On Mondays and Fridays, I will post asynchronous lectures. I tend to break up each day's lectures into a couple of chunks of 15-20 minutes. They will be under the Panopto tab in Canvas.

On Wednesdays, class will be a synchronous Zoom discussion session. When you attend our zoom sessions, please begin with your microphone muted and your camera on. Please keep your camera on as much as possible. If you need to step away for a moment, that's fine. But please keep your cameras on, as a general rule.

Attendance

If you miss more than 4 of our synchronous sessions, your credit for attendance will begin to drop 1 point with each additional absence. If you are ill or miss class for religious reasons, your absence will be excused. Please send an email to the TA to let him know. If you are in a zoom session and your internet connection breaks, try to reconnect. If it becomes a significant issue, email Derek, the TA, and let him know.

Class Participation

Your class participation grade will be based on your engagement with the class in our Wednesday discussions and on your participation in the class discussions posted on Canvas. I will post discussion questions each week. Most weeks there will be one discussion question; some weeks there will be two or three, depending on the material we cover. You can earn credit by commenting on those questions, building on or responding to other student's posts, or asking questions about the lecture. I expect all comments in Canvas discussions to be thoughtful and civil. You do not have to participate in every discussion, or write novel-length comments. But you should demonstrate engagement with the issues under discussion in the course.

A good rule of thumb for what you can expect to get for your participation grade:

Posts over the course of the semester:

1-5 substantive comments: 6 or 7/10

5-10 substantive comments: 7 or 8/10

10-14 substantive comments: 9 or 10 out of 10

For reference, there are 14 full weeks in the semester, so to get full credit, you should aim to post 1 comment per week *most* weeks. (You can skip four weeks).

TIMING: To get full credit for your comment, it must be posted before we discuss the related material in our synchronous session or shortly thereafter. Each discussion post will close about a week after we discuss the associated material in class.

Do not plan to go back and add comments at the end of the semester!! Most posts will be closed by then.

I will read the comments posted each week before Wednesday's discussion and take them up in our synchronous class. To ensure that I read your comment before class on Wednesday morning, it must be posted by 8pm Tuesday night. I may see it if you post it after that, but it is not guaranteed.

The above point distribution does not take into account the participation that will take place in our synchronous discussion sessions. If you are a great participant in those sessions, that will improve your participation grade.

Exams

Exams will be essay-style questions. Exams will post on Fridays at 2:15pm, after our synchronous session ends. They will be due the following Monday at 5pm. (There will be no new lecture on those Mondays). The first midterm exam will be due March 1st; the second will be due April 12th. I will give you at least 2 questions to choose from for each exam. Answers

will be graded for clarity, accuracy, textual evidence, writing quality, and depth and originality of analysis. Before the first exam, I will post a RUBRIC laying out more precisely the standards by which essays will be evaluated.

Exams 1 and 2 will have a word range of 750-1000 words. The final exam will have a word range of 1000-1600 words. It may include more than one essay question and ask you to analyze and compare and contrast multiple works.

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. 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 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.

Course Schedule* **

*Dates in **bold** indicate a synchronous Wednesday discussion

** The schedule below is the plan. I will frequently post Canvas announcements confirming the exact assignments for upcoming classes (because sometimes we fall behind) and giving reminders, etc. Please set your notifications in Canvas to get these announcements. That is my main method of communication.

Jan. 20th	Introduction
Jan. 22 nd	Intro to the Good: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book I
Jan. 25 th	Virtue and Habit: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Books I and II
Jan. 27th	Discussion
Jan. 29 th	The Mean: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II
Feb. 1 st	Virtue and Choice: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II
Feb. 3rd	Discussion
Feb. 5 th	Courage and Generosity: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book III
Feb. 8 th	Magnificence and Magnanimity: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book IV
Feb. 10th	Discussion
Feb. 12 th	Contemplation: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book X/ <i>Politics</i> , Book I
Feb. 15 th	The City: Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book I
Feb. 17th	Discussion
Feb. 19 th	Acquisition: <i>Politics</i> , Book I
Feb. 22 nd	Justice: <i>Politics</i> , Book III, 6-9
Feb. 24th	Discussion
Feb. 26 th	<i>Politics</i> , Book III, 10-13; exam one posted
Mar. 1 st	Exam One Due at 5pm
Mar. 3 rd	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Mar. 5 th	<i>The Prince</i>
Mar. 8 th	<i>The Prince</i>
Mar. 10th	Discussion
Mar. 12 th	<i>The Prince</i>
Mar. 22 nd	<i>The Prince</i>

Mar. 24th	Discussion
Mar. 26 th	<i>The Prince</i>
Mar. 29 th	<i>The Prince</i>
Mar. 31st	Discussion
Apr. 2 nd	William Shakespeare, <i>Julius Caesar</i>
Apr. 5 th	<i>Caesar</i>
Apr. 7th	Discussion
Apr. 9 th	Joseph Addison, <i>Cato</i> ; exam two posted
Apr. 12 th	Exam Two Due at 5pm
Apr. 14th	<i>Cato</i> (Discussion)
Apr. 16 th	William Shakespeare, <i>Richard III</i>
Apr. 19 th	<i>Richard III</i>
Apr. 21st	Discussion
Apr. 23 rd	Henrik Ibsen, <i>Enemy of the People</i>
Apr. 26 th	<i>Enemy of the People</i>
Apr. 28th	Discussion
Apr. 30 th	Arthur Koestler, <i>Darkness at Noon</i>
May 3 rd	<i>Darkness at Noon</i>
May 5th	Discussion
May 7 th	<i>Darkness at Noon</i> ; Final Exam Assigned

Final Exam Due Thursday, May 13th, at 12pm