

Morality and Politics

GOV 351L/CTI 325
Spring 2022

Unique # 37950/29820

While we are online (as of now, until 1/27/22): Asynchronous lectures on Tuesdays and one live Zoom session per week: Thursdays 9:45AM– 10:45AM

AND TA-led optional discussion sessions, day/time TBD

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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 (but see note below)

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 Joe Sachs. Hackett.
4. *Prince*. By Niccolo Machiavelli. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. University of Chicago Press.
5. *Four Major Plays*, Volume II. By Henrik Ibsen. Signet Classics.
6. *Julius Caesar*. By William Shakespeare. Bantam Classics.
7. *Richard III*. By William Shakespeare. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon & Schuster.

8. *Henry VI, Part One*. By William Shakespeare. Folger Shakespeare Library. Simon & Schuster.

About the textbook requirements: We will be using 8 texts this semester. What I have listed above are the editions I recommend. The editions in bold are the ones for which it *really matters* that you get the right edition. The Shakespeare plays are available in a zillion editions, and probably also online. Feel free to use whatever edition of the Shakespeare plays you can find. There are also multiple translations of Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* that would be fine to use. In the case of Aristotle's *Politics*, there are other translations that would work nearly as well as the one listed; if you have a question about a particular edition, ask me.

Grading and Requirements

Short Response Paper: 5%

Exam 1: 25%

Exam 2: 25%

Exam: 25%

Class Participation & Attendance: 20%

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 Paper (5%)

I will post a brief response question on February 8th. Answers will have a word limit of 400 words. You can submit your answer through Canvas. These responses will be graded from 1 to 5. The point of this assignment is to "check in," so to speak, early on in the course. It will be due February 10th.

Exams (75%)

There will be three exams in this course, each one worth 25% of the grade. The first and third exams will be take home essay exams submitted in Canvas. The second exam will be an in-class blue book essay exam. For each exam, I will give you at least 2 essay questions to choose from. Answers will be graded for clarity, accuracy, textual evidence, writing quality, and depth and originality of analysis.

Exam 1 will have a word range of 1000-1200 words. Exam 3 will have a word range of 1200-1500 words.

Class Participation and Attendance (20%)

Each week I will post discussion questions in Canvas. Responses will be due Wednesdays at 10pm. (If you post after 10pm, I *might* see it, but I make no guarantees). The primary way to gain full credit for class participation is to post before class 5 times throughout the semester. You are welcome to post more than that. The posts do not have to be novel-length or incredibly profound. However, they should be well-thought, considered responses to the question. You can also raise a question yourself, or respond to somebody else's response. All posts must be civil and respectful, and they must be your own original thoughts. In addition to gaining class participation through online posts, you can gain credit through active, thoughtful participation in class discussion.

Attendance Plans

Once we return to in-person instruction, attendance will be required. Having said that, you can have up to 5 unexcused absences before it begins to affect your grade. If you have more than 5 unexcused absences in the class, your credit for attendance will drop 1 point with each additional absence, up to a maximum of 10 points.

If you are ill or miss class for religious reasons, that is considered an excused absence. Please send an email to the TA.

As the COVID pandemic stretches on, we want to be as careful as we can about transmission. We prefer to err on the side of caution, and excuse absences rather than risk you coming to class with COVID. Just communicate with us, keep us apprised of your situation, and we will be reasonable.

The current plan is for attendance to be worth 10% and class participation to be worth 10%. However, that is based on the current situation, which is that we will be online for two weeks, and then shift to in-person instruction. If we end up online for longer than two weeks – which I do not anticipate, but let's face it, it might happen – then I will either start requiring attendance at the Zoom sessions, or count class participation for part/all of the attendance grade, or some combination of the two.

Class Procedures

While we need to be online, class will be conducted as follows: I will post asynchronous lectures on Tuesdays. They will be under the “Panopto” tab. On Thursdays, we will have a synchronous Zoom session from 9:45-10:45. It is my aim to return to in-person instruction as soon as is feasible.

We are also fortunate to be able to offer OPTIONAL WEEKLY DISCUSSION SESSIONS throughout the semester with our TA, Emily. They will begin, at least, on Zoom. Look out for an email from Emily about the potential day/time of the week for these sessions!

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

January 18	Introduction
January 20	The Good and Happiness: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book I
January 25	Habit and intro to the Mean: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II
January 27	The Mean Con't, and Choice: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book II-III
February 1	Choice and Courage: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book III
February 3	Generosity and Magnificence: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book III-IV
February 8	Greatness of Soul: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book IV; short response question posted
February 10	Contemplation: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Book X/ <i>Politics</i> , Book I; short response due @ 5pm
February 15	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book I
February 17	Justice: Book III, 6-13
February 22	Justice con't - Books IV and VII
February 24	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
March 1	Exam One Due at 5pm
March 3	<i>The Prince</i>
March 8	<i>The Prince</i>
March 10	<i>The Prince</i>
March 13	<i>The Prince</i>
March 15	<i>The Prince</i>
March 22	Shakespeare, <i>Julius Caesar</i>
March 24	<i>Caesar</i>
March 29	Review
March 31	Exam Two: In Class Essay
April 5	Shakespeare, <i>Henry VI, Part 1</i>
April 7	No class (I will be at a conference)
April 12	<i>Henry VI, Part 1</i>
April 14	Shakespeare, <i>Richard III</i>
April 19	<i>Richard III</i>
April 21	<i>Richard III/Henrik Ibsen, Enemy of the People</i>
April 26	<i>Enemy of the People</i>
April 28	Arthur Koestler, <i>Darkness at Noon</i>
May 3	<i>Darkness at Noon</i>
May 5	Exam Three Due at 5pm
	There is no final exam in this course.