

The University of Texas at Austin
GOV 355M, Unique 38675
Xenophon and Machiavelli
Spring 2021

Professor: Lorraine Pangle

class time: T Th 11 am-12:15 pm

class location: by Zoom until conditions improve; in WAG 214 thereafter

office hours: W F 10-11:30 am by Zoom or outdoors (location TBA)

contact: lorraine.pangle@austin.utexas.edu. Please use email rather than Canvas message system.

Themes

This course will explore the themes of morality and leadership in the writings of two great political philosophers, the ancient Athenian writer Xenophon, a student of Socrates, and the renaissance Florentine Machiavelli.

First, we will read Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, a rich fictional depiction of a virtuous, law-based ancient polis and the process by which a man of boundless talents and ambition easily subverts it. In place of the virtuous republic, Xenophon's Cyrus creates a progressive, dynamic, multi-ethnic society, aimed at wealth and expansion and glory, in which merit is rewarded and a self-sacrificing view of justice is replaced by a frank pursuit of the good things of this world. Yet in exploring this entrancing vision, Xenophon gives clear reasons why, in the end, he rejects it as the best model for a healthy society. Thus we will turn next to Xenophon's *Memorabilia of Socrates*, in which Xenophon presents an alternate model of human excellence, that of the philosopher who pursues a contemplative life of inquiry, moderation, and friendship.

Machiavelli had the highest opinion of Xenophon and gave all his works the closest study. Yet he rejected the contemplative model of Socrates and devoted his writings to promoting the progressive, expansive political vision and encouraging the ambition that the *Education of Cyrus* warns against. In the second half of the course we will read Machiavelli's two great masterpieces, the *Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*. What did Machiavelli see that Xenophon did not, or what did Xenophon see that Machiavelli did

not? How can these contrasting works help us understand and assess the deepest differences between ancient and modern republicanism and the fundamental presuppositions of modern liberalism? More deeply, what light can they shed on the human condition and on the problems of creating a just and stable political order in any time or place?

Prerequisite: upper-division standing.

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 <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts>.

Required Texts (All are available at The University Co-op; *you must buy these editions.*)

Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*. Trans. Wayne Ambler. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8014-8750-1.

Xenophon, *Memorabilia of Socrates*. Trans. Amy Bonnette. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994. ISBN 0-8014-8171-6.

Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Trans. Harvey Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. ISBN 0-226-50038-1.

Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*. Trans. Mansfield and Tarcov. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. ISBN 0-226-50036-5.

Recommended Texts

Strunk, William, and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*. Fourth Edition. London: Penguin Books, 1999.

Turabin et al, *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Seventh Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Course Requirements and Policies

class participation	20%
1500-2000 word essay on Xenophon, due 2/23 by 9 am	25%
1500-2000 word essay on Machiavelli, due 4/13 by 9 am	25%

final exam, 5/15, 2-5 pm

30%

Your class participation grade will be based on your attentive presence and active contributions to our ongoing conversation about the books over the semester.

You should be present at every class, with the reading assignment for that day completed, notes taken or the book marked, and the book in hand. When we meet in the classroom, no laptops or electronic devices of any kind may be used unless required by a student with disabilities. When we meet online, you should be in a quiet place, free from distractions, with your camera on, your email and internet browser turned off on your computer, and your cell phone silenced and stowed away. We will try our best to emulate a true, leisured, face-to-face conversation.

Participation grades will be based on three components: the questions and comments you post on the discussion board before class, your contributions to class discussion, and the thoughts and questions you bring to office hours. If you are active in class, posting on the discussion board is optional. If you are quiet, you should aim to make a post at least once a week, identifying something you found especially interesting or provocative in the reading, raising one or two questions about the reading that you would like to take up in class, and if you like responding to other students' posts. Discussion boards will close at 8 am on the day of each class. Visits to office hours are always warmly welcome, and making a habit of attending office hours is an excellent way to get the most out of your college courses. Best is to do all three.

There will be no penalty for absences due to religious holidays for which you have notified me in advance, or for documented illnesses or family emergencies. If you miss an online class because of connectivity problems and email me right away, you can be counted present by getting notes and coming to office hours the next day to catch up. Otherwise, your participation grade will fall by one letter grade (10%) for each unexcused absence after the second. Class participation grades will be raised by 5% for perfect attendance.

Essays will be graded for the quality of the writing as well as for their substantive content. For advice on writing essays in political philosophy, please go to <https://webspace.utexas.edu/lsp226/lorraineangle/advice.html>. For individual help with essay writing, please come to office hours any time or visit the Undergraduate Writing Center, info at <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>. Late essays 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. Either essay 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.

Essays should be submitted on the Canvas course site and will be processed by TurnItIn, a tool that compares submitted material to an archived database of published work to check for potential plagiarism. Other methods may also be used to determine if an essay is the student's original work. Regardless of the results of any TurnItIn submission, the professor will make the final determination as to whether or not an essay has been plagiarized. Plagiarized essays will receive a grade of 0.

Plus and minus grades will be used, as follows: 93-100: A; 90-92: A-; 87-89: B+; 83-86: B; 80-82: B-; 77-79: C+; 73-76: C; 70-72: C-; 60-69: D; below 60: F.

University Honor Code: The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

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

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

1/19 Introduction and Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, book 1, chapters 1-2

1/21 and 1/26 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, book 1, cont'd

1/28 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, book 2

2/2 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, book 3

2/4 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, book 4

2/9 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, book 5

2/11 and 2/16 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus*, books 6-8

2/18 Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, book 1

2/23 Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, book 1, cont'd; first essay due 9 am

2/25 and 3/2 Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, book 2

3/4 and 3/9 Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, book 3

3/11 Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, book 4

spring break

3/23 Machiavelli, *Prince*, chapters 1-5

3/25 Machiavelli, *Prince*, chapters 6-10

3/30 Machiavelli, *Prince*, chapters 11-15

4/1 Machiavelli, *Prince*, chapters 16-20

4/6 Machiavelli, *Prince*, chapters 21-26

4/8 Machiavelli, *Discourses*, book 1

4/13 Machiavelli, *Discourses*, book 1, cont'd; second essay due 9 am

4/15 Machiavelli, *Discourses*, book 1, cont'd

4/20, 4/22, and 4/27 Machiavelli, *Discourses*, book 2

4/29, 5/4, and 5/6 Machiavelli, *Discourses*, book 3

Saturday, May 15, 2-5 pm: final exam