

DEMOCRACY IN ATHENS AND AMERICA
CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT
POLITICAL SCIENCE 315
SPRING 2024

Introduction

1-11 Receive syllabus; get acquainted; political science theory and intellectual traditions

Part One: Athens, her philosophers, and an American dilemma

1-16 Thucydides questions Athenian myths and tells the story of Themistocles as an exile
The Landmark Thucydides, 3-16; 49-51; 76-79; 577-592

1-17 **Special Event: King Day Teach-in: Special 20th anniversary edition**

1pm: Cedric Taylor, Central Michigan University, Environmental Racism

2pm: Chris Cooper, University of Tennessee Extension, Sustainability and Community

3pm: Chloe Bell, Greater Chicago Legal Clinic, Redlining in Chicago

1-18 Socrates questions Athenian religion

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates* (Euthyphro), 1-27

1-23 Plato questions the Athenian family (and solves the leadership problem in democracies)

Plato, *The Republic*, Books 4 & 5 (parts), 177-195; 225-252

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

1-25 Aristotle questions Athenian democracy

Aristotle, *The Politics*, Books 1, 3, & 7 (parts): 35-38; 86-94; 118-126; 212-223

Query one: how far should family authority reach into public education?

1-30 The family state, the state of families, the state of individuals, and the democratic state
Gutmann, *Democratic Education*, 19-47

2-1 *class debate*: do school boards have “a right to be wrong” by banning critical race theory?

Gutmann, *Democratic Education*, 40-70; 95-107

Leher, “The Unlikely Issue Shaping the Virginia Governor’s Race,” October 13, 2021

2-5 Micro-essay #1 due as a Google doc by 4pm (democracy and education)

Part Two: Aristotle, practical reason (judging from ends to means), and a global dilemma

2-6 Aristotle, the priority of the good, and the thick vague theory: taking the metaphysics out
Nussbaum, “Aristotelian social democracy,” 47-71

2-8 Aristotle, the capabilities approach, and its applications

Nussbaum, “Aristotelian social democracy,” 71-104

Posner, “Human welfare not human rights,” 1758-1769; 1775-1789

Query two: how should we gauge progress in development?

2-13 Nussbaum defines and applies the capabilities approach and its rival, the GDP

Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities*, 1-68

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

- 2-15 *class debate*: does the capabilities approach succeed in attaining a universal position?
Vasbist, “Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach,” 230-237; 246-266
- 2-19 Micro-essay #2 as a Google doc by 4pm (universalist versus western paternalist capabilities)

Part Three: Athenian power and the realist/constructivist debate

- 2-20 Fear, honor, and interest: The roots of Athenian power
The Landmark Thucydides, 16-51
- 2-22 Dissecting Pericles Funeral Oration
The Landmark Thucydides, 111-118

Query three: is Athenian power justified?

- 2-27 The Mytilenean debate: Cleon v. Diodotus
The Landmark Thucydides, 159-183
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

- 2-29 *class debate*: which motive is stronger in the Mytilenean case, honor or interest?
The Landmark Thucydides, 43, 159-183 (very carefully and line by line this time)

- 3-4 Micro-essay #3 as a Google doc by 4pm (honor and interest)

Query four: was the war inevitable?

- 3-5 The unwinding of Hellas in the pattern set by Corcyra: revolution to civil war
The Landmark Thucydides, 55-85; 194-201
- 3-7 Stasis: civil war, international chaos, and the security dilemma
Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics*, 65-96
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

3-9/3-17 SPRING BREAK

- 3-19 The peace treaty and the Melian dialogue
The Landmark Thucydides, 301-317; 325-333; 350-357
- 3-21 The tragic end in Syracuse
The Landmark Thucydides, 397-402; 427-435; 451-478
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 3-26 The realist/constructivist debate over Thucydides
Lebow, “Thucydides the Constructivist,” *APSR*, 547-560
- 3-28 *class debate*: does Thucydides present the war as inevitable or avoidable?
Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity*, 1-18
- 4-1 Micro-essay #4 as a Google doc by 4pm (realism versus constructivism)

Part Four: How democracies justify dissent and war

- 4-2 Socrates the dissenter
Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates* (Apology), 31-67

- 4-4 Socrates the loyal citizen
Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, (Crito), 76-92
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

Query five: under what conditions are dissenters against democratic states justified?

- 4-9 The Fortas-Zinn debate in the US
Abe Fortas, *Concerning Dissent and Civil Disobedience*, 9-25
Howard Zinn, *Disobedience and Democracy*, 3-31
- 4-11 *class debate*: should civil protestors respect their punishment?
Abe Fortas, *Concerning Dissent and Civil Disobedience*, 29-40
Howard Zinn, *Disobedience and Democracy*, 32-53
- 4-15 Micro-essay #5 as a Google doc by 4pm (civil disobedience and political obligation)

Query six: what ethical principles, if any, apply during times of war?

- 4-16 Mytilene, Melos, and the realist constructivist debate again
Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 3-22
Martha Finnemore, *National Interests and International Society*, 69-88
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 4-18 The war in Ukraine in the legalist paradigm: is Ukraine in 2022 like Hungary in 1848?
Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 23-33; 51-97
- 4-22 *class debate*: is Walzer's "double effect" rule on targeting civilians morally valid?
Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 138-159
- 4-30 Final Exam 3:30-5:30

Required books (available at the IWU Bookstore)

- Gutmann, Amy. *Democratic Education*. Princeton. 2nd ed. 1999.
Plato. *The Last Days of Socrates*. Translated by Hugh Tredennick and Harold Tarrant. New York. 1993.
Thucydides. *The Landmark Thucydides A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Richard Crawley. Ed. Robert B. Strassler. New York. 1996.
Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars*. New York. Basic Books. 2006.

Canvas reading

The class schedule also refers to several readings from the following books and articles will be found on the Modules link of our Canvas course page.

- Aristotle, *The Politics*. Chicago. 1984.
Crane, Gregory. *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity*. Berkeley: California. 1998.
Finnemore, Martha. *National Interests in International Society*. Ithaca: Cornell. 1996.
Fortas, Abe. *Concerning Dissent and Civil Disobedience*. New York. Signet. 1968.
Lebow, Richard Ned. "Thucydides the Constructivist," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 95 No. 3 (Sept. 2001):546-560
Lebow, Richard Led. *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests, and Orders* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2003.
Leher, Lisa. "The Unlikely Issue Shaping the Virginia Governor's Race: Schools." *New York Times*. October 13, 2021
Nussbaum, Martha. "Aristotle's Social Democracy," *Aristotle and Modern Politics*. Notre Dame. 2002.
Nussbaum, Martha. *Creating Capabilities*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard. 2001.

Plato, *The Republic*. New York: Penguin. 1955.

Posner, Eric. "Human Welfare not Human Rights." *Columbia Law Review* Vol. 108 (2008):1758-1802

Vasbist, Latika. "Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach: Perils and Promises" *Journal of the Indian Law Institute* Vol. 52 No. 2 (April-June 2010):230-266

Zinn, Howard. *Disobedience and Democracy: Nine Fallacies on Law and Order*. Cambridge: South End Press. 2002.

Social contract

Students are required to write five 750-word micro-essays. The class format will be to discuss and debate topics before you write on the material. We will debate six queries, and in six "three questions" sessions, students will have the opportunity to set the agenda for class discussion (see the class schedule for dates). For three questions sessions, students should prepare three queries suitable for discussion. Chosen at random, students are asked to lead the class in discussion of their question.

Micro-essays 50% (10% each)

Revised essay 10% (due by the last day of class; appointment with me and writing center visit required)

Class Discussion 15%

Final Exam 25%

Use of artificial intelligence tools like ChatGBT or other large language models to assist with class assignments is prohibited, unless specifically approved ahead of time by me.

Class participation is essential for this class. This is a discussion-oriented, flipped classroom. You are expected to have read the reading for the class session in which it appears on the syllabus. Attendance is important to build an intellectual community and sustain the dialog needed to make sense of the issues presented. Students may take as many as three absences, excused or unexcused, without impacting their class participation grade. However, there is a limit to the number of absences you may have and still pass; no student who misses as many as **eight** class sessions, for whatever reasons, shall receive a passing grade.

All assignments and the final exam will be posted on my homepage. At least once during the semester, every student must visit me during office hours to discuss in detail the writing issues raised by one essay. I will pass out a sign-up sheet after the first micro-essay. Students must also visit the writing center as part of the revision process. Micro-essay rewrites of one essay will be accepted up until the last day of class (April 22). Rewrites must be printed out and handed in with the original version.

Illinois Wesleyan University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health and chronic or temporary medical conditions), it is your responsibility to register with Disability Services. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and accommodations cannot be provided until I receive an email from Disability Services. Once the email is sent, please make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations confidentially so they may be implemented in a timely fashion. For more information contact Disability Services by visiting 110 Holmes Hall, calling 309-556-3231, or emailing jhowe@iwu.edu

Office hours

Center for the Liberal Arts (CLA) 251

TTR 4-5; W 9-11, 1-2; and by appointment

309-556-3126

Webpage: sun.iwu.edu/~jsimeone