



Lakehead University  
*Ancient and Medieval Political Thought (2014)*  
POLI-2510-FA  
TTh 10-11:30 – AT 1010

Instructor: Dr. Patrick Cain (Political Science)  
Office: Ryan Building 2033  
Phone: 343-8304  
Email: pncain@lakeheadu.ca  
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-1:00 (or by appointment)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course focuses on ancient and medieval thinkers with the purpose of introducing students to some of the most important political thinkers and concepts in the tradition. The writers from these periods provide us with a series of inquiries into how we should live and how we should live together. In doing so, they provocatively raise questions of justice, virtue, freedom, and the political order. We will read and discuss their work with the purpose of achieving an understanding of the presented arguments and concepts on their own terms, and with the aim of gaining a critical perspective on the politics and ethical practices of our own time.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Required Texts:**

*Because we will refer often to the text during class, and because some translations are better than others, please purchase the editions listed.*

1. Aristophanes, *The Assembly of Women*. Prometheus Books
2. Plato, *Republic*, Basic Books
3. Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*. Cornell University Press
4. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. University Of Chicago Press

#### **Recommended Reading:**

1. Homer, *Iliad* (any translation)

#### **Grading:**

Term Paper: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

Reading Assignments: 8% X 3 Assignments = 24%

Participation: 16%

## **Assignment and Grading Details:**

### *Reading Assignments*

Each student is to select and complete any 3 of the 8 listed reading assignments (each assignment is associated with a particular set of readings). Each reading assignment is worth 8% of the final grade.

Assignments will generally consist of one or two set of questions based on the day's readings. Students will answer the questions in full sentence form, filling 3 double spaced pages with standard font size (12 inch Times New Roman or equivalent size) and 1 inch margins.

Each reading assignment's questions will be sent to students via email or posted on the course website. All reading assignments are due at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned, and will not be accepted late for any reason. Missing assignments will be given a grade of zero.

**Paper:** Paper topics to be distributed. Unless otherwise stated, the paper is due in class on the date scheduled. A late paper will see a grade deduction of 5% per day. Extensions may be requested in advance of the due date, but not afterwards.

**Class Participation:** Although the instructor will regularly lecture, much of class time will also be spent discussing the assigned readings. Students are expected to fully participate in this discussion. To do so, students should: 1. Read assigned material carefully; 2. Bring the readings to class; 3. Be prepared to discuss the readings; 4. Avoid being inattentive and/or appearing inattentive.

In order to facilitate discussion, and in order to allow the lectures to be executed in the most effective manner, students are required to follow the seating direction of the instructor, who will advise students which seats are available for use.

**Class Readings:** The readings from this course involve complicated ideas and difficult arguments. Moreover, the presentation of these ideas and arguments sometimes take forms that may not be familiar to students. Students should therefore read the assigned readings carefully, slowly, and several times in order to grasp their content. The importance of this task is reflected in the weight of the grade given to reading assignments (24%) and class participation (16%).

## **Other Policies:**

### *Communication*

The instructor will regularly communicate with students about a variety of matters, both through in-class announcements and via email using students' Lakehead email account. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with any questions that arise during the course of the semester. While course administrative questions are entirely appropriate, students are also encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss questions related to the course's subject matter. Students are reminded that while email is appropriate for factual inquiries, more complex questions are usually best handled in person.

### *Electronic Devices*

Cell phones should be left at the front of the class, or should not be visible to the instructor (e.g. placed in a bag or purse). If a cell phone is visible, the instructor will assume that it is being used. Laptop use is not allowed without permission. No audio or video recording of the class is allowed without the permission of the instructor. If permission is granted, recording is allowed solely for private use.

### *Academic Honesty*

Academic honesty is expected of all Lakehead University students. Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make themselves fully familiar with Lakehead's policy in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, it is worth emphasizing the following:

*Plagiarism involves presenting another's words, work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one's own.*

To avoid plagiarism, writers should always:

1. Put quotation marks around any words from sources
2. Paraphrase material completely; changing (with the help of a thesaurus) or rearranging a few words or the tense of a verb is not paraphrasing.
3. Give accurate and complete citations for all material *including paraphrased material.*
4. Avoid borrowing entire arguments or approaches to a subject from another writer. Make it 'original' while staying faithful to the assignment parameters.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*(Readings and schedule will be adjusted throughout the year at the instructor's discretion)*

- 9/9 Course Outline  
Introductory Lecture: Political Thought Ancient and Modern
- 9/11 *Genesis*, Chapters 1-3  
<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1-3&version=NASB>
- 9/16 *Genesis*, Chapters 1-3  
Aristophanes, *Assembly of Women*
- 9/18 Aristophanes, *Assembly of Women*  
**Reading Assignment #1 Due**
- 9/23 Aristophanes, *Assembly of Women*
- 9/25 Plato, *Republic*, Book I (327a-336a)
- 9/30 Plato, *Republic*, Book I (336a-end)
- 10/2 Plato, *Republic II*
- 10/7 Plato, *Republic III*

- 10/9 Plato, *Republic IV*  
**Reading Assignment #3 Due**
- 10/14 Plato, *Republic V*  
**Reading Assignment #4 Due**
- 10/16 Plato, *Republic VI and VII* (Only 484a-496e; 509d-521a)
- 10/21 Sophocles, *Oedipus the Tyrant*  
**Reading Assignment #8 Due**
- 10/23 Sophocles, *Oedipus the Tyrant*  
**Reading Assignment #8 Due**
- 10/28 Sophocles, *Oedipus the Tyrant*
- 10/30 Aristotle, *Ethics I*  
**Reading Assignment #5 Due**
- 11/04 Aristotle *Ethics I*
- 11/06 Aristotle, *Ethics II*
- 11/11 Aristotle, *Ethics III*  
**Reading Assignment #6 Due**
- 11/13 Aristotle, *Ethics IV*
- 11/18 Aristotle, *Ethics VIII*  
**Reading Assignment #7 Due**
- 11/20 Aristotle, *Ethics IX*
- 11/25 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question 105, "The Reason for the Judicial Precepts) <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2105.htm>
- 11/27 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question 105, "The Reason for the Judicial Precepts) <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2105.htm>  
**Paper Due**