

Introduction to Politics: Human Being and Citizen

Azusa Pacific University

Class

Semester: Fall, 2009
Room: MMED 3
Time: Wednesdays, 7:30-10:30
Units: 3
Department: History and Political Science
Department website: <http://www.apu.edu/clas/historypolisci/>

Instructor

Kevin Walker, M.A., ABD, Adjunct Instructor of Political Science
Office: Ronald Adjunct Office
Office Hours: By appointment.
Phone: (858) 248 9272 (emergencies only)
Email: kmwalker@apu.edu
Blog: assimilatiodei.blogspot.com

Course Description and Objectives

An individual tries to know what is good through philosophy; but a community of citizens tries to *live* what is good through politics. Taking the approach of “political philosophy” – as individuals who are also citizens – we will join a variety of great and influential thinkers who have sought to clarify the best way for a community of people to order life together. We will discuss how those communities might correspond with the good of the individual person; we will also consider the meaning of leadership, and the difference between a statesman’s legitimacy and a tyrant’s force; we will look at the science of law, and what it means in human societies, as well as the purpose of government in relation to rights; and, lastly, we will consider the idea of progress, and discuss whether or not we can ever move to a condition that is “beyond politics.” Throughout this course, we will reflect on our own answers to these questions, and develop a sense for how those answers shape our most basic assumptions about God, ourselves, and or fellow members of our own political community.

Course Requirements

The overall grade for this class will be based on the following:

- **Essay I (30 points).** “Who Had the Better Founding: Athens or Sparta?” or “Were the Athenians Right to Execute Socrates?” (8-10+ pages)
- **Essay II (30 points).** “How do you Coax a Good Man into Politics?” or “How do you Persuade a Tyrant that it is Better to be Good?” (8-10+ pages)
- **Essay III (30 points).** “What is Liberalism: Progress or Return?” or “Can we Get Beyond Politics?” (8-10+ pages)
- **Thirteen Weekly Reading Responses and Minor Research (10 points, 1 point each, -3).** These are short-answer questions on the readings, as well as minor research on related topics.
- **Extra Credit.** There will be various extra credit options through the course of the semester, related to campus events (Matheteis Forums, guest speakers, etc.).
- **Instructor Error.** If the instructor makes a clear and *demonstrable* mistake, all students will receive a half percentage point.

Essay Grading

Grades for each of the three essays will be based on the following:

- A Mastery of the subject: The work meets each of the required points; sufficient sources are quoted and cited as evidence for premises; reasoning is sound; and there are no typos or other writing errors.
- B Above-average understanding of the material: The work partially addresses one or two major points of the subject; premises are only moderately supported with quotes from the text; reasoning is weak; there are some typos and other writings errors.
- C Average treatment of the material: The work does not fully address the major points of the subject; premises are poorly supported with quotes from the text; there are many typos and other writing errors.
- D Below-average treatment of the material. The work does not adequately address the major points of the subject; premises are not supported with quotes from the text; there are many typos and other writing errors.
- F None of the basic requirements were met.

Student Learning Outcomes

<u>Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>IDEA Objective</u>	<u>Assignments to Assess that Objective</u>
<i>By the end of this course, students should be able to...</i> Demonstrate proficiency in spoken and written English appropriate to college graduate level.	Course Exams; Course papers and projects.	Reading Responses; Essays I, II, and III.
Demonstrate the civic literacy and articulate the responsibilities required of citizens in a democratic republic.	Observation of Students Performance in the Classroom; Course Examinations; Course Papers and Projects.	Class Participation; Reading Responses; Essays I, II, and III.
Articulate a Christian understanding of politics.	Observation of Student Performance in the Classroom.	Class Participation.
Analyze the writing of major thinkers in the history of political philosophy.	Observation of Students Performance in the Classroom; Course Examinations; Course Papers and Projects.	Class Participation; Reading Responses; Essays I, II, and III.

Heritage and Institutions Learning Outcomes

<u>Student Learning Outcome</u>	<u>IDEA Objective</u>	<u>Assignments Used to Assess</u>
<i>By the end of this course, students should be able to...</i> Identify and describe connections between contemporary life and the human experience of other times and cultures.	Observation of Students Performance in the Classroom; Course Examinations; Course Papers and Projects.	Class Participation; Reading Responses; Essays I, II, and III.
Recognize and explicate certain patterns, processes and structures of human life, community and meaning, and cultural interaction.	Course Papers and Projects.	Reading Responses; Essays I, II, and III.
Develop and articulate constructive ways to interact with and influence social structures.	Course Papers and Projects.	Reading Responses; Essays I, II, and III.

Special Needs

Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

Academic Integrity

APU's Academic Integrity Policy booklet states:

The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

Plagiarism, or the use of someone else's text without quotes and proper citation, is considered a violation of the university's standards of academic integrity and will be grounds for serious disciplinary action.

Required Reading

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *The Republic and the Laws*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Locke, John. *Second Treatise on Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1992.
Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Bantam Classics, 1984.
Plato. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1992.
Reading Packet and miscellaneous handouts.

Class Schedule

I. The Philosopher and the City: "Were the Athenians Right to Execute Socrates?"

Week 1 – September 9

Introduction: The Study of Politics in Christian Liberal Arts Education; Definition of Terms

Week 2 – September 16

The Perfect City that Succeeded

- Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* (packet)

Last Day to Drop – Friday, September 18

Week 3 – September 23

The Excellent City that Failed

- Plutarch, *Life of Solon* (packet)

Week 4 – September 30

The Philosopher in the City

- Plato, *Apology of Socrates in Trial and Death of Socrates* (pp. 19-41)
- Plato, *Crito*, in *Trial and Death of Socrates* (pp. 43-45)

II. "What is Leadership: Statesmanship or Power?"

Week 5 – October 7

The Statesman and the Republic

- Cicero, *The Republic*, Book I (pp. 3-34)

Essay I – Optional First Draft Due Wednesday, October 7

Week 6 – October 14

APU Study Day

- Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Republic*, Book II (pp. 35-59)

*****Essay I – Due Friday, October 16*****

Week 7 – October 21

The Statesman and the Republic

- Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Republic*, Books III; V-VI (pp. 60-75; 81-94)
- Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Laws*, Book I (pp. 97-120)

Week 8 – October 28

The Prince and his Principality

- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dedicatory Letter and Ch. I-X (pp. 15-48)

Week 9 – November 4

The Prince and his Principality

- Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters XV-XXV (pp. 49-97)

Essay II – Optional First Draft Due November 4

III. Law, Government and Progress

Week 10 – November 11

The Science of Law

- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, II, Q. 90-92; 94 (packet)

*****Essay II – Due Friday, November 13***
Last Day to Withdraw – Friday, November 13**

Week 11 – November 18

The Purpose of Government

- John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (pp. 1-59)

Week 12 – November 25

Liberal Government

- John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (pp. 59-80)

Thanksgiving

Week 13 – December 2

The American Regime

- American political documents (packet): The Declaration of Independence (1776) – James Madison, Federalist #10 and #51 – Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments (1848) – Abraham Lincoln, Letter to Henry Pierce & Others (1859); Speech on the Dred Scott Decision (1857); Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1963)

Week 14 December 9

American Progressivism: Can we get Beyond Politics?

- Theodore Roosevelt, “The New Nationalism” (1912); Woodrow Wilson, *The New Freedom*, Ch. 1-3 (1913) (packet)

Essay III – Optional First Draft Due Wednesday, December 9

Week 15 – Finals Week

*****Essay III – Due Wednesday, December 16*****

Introduction to Politics

Essay I – On Plutarch’s Lives of *Lycurgus* and *Solon*, and Plato’s *Apology of Socrates*

In an 8-10+ page essay, with your name *only* in the upper right-hand corner, double-spaced, written within normal margins, in 12 point Times New Roman font, answer *one* of the questions below. In answering this question, be sure to give a full and thoughtful account, including supporting quotes and citations, of at least two of our three texts, though be sure to at least mention the third one: 1.) Plutarch’s *Life of Lycurgus*; 2.) Plutarch’s *Life of Solon*; 3.) Plato’s *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito*.

1. **Give an introduction.** Explain why the question is important and what you think the answer is (one paragraph);
2. **Defend the side you disagree with.** State why it might be truth of the matter (in about three paragraphs);
3. **Transition.** Briefly give your own criticism of the side you disagree with;
4. **Explain the side you agree with.** State why you think it is true (in about three paragraphs);
5. **Give a conclusion.** Sum everything up (one paragraph).

Were the Athenians Right to Execute Socrates?

For Socrates, the “citizen-philosopher” of Athens, nothing in life could be more important than the perfection of the individual soul. It was not his own soul that needed perfecting: his questions were aimed entirely at his fellow citizens. He compelled them to know themselves, to rise above the city’s conventional ways of understanding, and seek the purest truth. Better than Athenian justice was perfect Justice; better than beautiful things was *the* Beautiful itself; and better than the wisdom of man was the Wisdom of “the god.” But this proved to be a threat to Athens. Worse than treason or conspiracy against the city, Socrates’ philosophic questions were aimed directly at the laws and the gods, which were the moral foundations of citizens’ lives. They were weak foundations, of course, as Solon himself was aware; but in practice, they were all the Athenians had – and they protected those values with the full force of democratic will. So what were the merits of the Athenian Assembly’s charge against Socrates? Despite their flaws, did they have a point? Or was Socrates completely blameless, since he sought a goal that really was greater than anything Solon had given the city? What would have to change for the philosopher and the city to get along: Socrates or Athens?

Who Had the Better Founding: Athens or Sparta?

All Spartans (and many other Greeks) believed that Lacedaemon had the greatest laws in the world, thanks to Lycurgus. There was no political dissent in Sparta, no class warfare as in many other cities, and not even the possibility of a tyrant. Sparta was “free” because it had perfected community life; it abolished all private property and individualism, and transformed all persons into pure citizens. It came at the cost of personal dignity and independence (not to mention the freedom of the Helots); but Spartan conditioning made them unaware of the loss. Athens, however, had a different view of its own greatness: freedom was a matter of accommodating private life, allowing for radical forms of individualism in both philosophy and the arts, and encouraging the pursuit of wealth. For Solon, the challenge involved giving people what they wanted, while at the same time mustering community spirit – a challenge that seemed successful in theory, but was more difficult in practice, as the tyrant Pisistratus proved. But was that inevitable for Athens? Would it have been possible to have a more effective balance of private and public interests? Can there be any kind of public spirit drawn from a city of wealth and individualism? Or is it better to simply give in to the Spartan way, and allow a group of social engineers to have absolute control?

Socrates in Sparta

When Socrates’ friends came to rescue him from prison, he refused to leave. He faced his execution knowing that that his philosophic life might indeed corrupt his fellow citizens by undermining the moral foundation of their lives, weak though it was. But suppose his friends forcefully abducted him, and through a variety of strange mishaps, he found himself in Sparta. Because of the different visions of Lycurgus and Solon, Sparta was a radically different kind of place compared to Athens: there was no extravagance or diversity of ideas – and there was certainly no freedom to think and speak as one pleased. At the same time, Sparta the city had a peculiar likeness to Socrates the man: while the city tried to be a perfect *society* through the right conditioning and education, Socrates tried to be the perfect *individual* through critical self-examination; both were willing to sacrifice beauty, excellence and nobility for a single-minded pursuit of total perfection. So how might he have been received in Sparta, had he gone there? What might Socrates have thought of Sparta, and the laws of Lycurgus? Given that Socrates agreed with the Spartans in their criticism of Athens – that it was corrupted by luxury, decadence, and mob-like democracy – what would he have approved of Spartan life? At the same time, what would the Spartans have thought of him: would they have simply expelled him (or killed him if he refused to leave) or would they have kept him around, perhaps elevating him to the level of an Ephor, the untouchable social engineers of Spartan society?

Citations

For Plutarch, cite the life in *italics* and the chapter number. E.g., “After leaving Sparta, the first place he visited was Crete,” Plutarch wrote, “where he studied the various types of government and spent time with the most distinguished men of the island” (*Lycurgus*, 4). All subsequent citations only need the chapter number. E.g., “Life in the city was like a military camp,” Plutarch wrote (24). For Plato, cite the page number. E.g., “I found that the men most in repute were all but the most foolish” (23).

Introduction to Politics

Essay II – On Cicero’s *Republic* and Machiavelli’s *Prince*

In an 8-10+ page essay, with your name *only* in the upper right-hand corner, double-spaced, written within normal margins, in 12 point Times New Roman font, answer *one* of the questions below. In answering the question, be sure to include a strong account of *both* Cicero and Machiavelli, and support all claims with quotes from the texts and citations.

Coaxing Virtue into Politics

On the outskirts of the city, in the middle of a small wheat-field, you will find the humble home of the republic’s most illustrious citizen. He is an honored veteran of several wars; he is a devoted husband and father; he is deeply pious toward the gods; he is well-known for his wisdom, his sense of justice, moderate tastes, and his overall greatness of soul. Quick-witted, dazzling in speech, magnanimous in spirit, with a firm knowledge of the republic’s great traditions and understanding of the law – he is *made* for politics. But, sadly, he has no interest in it. His only wish is to live on his farm, work his land, and then retreat into his books on philosophy, worship, and other heavenly things. “Leisure, contemplation, and meditation on virtue – what greater pleasures are there?” he asks. “I honor our great constitution and the noble leaders who secured our freedom. But I simply cannot subject myself to the fools who run the Assembly.” It is true: while the people are corrupt and debauched with luxury, the assembly is overrun with brutal partisanship and power-politics. Those who do not join and flatter the mob frequently face personal destruction; those who praise great old traditions and respect for the law are demonized as uncaring and indifferent to the needs of the people. Many fear that society is ripe for tyranny. This plainly calls for a statesman. So how would you persuade such a man to serve his city and run for office? Though his only concern is goodness, what are the social conditions of a republic, as opposed to other regimes, that *invite* him to pursue a political career? What might he already understand about the Machiavellian nature of politics? How would he use Machiavellian tools without accepting Machiavelli’s whole philosophy?

Explaining Goodness to Tyranny

You’re befriended by the most successful tyrant-warlord-gangster-thug of all time. He has stamped out all enemies through a systematic plan of dominance; he owns the police and the justice system; he exerts perfect control over all national affairs; he maintains a constant feeling of crisis at the hands of foreign enemy states. Most importantly, though, he has won the absolute love of the people through luxury, flattery and social corruption – and a steady dose of fear, just in case. His rise to power was rapid and awe-inspiring, and it seems it will never end. He is the Machiavellian ideal: “I owe it all to this,” he says, showing you his tattered, underlined copy of *The Prince*, which he has memorized. Yet, for all his power, you find him to be surprisingly gentle-spirited in his old age, frequently retreating from the dirty work into a life of quiet leisure and the study of old books saved from the bonfires – and he has read Cicero’s *Republic* and *The Laws*. Weighing both Machiavelli and Cicero in his mind, he asks: “Why would a ‘good man’ ever enter politics? He belongs on his farm with his philosophy books, not in public life. And why would anyone in politics try to be good? If such a man was truly great, he wouldn’t worry about the laws and the traditions of the city and trying to bring morality to the people – no, no. He would seek his own glory. And how can anyone say a republic is the best regime? – all that ‘civic virtue’ and seeking ‘the public good’ – bah! I choose power.” How would you explain Cicero’s view – that it is better to be good, especially as a leader – to a pure Machiavellian? How would you show the defense of a republic to a tyrant? How would you defend justice when accident and “fortune” are the forces that rule the world? How would you defend Cicero’s view of wisdom to one who sees it only as “ability”?

Points to Consider

In answering these questions, be sure to give a complete and thoughtful account of at least six of the following points, a few from each side.

Cicero’s *Republic*

- **Private Contemplation and Public Service (*Republic*, Book I.1-32).** Why are the eternal and heavenly things preferable to the temporal things? Why are temporal things still worthy of attention? What kind of person devotes attention to both, or at least brings the eternal things down to a temporal level?
- **The Various Regimes (I.33-71).** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various regimes? Why is a monarchy the best regime in general? Why is a republic best for a free people?
- **Justice and Human Nature (Book III).** Why do some believe it is better to be unjust? What makes it impossible for this to be completely true? Why is it better to be just?
- **Human Nature and Law (*Laws*, Book I. 16-35).** Why are human beings made for law? Why is virtue good for its own sake? What is the nature of the highest good, and what is philosophy for?

Machiavelli’s *Prince*

- **Maintaining Principalities (Ch. 1-5).** What are the various principalities? What are the difficulties of keeping one by force? What are the social conditions that make a prince successful in keeping his power?
- **Acquiring Principalities (6-10).** What difficulties does a prince face in seizing power? Why do princes often fail in this endeavor? What kinds of things help a prince succeed?
- **Princely Power in General (11-14).** What example does the Church offer a prince? How should he manage military matters? How should he relate to his troops?
- **Princely Conduct (15-23).** What is the importance of public opinion for a prince? What are the features of an ideal prince’s conduct? How should a prince acquire esteem?
- **Ability and Fortune (24-25).** Why do principalities fail? What is the secret of political success for a prince? What outlook should a prince have for all of political life?