

“It has been well said of Aristotle, ‘Solet Aristoteles quaerere pugnam’; ‘Aristotle has a habit of seeking a fight.’ He is seeking a fight not because he loves fight and enmity but because he loves peace and friendship; but true peace and friendship can only be found in the truth.”

—Leo Strauss [quoted in Thomas Pangle, *Leo Strauss*. p.6]

Political Science 7991

Special Topics in Political Theory: Aristotelian Realism

Fall 2015

Political Science, like many other academic disciplines, counts Aristotle among its founders, though in the Renaissance and modern ages, his authority was widely repudiated in this as in other fields of learning. In this course, we will read closely his *Politics*, in the context of his philosophy more generally and of political history in his time, asking what remains vital in his thought as well as what has been superseded. Examining his influence in medieval and early modern times, we will consider what he has to contribute to the study of politics today.

Instructor: James Stoner, Stubbs 214
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:30
Thursdays, 10:00-11:30, and by appointment

Books available for purchase:

- Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (Free Press) [ISBN 9780684827902]
- Richard P. McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (Random House) [ISBN 9780375757990]
- Robert C. Bartlett & Susan D. Collins, trans., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226026756]
- Carnes Lord, trans., *Aristotle's Politics* (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226921846]
- Dino Bigongiari, ed., *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Free Press) [ISBN 9780684836416]
- Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace* (Liberty Fund) [ISBN 9780865974322]

Course requirements:

- Attendance at all class sessions and participation in discussions [absence penalized]
- Five 500-word papers on the assigned reading, due before class (& read aloud) [40%]
[team A: 9/1, 9/15, 9/29, 10/13, & 11/10; team B: 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, & 11/17]
- One-page review of secondary materials on Aristotle [due in class on 11/3] [10%]
- Research paper, 20-25 pages, on a topic approved by the instructor (preliminary presentation on 11/24 or 12/1; final paper due 12/11) [50%]

Grading scale: A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%), etc.

SYLLABUS:**I. Aristotle in Context: Political Science Today, and Politics in Classical Greece**

- Tues., 8/25 Leo Strauss, "Epilogue," in Herbert Storing, ed., *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*, ch. 5
 Leo Strauss, "Aristotle," in *The City and Man*, ch. 1
- Tues., 9/1 Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, books I, II.1-78, III.1-85, V.84-116

II. Aristotle

- Tues., 9/8 Aristotle, *Categories* (complete)
 Aristotle, *Physics*, Book II, IV
 Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book I, ch. 1; Book II, ch. 1-2; Book III, ch. 4-13
 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I
- Tues., 9/15 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I-V
 Tues., 9/22 *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI-X
- Tues., 9/29 Aristotle, *Politics*, I-II
 Tues., 10/6 *Politics*, III
 Tues., 10/13 *Politics*, IV-VI
 Tues., 10/20 *Politics*, VII-VIII
- Tues., 10/27 *Rhetoric*, I-II
- Tues., 11/3 Workshop on secondary literature on Aristotle

III. Aristotelians

- Tues., 11/10 Thomas Aquinas, *Political Ideas* (complete)
 Fri., 11/13 PAPER TOPIC DUE
 Tues., 11/17 Hugo Grotius, *On the Right of War and Peace*
 Book I: Preliminary Discourse, ch. 1-2, 4-5
 Book II: ch. 1, 3, 5, 22-25
 Book III: ch. 1

IV. Workshop: Presentation of Research

- Tues., 11/24 Presenting:
 Tues., 12/1 Presenting:
- Fri., 12/11 PAPERS DUE