

POLS 4010

Spring 2023 | MWF 11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m. | 301 Baldwin Hall

POWER POLITICS: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY TO MACHIAVELLI

“[P]eople are ... little aware how completely,
during the greater part of the duration of our species,
the law of force was the avowed rule of general conduct,
any other being only a special and exceptional consequence of peculiar ties”

—John Stuart Mill

“*Athenians*:... We believe it of the gods, and we know it for sure of men,
that under some permanent compulsion of nature wherever they can rule, they will.
We did not make this law; it was already laid down, and we are not the first to follow it;
we inherited it as a fact, and we shall pass it on as a fact to remain true for ever.”

—Thucydides

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course to introduce students to foundational texts in early Greek, early Christian, and early modern political thought. Its aim is to make a march through a variety of texts that explore the preeminent role of power in politics—particularly power as the ultimate arbiter of truth, justice, and right and wrong. These texts include Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*; Plato *Apology*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic* (books I and II); Critias, *Sisyphus* fragment; Antiphon, fragment 44 of *Truth*; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*; Augustine, *City of God*; and Machiavelli, *Prince* and *Mandrake*. Through these texts we will reflect on a number of issues that arise when human nature (and sovereign power) is reckoned as a force that will again and again, when given the chance, overpower the fragile restraints of law, religion, morality, and justice. All the readings are in English translation from other languages.

Instructor

Dr. Ilya P. Winham

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Office Hours: by appointment

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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Basic knowledge and critical understanding of the work of ancient thinkers
- 2) The ability to see themselves as critical readers and to realize that the meaning of a work of political thought is something they themselves construct on the basis of certain determine ideas and materials.
- 3) The ability to discuss ideas in a pair or group with clarity, patience, and sensitivity to the views of others

TEXTS

Note: We will read the texts listed below in manageable chunks as we move through the course. How much we read will depend on your reading needs as these are exposed in class. Please purchase only the hyperlinked texts, and you must purchase ONLY these specific editions. We need to be, quite literally, on the same page and different translations of these materials will create difficulties for reading and interpretation. *Always bring the assigned reading to class.* Please do NOT use ebooks.

- Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*, trans. Gagarin/Woodruff (Cambridge) [eLC]
- Plato, *Apology*, trans. Grube/Cooper, 3rd edition (Hackett) [eLC]
- [Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. Robin Waterfield \(Oxford World's Classics\)](#)
- Plato, *Republic*, Books I and II, trans. Grube/Reeve, 2nd edition (Hackett) [eLC]
- Antiphon, fragment 44 of *Truth*, trans. Gagarin (University of Texas) [eLC]
- Critias, fragment of *Sisyphus*, trans. Gagarin/Woodruff (Cambridge) [eLC]
- [Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Martin Hammond \(Oxford World's Classics\)](#)
- [Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson \(Penguin Classics\)](#)
- [Machiavelli, *The Essential Writings of Machiavelli*, trans. Peter Constantine \(Modern Library Classics\)](#)

COURSE FORMAT AND CONDUCT

This course will primarily consist of discussions but will also include lectures and videos. The aim in our discussions is to allow great latitude for the agenda of topics to be explored in any class. It is my aim to have class discussions that are constructed entirely from topics and questions initiated by the students. My task is to set the day's reading, to elicit from students (by asking for volunteers or calling on students) passages and ideas to be discussed, and to monitor a conversation/inquiry around the issues raised.

The pedagogy of this course is inspired by Plato's thought that education should not be a matter of pouring doctrines or interpretations into a student's soul, but rather a matter of providing some stimulus to a potentially active soul's inquiry. So the point of this course is not to learn the instructor's interpretation of the assigned texts, and it is not organized around some definite content to be covered in class by lectures and passively received by students. The point of reading, interpreting, and discussing the primary texts that form the subject-matter of the course is to nurture critical reading skills and critical reflection on central questions like the purpose of politics and human life, what it is to be happy, the nature of freedom, power, and the good, and the value and meaning of morality, law, and justice. We read ancient texts not to confirm the beliefs and prejudices of the day but because they offer a different perspective from our own, and a different vantage-point from which to review, and recognize the extent and nature of, our assumptions and beliefs.

Class Conduct and Comportment

Please keep in mind some simple, commonsense elements of being a member of this class. First, *timing*. Please arrive on time and remain for the entire class session. Late arrivals and early departures are extremely disruptive for everyone. If you think this will become habitual, don't take the class. Second, *diversions and distractions*. While your phones must be silenced and put away for the entire class, food and computers/tablets are allowed in class. However, it is important to remember that the use of computers/tablets in class should be focused on academic purposes only. This means that while you are welcome to use your computer to take notes and to access your notebooks, you should not use it to access social media, email, chat, or engage in any other non-academic activities. It is important to be respectful of your classmates and the instructor by paying attention and participating in class, rather than being distracted by non-academic activities on your devices. By following these guidelines, you will be able to make the most of your in-class learning experiences and fully engage with the course material. Finally, *class attendance*. Since 25% of your grade is based on your in-class performance and participation, this is *not* the course you want to take if coming to class is low on your agenda.

Office Hours

I want all students in the class to make use of my office hours or email (iwinham@uga.edu) if you have any questions or confusions about anything pertaining to the course. Since I spend most of my time in Brooks Hall, please email me to set up a time to meet in my Baldwin Hall office – I am usually available the next day. Email is preferred if you have a quick question about the class or a specific question about the reading or something covered in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Notebooks and Grades

You will keep a notebook (typed), which will be a running record of your engagement with the readings and assignments in the course. Everything you do in relation to the course should be recorded in your notebook. The notebooks serve three purposes: they will help you keep up with the course in a regular way, they will be used to facilitate class discussion, and they will be useful tools for practicing critical self-reflection.

You will upload your notebook to eLC (as a PDF or Word document) about three times during the semester, and again at the end of the course when your final paper is turned in (May 5). Eventually, you will use your notebook of chosen passages, comments, and reflections to write a final paper (6-8 pages, double-spaced) about an aspect of ancient political thought that most interests you. There will be no quizzes or exams. Grades will be determined by the character of your notebook (50%), your in-class performance (25%), and your midterm and final papers (25%).

Your notebook assignments will vary over the course of the semester. But as a general rule you will be asked to choose a passage from the assigned reading—no more than a page—that you determine would be interesting for class discussion. You are required to type out the entire passage into your notebook and then write your own thoughts, comments, reactions, and questions about the passage. Your discussion of the passage should be *at least one paragraph*. Your chosen passage should show that you have thought about the reading independently before class. What I'm looking for is your fresh, individual interaction with the original work. I'm not looking for polished and sophisticated responses; I'm looking for the articulation of your own thoughts. Near the passage make sure to record (1) the date that you wrote the passage down and (2) its citation (author, title, and page or line numbers).

When you write in your notebook about the passage, please consider not just my perspective as a reader and grader of your work, but also the perspective of your classmates. Your writing should be clear and understandable to them, and it also should encourage critical thinking and discussion among your classmates, whether they agree with your ideas or not. It is particularly useful for class discussion to draw attention to matters you don't feel you understand or matters that interest you and that you'd like to have discussed in greater detail. You should be prepared to read the passage to the class as well as explain why you found it interesting or important to discuss. The passage could be important for you personally, or for understanding some particular point of view, concept, or argument in the reading, or for understanding the reading as a whole. You may find a passage to be important because it offers a different take on the same topic from a passage you've previously recorded in your notebook.

After each in-class discussion you are to use your notebook to reflect on the class and your notebook entry for the class. In this way your notebooks not only require regular attention to the reading, but regular reflection on that attention.

You are expected to perform these tasks only when you see [NOTEBOOK] on the syllabus, which occurs once a week (with one exception) and often (but not always) on a Wednesday.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accommodations

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the DRC and the instructor.

Academic Honesty

The University's Academic Honesty Policy ("A Culture of Honesty," available at honesty.uga.edu) defines scholastic honesty as "the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed." Academic honesty is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, will result in disciplinary action.

CLASS SCHEDULE, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND NOTEBOOK ACTIVITIES

This schedule is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary and are considered further elaborations of the original course. Remaining in this course after reading this syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes and responsibility for being aware of them.

Week 1

Gorgias

- 1/9 (M) First Day of Class
- 1/11 (W) Name Day
- 1/13 (F) Read Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen* [eLC]
In-Class Deep Reading Exercise

Week 2

Gorgias

- 1/16 (M) NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
In his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, King wrote the following about the early Christians: "There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being 'disturbers of the peace' and 'outside agitators.' But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were 'a colony of heaven,' called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be 'astronomically intimidated.' By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests."

- 1/18 (W) Bettany Hughes lecture, "Helen of Troy: Goddess, Princess, Seductress"
- 1/20 (F) Re-read Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen* [eLC]
In-Class Discussion [NOTEBOOK]

Week 3	Socrates
1/23 (M)	Read Plato, <i>Apology</i> [eLC] **In-Class Recitation Exercise**
1/25 (W)	**In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
1/27 (F)	Lecture on Plato, <i>Apology</i>
Week 4	Gorgias and Polus
1/30 (M)	Read Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , pp. 3-26 (Socrates's conversation with Gorgias) **In-Class Deep Reading Exercise**
2/1 (W)	Read Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , pp. 27-62 (Socrates's conversation with Polus) **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
2/3 (F)	Lecture on Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , pp. 3-62
Week 5	Callicles
2/6 (M)	NO CLASS – Read Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , pp. 63-135 (Socrates's conversation with Callicles)
2/8 (W)	**In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
2/10 (F)	Lecture on Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , pp. 63-135
Week 6	Thrasymachus, Glaucon, Adeimantus
2/13 (M)	Read Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book I [eLC] (Socrates's conversation with Thrasymachus) **In-Class Deep Reading Exercise**
2/15 (W)	Read Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book II [eLC] (Socrates's conversation w/Glaucon & Adeimantus) **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
2/17 (F)	Lecture on <i>Republic</i> , Books I and II
Week 7	Antiphon and Critias/Thucydides
2/20 (M)	Lecture on Socrates and the Sophists
2/22 (W)	Read Antiphon, fragment 44 of <i>Truth</i> [eLC] and Critias, fragment of <i>Sisyphus</i> [eLC] **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
2/24 (F)	Lecture on Thucydides: Who was Thucydides? Why does Thucydides matter?
Week 8	Thucydides
2/27 (M)	Read Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book I, pp. 1-13 (1.1-1.23). **In-Class Deep Reading Exercise**
3/1 (W)	Read Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book I, pp. 13-28 (1.24-1.55) **In-Class Deep Reading Exercise** [NOTEBOOK]
3/3 (F)	Read Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book I, pp. 28-73 (1.56-1.146) Lecture on <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book I
Week 9 - SPRING BREAK!!	
Week 10	Thucydides
3/13 (M)	Read Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book II Edith Hall lecture, "The Greatest Speech of All Time: Pericles' Funeral Oration"
3/15 (W)	**In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
3/17 (F)	Lecture on <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book II (Pericles)

Week 11	Thucydides
3/20 (M)	Read Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book III, pp. 131-188 Lecture on Emotions in Thucydides
3/22 (W)	**In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK – On Civil War (<i>stasis</i>) 3.81-84]
3/24 (F)	Read <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book IV (quickly), and focus on Book V Danielle Allen lecture, “What to Do with Sound-Bites: On Politics and Propaganda in the 21st Century”
Week 12	Thucydides/Augustine
3/27 (M)	Read Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , Book V, pp. 301-307 (the Melian Dialogue) **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK – the Melian Dialogue 5.84-5.116]
3/29 (W)	Lecture on St. Augustine: Who was St. Augustine? Why does St. Augustine matter?
3/31 (F)	Read Augustine, <i>City of God</i> , Book I **In-Class Deep Reading Exercise** [NOTEBOOK]
Week 13	Augustine
4/3 (M)	Lecture on <i>City of God</i> , Book I
4/5 (W)	Read Augustine, <i>City of God</i> , Book II (chs. 1-4, 6-7, 11-14, 16-23) and Book III (chs. 1, 9-14, 20-21, 31) **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
4/7 (F)	Read Augustine, <i>City of God</i> , Bk. IV (chs. 1-4, 6-8, 12, 15, 18-23, 25-26, 28-30, 33), and Book V (chs. 1, 8-19, 21, 24-26) Lecture on <i>City of God</i> , Books IV and V
Week 14	Augustine
4/10 (M)	Read Augustine, <i>City of God</i> , Book XIX **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
4/12 (W)	Lecture on <i>City of God</i> , Book XIX
4/14 (F)	Robert Dodaro lecture, “Augustine on the Formation of the Statesman’s Ethical Conscience”
Week 15	Machiavelli
4/17 (M)	Quentin Skinner lecture, “Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction”
4/19 (W)	Read Machiavelli’s <i>Prince</i> and his letters to Riccardo Becchi (9 March 1498), Giovan Batista Soderini (Sept. 1506) and Francesco Vettori (10 Dec. 1513) **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
4/21 (F)	TBD
Week 16	Machiavelli
4/24 (M)	UGA’s Performance of Machiavelli’s <i>Mandrake</i>
4/26 (W)	UGA’s Performance of Machiavelli’s <i>Mandrake</i>
4/28 (F)	Read Machiavelli’s <i>Mandrake</i> and his letter to Luigi Guicciardini (8 Dec. 1509) **In-Class Discussion** [NOTEBOOK]
5/1 (M)	Last day of class