

**POL 2107B - FALL 2013**

# **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THOUGHT**

Lecture: Thursday 17:30-20:30

Location: ART 033

**Professor Sophie Bourgault**

School of Political Studies

Office: FSS 7062

Tel: (613) 562-5800, ext.4962

sbourgau@uottawa.ca (Please use *with moderation!*) \*

**Office hours:** Wednesday 2h30-4h00pm  
And by appointment.

*\* Please note that the professor and the T.A.s will answer your emails promptly only on week days. Many thanks for your patience.*

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**Course description:**

This course introduces the student to the discipline of political thought through a close reading of classic texts by Sophocles (*Antigone*), Plato (*The Apology of Socrates*; *The Republic*), Aristotle (*The Politics*), and Diogenes Laertius. The meaning of the word ‘politics’ for the ancients was extremely broad; this course will thus be concerned with a lot more than the specific issues we tend to understand as political today. We will heed Aristotle’s counsel that the student of politics must “study the soul” (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1102a24). Some of the following questions will guide our reading throughout the term: What is a good soul? What is happiness, and how can human beings work towards it? To what degree is active citizenship central to this pursuit? What is justice? What is the best way for individuals to organize their political communities? Who should rule? And on what basis ought we to judge claims to political authority—wealth, power, wisdom, virtue?

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**Course format:**

While this course is primarily lecture-based, it is hoped that students will participate actively in each lecture by raising questions and sharing critical reflections on the material. Therefore, you must come to class prepared, having done the required readings in advance. Also, in order to delve more deeply into the texts and address particular interpretative problems, the class will be divided up into small discussion groups twice during the term. Your presence and *active* participation in these discussion groups is compulsory. It is your responsibility to make sure that you know when and where your discussion group is held. If you have questions about the discussion groups, please come see me right after class, or consult Virtual Campus.

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### Required texts:

The following texts are all required for this course. I encourage you to purchase the particular editions recommended below as this will facilitate class interaction. **All texts are available for purchase at Benjamin Books** (122 Osgoode St; (613) 232-7495) and a copy of each has been put on reserve at the Morisset Library.

- Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*, E.F. Watling trans. (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003).
- Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, G.M.A. Grube trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000).
- Plato, *Republic*, G.M.A. Grube trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992).
- Aristotle, *Politics*, C.D.C. Reeve trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998).

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### Methods of evaluation:

- One mid-term test (in class – Oct.24<sup>th</sup>): 25%
- One essay, 6-8 double-spaced pages (due Nov.28<sup>th</sup>): 30%
- Final examination (to be held during the official examination period): 35%
- Discussion groups: 10% \*  
\* *half of this grade will be assigned to your one-page response paper (the rest to your participation and presence in DGDs). Details about the response papers will be given on the first day of class.*

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### The unfortunate (but non-negotiable) rules of the game:

- **Smart phones, recording equipment and other technological devices may not be used in the classroom.** Please turn off your phones and leave them in your bags during class time. I strongly urge you to keep your portable computers in your bags as well. If you absolutely must use a portable computer to take notes during the lecture, I would kindly ask you to sit in the last four rows of the classroom, to avoid distracting your fellow students. Thank you very much for your collaboration. If you would like to discuss any of this, please do not hesitate to come see me after class.
- **ABSENCE FROM A DISCUSSION GROUP.** If due to serious health problems you cannot make it to your discussion group and would like to avoid losing marks for this absence, **you must contact your T.A.** directly. You will be asked to provide an official medical certificate in order to waive the penalty for your absence. Please note that your T.A. is under no obligation to allow you to join another group if you miss a particular one.
- **LATE PENALTY (for the essays).** Unless an essay is accompanied by a proper medical note, the late penalty is 5% per day (including weekends). The following reasons are NOT valid reasons for submitting an essay late or for missing an exam: work, travel plans or errors made by the student while reading the course outline or the examination

timetable. Snow, sunshine, high number of assignments due at the same time, computer blow-up or an unhappy girlfriend are not good reasons either.

- **SUBMISSION OF LATE ESSAYS.** Essays are due in person at the beginning of the class. Please note that no essay will be accepted electronically. Late papers are NOT to be slipped under my door (or the secretary's door). Essays put under my door will be placed in the recycling bin. It is students' responsibility to submit their essays at the School of Political Studies' reception desk (during regular office hours) or to put them in the appropriate box (located near the secretariat). The School of Political Studies is located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the new FSS building.
- **APPEALS.** If you are convinced that your essay or mid-term test has been graded unfairly, the procedure is the following. First, you must re-read your work closely and consider all comments made by the T.A. or myself. Second, you must submit to the professor, along with your assignment, a **formal written request (one page)** indicating very clearly the reasons you believe your work should have received a higher mark (note: having worked hard is not a good enough reason). If you are still unhappy with the result of this first appeal, you are entitled to fill in a formal request at the School of Political Studies.
- **PLAGIARISM.** All students must keep hard copies of their assignments until the very end of the academic year. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. Ignorance on the student's part of what constitutes plagiarism cannot, under any circumstance, erase the academic offense. Please visit the following website: <http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf> and read carefully the guidelines on plagiarism included below. If you still have concerns after that regarding plagiarism, please do not hesitate to talk to me or your T.A.

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### ***Beware of Academic Fraud!***

Academic fraud is an act committed by a student to distort the marking of assignments, tests, examinations, and other forms of academic evaluation. Academic fraud is neither accepted nor tolerated by the University. Anyone found guilty of academic fraud is liable to severe academic sanctions.

Here are a few examples of academic fraud:

- engaging in any form of plagiarism or cheating;
- presenting falsified research data;
- handing in an assignment that was not authored, in whole or in part, by the student;
- submitting the same assignment in more than one course, without the written consent of the professors concerned.

In recent years, the development of the Internet has made it much easier to identify academic plagiarism. The tools available to your professors allow them to trace the exact origin of a text on the Web, using just a few words.

In cases where students are unsure whether they are at fault, it is their responsibility to consult the University's Web site at the following address:

[http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/writing\\_tools.asp](http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/writing_tools.asp) « *Tools for Writing Papers and Assignments* ».

Persons who have committed or attempted to commit (or have been accomplices to) academic fraud will be penalized. Here are some examples of the academic sanctions, which can be imposed:

- a grade of « F » for the assignment or course in question;
- an additional program requirement of between 3 and 30 credits;
- suspension or expulsion from the Faculty.

Last session, most of the students found guilty of fraud were given an « F » for the course and had between three and twelve credits added to their program requirement.

For more information, refer to: [http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/newsletter/fraud\\_e.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/newsletter/fraud_e.html)

### Extra help:

- Students with weak writing skills are strongly encouraged to visit a writing center and to consult writing manuals. See <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/mentorship> for more details about the Mentorship Program and <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/writing> to learn more about the Writing Help Centre.
- **Please do not hesitate to talk to me (or to consult your T.A.) at any point during the writing process. My office hours are indicated above, and I will be more than happy to help you.** Good writing skills will be generously rewarded in this course (and in your career as well): please take advantage of all opportunities to strengthen them.
- Students with disabilities or learning difficulties should visit the Access Service office. Details can also be obtained via the SASS office: [www.sass.uottawa.ca](http://www.sass.uottawa.ca).

### Reading Schedule (\*\* subject to change \*\*):

Sept.5	<b>Introduction</b> . What is political thought? <i>* one-page response papers questions distributed</i>
Sept. 12	<b>Greek tragedy</b> - “The Greek Miracle”? - Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i> (in <i>The Theban Plays</i> )
Sept.19	<b>Socrates</b> - <i>The Apology</i> (in: <i>The Trial and Death of Socrates</i> ) - introduction to Plato’s <i>Republic</i>
Sept. 26	<b>Plato</b> - <i>Republic</i> , Books I & II
Oct. 3	<b>Discussion groups</b> ( <i>Antigone &amp; The Apology</i> will be discussed) <b>** One–page response papers due at the beginning of the discussion groups. **</b>

Oct. 10	<b>Plato</b> - <i>Republic</i> , Books III, IV & V
Oct. 17	<b>Reading week</b>
Oct. 24	<b>Mid-term test (in class)</b>
Oct. 31	<b>Plato</b> - <i>Republic</i> , Books VI, VII, VIII & IX
Nov. 7	<b>Aristotle</b> - <i>The Politics</i> , Book I & Book II, ch.1-5
Nov. 14	<b>Aristotle</b> - <i>The Politics</i> , Book III & IV
Nov. 21  <i>The professor &amp; the T.A.s will hold special office hours this week to help you with your essays.</i>	<b>Discussion groups</b> (Aristotle's <i>Politics</i> will be discussed.) <b>** One-page response papers due at the beginning of the discussion groups. **</b>
Nov. 28	<b>Cynicism</b> - Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers</i> (excerpts)  <b>* ESSAYS DUE (at the beginning of class) *</b>  <b><i>Review for the final exam.</i></b>

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