Course Description

In this graduate seminar, we will read and discuss a range of works from ancient Greek political thought (though we will leave out several texts of central importance—especially Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Politics). Topics for discussion include: history, philosophy, rhetoric and dramatic poetry as modes of political thought; the nature of justice; the promise and perils of democracy; the nature of fate and the role of human agency. We will approach these texts and questions as important in their own right, as crucial to our understanding of the history of western political thought, and as of continuing relevance to contemporary politics and political theory.

Course Materials

The following materials are available for purchase at the University Bookstore.

Aeschylus, The Oresteia, translated by Fagles (Penguin, 1984)
Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, translated by Irwin (Hackett, 1999)
Plato, Symposium, translated by Nehamas (Hackett, 1989)
Sophocles, The Three Theban Plays, translated by Fagles (Penguin, 1984)
Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, translated by Lattimore (Hackett, 1998)

Additional readings will be available as pdf files on Learn@UW

Course Requirements

Everyone is expected to come to each seminar session having read the assigned material carefully. We will begin each session by brainstorming questions for discussion, so please come prepared to contribute a question or two of your own. The main assignment for the course is an article length (20-30 pages) research paper. Your paper grade will be based on the final product, but you must complete several preliminary assignments along the way. These include a one-page topic proposal, a preliminary bibliography, a 6-8 page literature review, and a draft of the
first 3-5 pages together with a detailed outline of the remainder of the paper. Due dates for each of these assignments appear on the course schedule below. Finally, our last two sessions will be devoted to presentations based on these research papers. You will both present your paper and serve as a discussant for another student.

Course grades will be calculated approximately as follows, though I reserve the right to change assignments and weightings as circumstances warrant:

- Participation: 25%
- Staged Research Paper: 50%
- Research Presentation & Discussant: 25%

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:

- Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact the instructor as early as possible. All information will remain confidential. You also may contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 1305 Linden Drive, (608) 263-2741 regarding questions about campus policies and services.

- Incompletes are painful for everyone involved. They almost inevitably slow the progress of your graduate study. I will grant them only in exceptional circumstances.

- Any instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be dealt with in full accordance with University policy and will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

**Reading Schedule**

Jan 22    Josiah Ober, “What the Ancient Greeks Can Tell Us About Democracy”
          Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Book 1)

Jan 29    Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, (Books 2-5)

Feb 5     Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, (Books 6-8)

Feb 8     Research Paper Topic Proposal Due

Feb 12    Plato, *Symposium*

Feb 19    Plato, *Laws* (Books 1-6)
Feb 22 Research Paper Preliminary Bibliography Due
Feb 26 Plato, Laws (Books 7-12)
Mar 5 Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics (Books 1-3, 5-6, 10)
Mar 12 Aristotle, Rhetoric (Book 1 and Book 2, 1-17) and Poetics (Learn@UW)
Mar 15 Research Paper Literature Review Due
Mar 19 Aeschylus, The Oresteia

SPRING BREAK

April 2 Sophocles, The Three Theban Play
April 9 Euripides, Medea, Bacchae, Alcestis (Learn@UW)

April 12 Research Paper First Pages and Outline Due
April 16 Aristophanes, Knights, Birds, Assemblywomen (Learn@UW)
April 23 No class (work on papers, meet with JZ)
April 30 Presentations
May 7 Presentations

Friday May 17: Final Research Paper Due