

*Classical Justice*

ANCIENT GREEKS faced problems that may seem familiar to us. We are likely to ask, as were they, whether and how we may reconcile democracy and empire, knowledge and power, or citizenship and tradition. Their questions appear to be our questions: can reason, dialogue, and revelation coexist as bases for political authority? Some artifacts from the ancient period will seem wholly strange to us, like the Greek conceptions of citizenship and justice without a notion of rights; differences of this kind may help us to think beyond the discourse of our time. We will ask: how did the emergence of written culture shape Greek understandings of law and justice? What does this process suggest about the attenuation of written culture today? How do different conceptions of time support different visions of political action? To explore these and other questions, we will grapple with some major works in ancient political thought. We'll reflect on why they are frequently invoked in present-day philosophy and critical theory. We'll work with Greek political-theoretical vocabularies, and engage for ourselves in political theorizing as a systematic intellectual project. While the course is historical, we'll also closely read texts in order to explore resources for critically examining present-day politics.

**Class Meetings:** Tuesday/Thursday 12:00-1:50pm, MI 209

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00-5:00pm, MI 218

**Email:** [wolflinka@beloit.edu](mailto:wolflinka@beloit.edu)

**Learning Objectives:** My objectives for student learning in this course include both knowledge and skills. By the end of the semester, you will:

- Be familiar with the arguments and ideas present in ancient political thinking presented in the readings, in lectures, and in classroom discussions.
- Understand some main theoretical debates about ancient political thinking, and be familiar with examples from the political world to which the debates speak.
- Thoughtfully read complex texts and analyze arguments.
- Communicate your own ideas and arguments, verbally and in writing.

**Course Requirements:** A 1-credit course at Beloit College requires a minimum of 12 hours of work each week, averaged across the semester. I will expect you to attend all classes and to thoughtfully read all course materials. More specifically, this class requires:

1. Attendance and participation. Class attendance (15%) and participation (5%) make up **20%** of your grade.
2. Five short essays (2-3 pages) due Thursdays at 12:00pm. Each of these essays is worth 10%, for a total of **50%** of your grade.
3. Leading class discussion. Each class facilitation is worth 5%, for a total of **10%** of your grade.
4. Final paper due Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 12pm. This paper is worth **20%** of your grade.

5. A 1-hour **final “exam”** (multiple choice) to be given on the final day of class. The final exam is required, and it is worth **0+%** of your final grade. (I will explain the meaning of this on the first day of class.)

**Readings:** The readings are the foundation of the course. If you like to read, and to discuss what you read with your fellows, you are likely to succeed in the class. That said, the material is dense and difficult, written in idioms that bear little resemblance to those idioms that even people who *do* read encounter today. It therefore requires that you practice “slow reading,” which takes time, concentration, patience, and reflection, **before** attending lecture. If you have taken these steps and are still having difficulty engaging in the course materials, arrange to see me in office hours.

**Textbooks:** There are no required books for this course, and all reading materials are available on Moodle. However, if you wish to purchase any of the textbooks, these are the editions I use:

Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Chicago, trans. Lord)  
 Plato, *Four Texts on Socrates* (Cornell)  
 Plato *The Republic* (Basic Books, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, trans. Bloom)  
 Thucydides, **either** *The Peloponnesian War* (Modern Library)  
**or** Strassler (ed.), *The Landmark Thucydides* (Simon & Schuster)\*

**Lectures:** My in-class lectures are an integral resource for your discussion meetings and your papers. Attendance is required. Be on time. Bring your copy of the text up for discussion to lecture and to discussion meetings. Stay focused. Electronic technology is not to be used during lecture, except with the internet switched off.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, chatting with your neighbors or digging into crinkly food packaging during class distracts your fellow students, and me. Be courteous.

**Essays:** The goal of the essays is to promote careful reading, synthesis of the readings with other course activities, and above all, scholarly articulation of your views of the readings. The essays you write in this course are works of theorizing; they are not research papers. Your essays will be evaluated by your use of textual evidence and argumentation, your originality, and the style and grace of your exposition. Improvement of these skills over the course of the semester is an important course objective. An “3-page essay” ends toward the bottom of the essay’s 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

I have found three books particularly valuable as we all work to improve our writing. Regarding argumentation, I suggest *A Rulebook for Arguments* by Anthony Weston (Hackett). In matters of composition, I recommend *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace* by Joseph M. Williams (Chicago). When it

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<sup>1</sup> Multiple studies have shown that using a laptop in a lecture class for any purpose is detrimental to students’ learning. See, Evan F. Risko, Dawn Buchanan, Srdan Medimorec, Alan Kingstone. “Everyday attention: Mind wandering and computer use during lectures,” *Computers & Education*, Volume 68, October 2013, pp. 275-283; see also Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking” *Psychological Science* 0956797614524581, first published on April 23, 2014. Further studies have demonstrated that screens distract nearby non-users too, in ways that harm their learning. See, for example, Faria Sana, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda, “Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers,” in *Computers & Education*, Volume 62, March 2013, pp. 24-31. Finally, mobile devices and apps (messaging, Facebook) are designed specifically to divert attention, both in terms of their visual aspects, as well as their appeal to the systems of the brain that provide emotional gratification. These systems easily override humans’ ability to generate sustained focus and, therefore, humans’ ability to form complex thoughts and to learn.

comes to the nuts-and-bolts of standard written English, as well as for advice on how to handle the challenges of advanced writing, I consult *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* by Bryan A. Garner (Oxford). You are accountable for submitting essays that work toward the standards outlined in these references. Selections from *Rulebook* and more information regarding paper requirements for this course are available on Moodle — set aside time to review these materials before you begin working on your essays.

**Office Hours:** I will be in my office, MI 218, on a weekly basis to talk about activities related to our course or your other academic concerns. I am available for meetings by appointment, however to schedule an appointment outside of my regular office hours you must have a course with a conflicting schedule, an unresolvable work conflict, or an emergency.

**Grading Guidelines and Course Policies:** A comprehensive account of my standards for grading and course policies is available on the Moodle site for this course. Review this material carefully — taking the course implies that you have read and understand it.

## ***Schedule of Lectures and Reading Assignments***

### **Jan 21 & 23: Course Introduction**

The Stoa Project, “Athenian Democracy: A Brief Overview” on-line  
(click through all 10 pages):

[http://www.stoa.org/demos/article\\_democracy\\_overview@page=4&greekEncoding=UnicodeC.html](http://www.stoa.org/demos/article_democracy_overview@page=4&greekEncoding=UnicodeC.html)

Ober, “Democracy’s Revolutionary Start,” from *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, 2009, pages 1-13

### **Jan 28 & 30: Political Tragedy and the Impetus to Theorizing**

Sophocles, *Antigone*

### **Feb 6, 11: Ancient Greek History, Democracy, and Culture**

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*

Book I: pars. 1-7, 15-97, 139-46

Book II: pars. 10-17, 34-54, 59-65

Book III: pars. 36-49, 70-84

Book IV: pars. 58-65, 117

### **Feb 13, 18: Diagnosing the Decline of Athens**

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*

Book V: pars. 16, 25-30, 84-116

Book VI: pars. 8-31, 43-93

Book VII: pars. 50-56, 60-87

Book VIII: pars. 1-2, 44-54, 88-89

### **Feb 25, 27: The Legacy of Socrates**

Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Apology* and *Crito*

### **Mar 3, 5: Justice and the Inadequacy of the Socratic Method**

Plato, *Republic*, Book I – III

### **Mar 17, 19, 24, 26: Plato’s Response to the Athenian Crisis**

Plato, *Republic*, Book II – IX

### **Apr 31, 2, 7: ‘The Highest Association’: Aristotle Recovers the *Polis***

Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I; Book III, Chs. 1-13, 15

**Apr 14, 21, 23: Aristotle on Constitutions and Polity**

Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VII, Chs. 1-10, 13-16; Book VII, Chs. 2, 3

**Apr 28, 30: From *Polis* to the Islamic World**

Al-Farabi, Ibn-Sina, and Ibn-Rushd, *Medieval Political Philosophy* (selections)

**May 5: Wrap Up & Final “Exam”**

**Classical Justice – Timeline**  
*Gregorian calendar*

Bring this timeline with you to class and refer to it often – it’s crucial to grasp the overlapping and entangled histories that inform our reading

*“Before the Common (or Christian) Era”*

- c1250 – Moses leads Israelites from Egypt
- c950 – J and E compose parts of *Five Books of Moses*
- 594 – Solon the Lawgiver’s legal reforms in Athens
- c550 – D and P compose parts of *Five Books of Moses*
- 509– Beginning of Roman Republic
- 508 – Cleisthenes’ legal reforms; emergence of the *demes*
- 499 – Beginning of Greek Classical Age
- 496 – Sophocles born
- 471 – Thucydides born
- 469 – Socrates born
- 441 – Sophocles’ *Antigone* first performed in Athens
- 431 – Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War
- 430 – Plague in Athens; beginning of Athenian decline
- 429 – Pericles dies
- 427 – Plato born
- 424 – Aristophanes’ *The Clouds* first performed in Athens
- 420 – “Peace of Nicias”
- 421 – Dramatic setting of Plato’s *Republic*
- 414 – Hostilities between Athens & Sparta resume
- 406 – Sophocles dies
- 404 – Athens surrenders to Sparta; reign of the 30 Tyrants
- 402 – Moderate democracy restored in Athens
- 401 – Thucydides dies (*History* ends in mid-sentence)
- 399 – Trial and execution of Socrates; end of Greek Classical Age
- 398 – Beginning of Greek Hellenistic Age
- 387 – Plato takes up residence at the Academy
- 384 – Aristotle born
- 360 – Plato writes *Republic*
- 367 – Aristotle arrives at the Academy
- 347 – Plato dies
- 342 – Epicurus born
- 335 – Aristotle founds the Lyceum in Athens
- 322 – Aristotle dies
- 270 – Epicurus dies
- 167 – Rome takes military control of Hellas
- c165 – Newest parts of Hebrew Masoretic Text composed
- 146 – Greece becomes a Roman Protectorate

## Key Greek and Latin Terms

Bring this list to class with you every day; add to it as new terms are introduced.  
Your facility with these terms will be gauged in the final exam.

### Greek

*Aletheia* – truth (cf. *Lethia*)  
*Anēr* - “manly” man  
*Anthropos* – (human) body  
*Aporia* – lack of a passage or way out  
*Archē* – empire, organizing principle  
*Aretē* – excellence and fitness in all things  
*Athenaioi* – Athenian (man)  
*Daimonion* – (Socrates’) “divine sign” or portion  
*Demes* – people, organized by legal jurisdiction  
*Demos* – “the people” (generally)  
*Dēmokratia* – democracy  
*Despotēs* - master  
*Dikaios* – to conduct your affairs in accordance with  
*dikē*  
*Dikē* – “justice,” or adherence to single fundamental  
order of the *Kosmos* → virtue of the *polis*  
*Doxa* – opinion, reputation  
*Eidos* – ideal form  
*Elenchus* – Socratic method  
*Elutherios* – spirit of freedom, liberty, license  
*Epistēmē* – knowledge  
*Epitaphios* – speech in praise of the dead  
*Eudaimonia* – happiness, “a good portion”  
*Eu zēn* – living well  
*Erastēs* - lover  
*Energieia* – action, function  
*Ethea* – habitual or personal patterns → ethics  
*Graphē* - writing  
*Ho demos kratei* – the people dominate  
*Hoi polloi* – the many  
*Isegoria* – citizens’ equality in speaking to the  
assembly  
*Isonomia* – citizens’ equality before the law  
*Kallipolis* – the attractive, beautiful city  
*Kinesis* – movement (e.g. of events)  
*Koinonia* – association, partnership  
*Kosmos* – everything, the universe  
*Krisis* – tipping point; rendering into constituent  
parts; decision; judgment; divorce  
*Kritik* – one who renders, judges, decides  
*Lethia* – loss of memory (cf. *Aletheia*)  
*Logos* – word, speech, reason  
*Mathema* – a known object, object of study  
*Metic* – resident alien  
*Mimesis* – performative identification  
*Noesis* – intellect, intellection  
*Nomos* – customs, cultures, names, traditions, laws  
*Oikos* – household  
*Paideia* – culture, education

*Phatria* – ancestral altar (tribal religion)  
*Philia* – love, friendship  
*Phrōnesis* – practical wisdom, prudence  
*Phusis* – nature  
*Pleonexia* – unbounded need, luxury  
*Polis* – city, political association  
*Polites* – citizens  
*Politeia* – regime, constitution (cf. Plato’s *Republic*)  
*Politikē* – study of politics  
*Politikos* – activity of politics  
*Praxis* – rhythmic dancing → practice  
*Prophases* – preconditions  
*Psyche* – ghost → soul  
*Sophia* – wisdom  
*Schole* – leisure  
*Stasis* – corruption, degeneration, revolution  
*Technē* – art, craft, technique  
*Telos* – end or final development of a thing  
*Theoria* – going to look at, see, view, contemplate  
(e.g. a drama)  
*Theoros* – one who goes to view and contemplate  
(e.g. a drama)  
*Tychē* – chance / fortune  
*Thumos* – spirit, courage  
*Zēn* - living  
*Zoon politikon* – political animal

**Thucydides' Peloponnesian War**  
Guide to Assigned Paragraphs

**Book One**

- 1-7: 'Archaeology' – Differences between Athens and Sparta  
15-19: Organization of Hellas into two alliances: Athens and Sparta  
20-22: Thucydides' discussion of his method  
23-31: Political Revolt (*stasis*) in Corcyra and resulting conflict with Corinth  
32-36: Speech #1: Corcyraeans at Athens  
37-43: Speech #2: Corinthians at Athens  
44-55: Battle between Corcyraeans, Athenians and Corinthians, off Sybota.  
56-65: Revolt (*stasis*) of the Potidaeans  
66-71: Speech #3: Corinthians at Sparta  
72-79: Speech #4 Athenians at Sparta  
79-85: Speech #5: Archidamus  
86: Speech #6: Sthenelaidas  
87: Spartans vote for war  
88-97: History of Athens' growth in power  
139-46: Speech 7: Pericles' first to the Athenians

**Book Two**

- 10-12: Speech #8: Archidamus to the Peloponnesians  
13-17: Strategy of Pericles  
34-46: Pericles' Funeral Oration (#9)  
47-54: The Plague  
59-65: Speech #10: Pericles to the Demoralized Athenians

**Book Three**

- 36-40: Speech #11: Cleon to the Athenians about the Mytileneans  
41-49: Speech #12: Diotodus' Reply  
70-84: Political Decline (*stasis*) of Corcyra

**Book Four**

- 58-65: Speech #15: Hermocrates to the Sicilians  
117: One-Year Armistice

**Book Five**

- 16, 25 - 30: Peace treaty between Sparta and Athens  
84-116: Melian Dialogue (#16)

**Book Six**

- 8-14: Speech #17: Nicias to the Athenians  
15-18: Speech #18: Alcibiades  
19-23: Speech #19: Nicias' reply  
24-31: Athenians' decision to sail upon Sicily  
43-51: Athenian setbacks on the way to Syracuse  
52-61: Effects of misconceptions in Athenian civic culture  
62-88: Events in Sicily and Syracuse  
89-93: Speech #21: Alcibiades to Spartans

**Book Seven**

- 50-6: Worsening circumstances in Sicily  
60-8: Speech #22: Nicias to Athenian soldiers  
69-87: Rout of Athens under Nicias and Demosthenes

**Book Eight**

- 1-2: Athenians learn of defeat in Sicily  
44-54: Further treachery of Alcibiades  
88-9: The Athenian Oligarchy