Justice, Virtue, and the Common Good (PSC 335)
Stephen F. Austin State University—Fall 2019
MWF 9:00-9:50, F374
Instructor: Dr. Alan Baily
Office: LAN 137
Office Hours: MW: 11:00-12:00; TR: 2:00-3:00; Friday: by appointment
Office Phone: (936) 468-2363
Email address: bailyai@sfasu.edu

I. Course Description: “Development and analysis of classical political thought from the pre-Socratic period through the Middle Ages” (SFA Catalog).

II. Course Objectives: This course offers an in-depth survey of the major political philosophers of the classical rationalist tradition, including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and their Roman progenies. We shall also survey the contributions of Christian thinkers including St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua; the medieval Islamic philosopher, Al Farabi, and the medieval Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides.

We begin with Socrates, who submitted morality and justice to philosophical (rational or scientific) questioning for the first time in Western history (and was executed for treason as a result). Next we shall read Plato’s Republic, which is both a defense of Socrates’ life and a foundational contribution to political thought in its own right. Following this we’ll examine Aristotle’s influential account of the moral and political nature of man, as put forward in the Ethics and Politics. Aristotle conceives of ethics (the science of character) as the proper basis for a science of politics, and he defines political science (politike episteme) as “the master art and science of the good for man.” What could this mean?

Plato’s and Aristotle’s philosophies had a significant impact on both Roman law and medieval theology, but these traditions adapted the classical rationalist tradition to suit their own conditions and purposes. The same goes for medieval Europe. Thus, the latter part of the course surveys the impact of both imperialism and revealed religion, on the classical rationalist tradition.

Major themes of the course include human nature, virtue, and justice; the relation of political goods and philosophical truth, the tension between reason and revelation, and the limits of political authority. Lectures and in-class discussions based on texts and student input are the chief methods of instruction. Success in this course will require close reading of the texts, critical analysis of ideas and arguments, and effective written communication.

Credit-hour Justification: "Justice, Virtue and the Common Good" is an advanced course in classical political thought that requires approximately 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction weekly for 15 weeks. In addition, students shall invest at least six hours weekly, out-of-class, on coursework including reading, researching, writing, and studying. Students are required to complete mid-term and final exams. Students must complete at least four major writing assignments and engage in classroom discussion.

Program Learning Outcomes: In any given semester, one or more of the following Program Learning Objectives (PLO) for Social and Behavior Sciences may be assessed.

- PLO#4 – “The student will differentiate a range of political systems and/or perspectives.”

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course, you should be able to:
Understand and explain Socrates’ importance as a point of reference for Plato’s and Aristotle’s political philosophy.

Describe the basic principles of classical (Platonic and Aristotelian) political thought, with particular reference to human nature, citizenship and civic virtue. You should also be able to identify differences between Plato’s and Aristotle’s views.

Explain the classical-rationalist typologies of political regimes as developed in Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Ethics and Politics.

Understand the impact of Christianity on classical conceptions of proper relationships among human beings, the role of divine authority, and the authority of the political community.

Explain the respective efforts of philosophers and theologians to synthesize classical political rationalism with the revealed authority of scripture.

III. Texts: The following books are required in this class; they are available at the university bookstore:


IV. Assignments and Grades: Your grade in this course comprises the below.

1. Two Take-home examinations: a mid-term and a final, each worth 20% of your semester grade [40%].

2. Response Papers: Students have four occasions to submit responses to the readings. Response papers make up 50% of your semester grade. You have one amnesty. In other words, if you submit all four papers, I will drop your lowest paper grade. Alternatively, you may turn in only three papers. Each paper should be 5-6 pages in length (typed, double-spaced and in 12-point TNR or a similar font). Each student shall present and discuss at least one response paper in class.

3. Question Cards: When readings have been assigned, students shall prepare an index card with a question or (thoughtful) comment about the readings, ready to submit by the beginning of class [10%].

Final grade distribution is as follows:

A=90-99, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=65-69, F=64 and below

V. Attendance and Classroom Decorum: Attendance is required; roll will be taken upon occasion. Students who miss more than three class meetings may face a 5% reduction for each additional missed meeting. Absences shall be excused for documented emergencies or official university events (also documented) only.

Mutual respect and consideration are indispensable to the success of any group endeavor. In view of this, I demand the highest standard of conduct in our class. To promote respect for yourself and your fellow students, please silence and put out of sight all cell-phones, blackberries, pagers, ipods and other mobile electronic communication or entertainment devices. Please do not pass notes or exchange whispers, either. If you choose to make a call (or a text) during class-time, kindly exit the classroom to do so, and do not return (you will be counted absent for the day) unless you have an exceptionally good excuse (e.g. a documented emergency, death in the family, etc).
Email Policy:

I will make every effort to respond in a timely manner to all emails addressed to bailyai@sfasu.edu. Please avoid using other email addresses (e.g. D2L email).

I will not reply to the following:
1. Emails not composed in standard written English (it’s not an IM);
2. Emails asking questions the answers to which are available in the syllabus, catalog or course schedule;
3. Emails requesting an excused absence or make-up assignment. Unless the emergency is dire, please discuss these matters with me in person;
4. Emails requesting a recap or summary of material covered in a class meeting the student missed.

Acceptable Student Behavior:
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

VI. Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

VII. PSC 335 Calendar, Fall 2019 (This calendar is tentative and I reserve the right to alter it.)

M  8/26  Welcome & Introduction.
W  8/28  Familiarize yourself with Homer’s Epics, Aeschylus’ Oresteia and Sophocles’ Antigone
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8/30</td>
<td><strong>No Class Meeting</strong> – Read <strong>Plato, Euthyphro</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Euthyphro</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Aristophanes, <em>Clouds</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>Aristophanes, <em>Clouds</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Apology</em>, to 24d</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Apology</em> 24d-35d</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Apology</em> 35e-42</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td><strong>First Response Paper Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Crito</em> 43a-48d3</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Crito</em> 48e-54</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Republic</em> books II-III</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Republic</em> book V</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Republic</em> book VI-VII</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>10/4</td>
<td>Plato, <em>Republic</em> book VIII-IX</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td><strong>Second Paper Due</strong></td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Ethics</em> books I-II</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Ethics</em> books III-IV</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Ethics</em> books V, VIII &amp; X</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Politics</em> books I-II</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>Aristotle, <em>Politics</em> books V &amp; VIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Cicero &amp; Polybius</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>Seneca</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>10/28</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Siedentop, “The Weakness of the Will” (handout); Paul’s Epistle to the Romans</td>
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F 11/1  Wilken, “Christianity as an Ancient Burial Society” (handout)
M 11/4  Augustine, Confessions books X-XII
W 11/6  Augustine, City of God
F 11/8  Augustine, City of God (continued)
M 11/11  Third Paper Due
W 11/13  Al Farabi, The Political Regime
M 11/18  Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles
W 11/20  Aquinas, Summa Theologiae
F 11/22  Siedentop, “God’s Freedom & Human” (handout)
M 11/25  Thanksgiving Holiday
W 11/27  Thanksgiving Holiday
F 11/29  Thanksgiving Holiday
M 12/2  Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses (excerpts)
W 12/4  Luther, “Secular Authority”; Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (excerpts)
F 12/6  Fourth Paper Due

Final Examination: Due Friday, December 13th at 12:00 p.m.

VIII. Withheld Grades  Semester Grades Policy (A-54):
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

IX. Students with Disabilities:
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.