

PHILOSOPHY 166, Winter 2015

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Lectures: Tue. & Th. 5:00-6:20, SOLIS 111. Office Hours: Tue. & Th. 4:00-5:00 and by appointment.

Philosophy 166 will be devoted to a critical study of Aristotle's political theory as presented in his *Politics*. This major Aristotelian treatise and his ethical treatises comprise Aristotle's practical philosophy. The two types of inquiry, political and ethical, are strongly connected in Aristotle, with political inquiry — i.e., the study of the nature, aims, various structures, etc., of the political community — presupposing the findings of ethical inquiry — the nature of ends and excellences of the individual. The plan is to read the whole of the *Politics*, not necessarily in the order in which the various Books of the work are arranged, and, in addition, a number of recent essays on some of the more important themes of Aristotle's treatise.

**Texts:**

Aristotle, *Politics*

**Readings:**

**A. Read excerpts from *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I.i.ii (to be distributed) and *Politics* I.**

- (a) The nature of the political association; the telic character of the polis and the nature of its end (*telos*).
- (b) The naturalness and priority of the political association; man as a political animal. J.M. Cooper, "Political Animals and Civic Friendship"
- (c) Natural rulers and natural subjects (slaves and women) R. Mayhew, "Rulers and Ruled"
- B. Read *Politics* II.**  
Evaluations of ideal constitutions proposed by Plato, Phaleas, and Hippodamus as well as of the actual constitutions of Sparta, Crete, and Carthage.  
R. F. Stalley, "Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's *Republic*"
- C. Read *Politics* III.**
  - (a) Who is a citizen? What is the nature of a citizen?
  - (b) Virtues of the individual and of the citizen.  
J. Roberts, "Excellences of the Citizen and of the Individual"

(c) Types of constitution, correct and incorrect ones.  
F. Miller, Jr., "Aristotle on the Ideal Constitution"

(d) Various Conceptions of Political (Distributive) Justice and Their bases: Aristocratic, Oligarchic, Democratic, and the Correct Basis of Distributive Justice.

(e) A Possible Defense of Democracy: Collective Excellence/Expertise of the Multitude and their Just Claim to be in Authority.  
J. Waldron, "The Wisdom of the Multitude"

(f) A Consequence of the Theory of Distributive Justice: Perfect Kingship

**D. Read *Politics* Books VII and VIII.**

The Highest End or Most Praiseworthy Life and the Best Constitution; Comparison of contemplative and political lives; Aristotle's accounts of the "ideal" constitution and education.

D. Depew, "Politics, Music, and Contemplation in Aristotle's Ideal State"

**E. Read *Politics* Book IV.**

Tasks of the statesman; the causes of the existence of many and different constitutions; parts of poleis; kinds of democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, and polity; why the Middle Class is more suited than the Classes of the poor and the wealthy for ruling and being ruled as well as its importance for a stable constitution and a well-governed polis.

R. Mulgan, "Aristotle's Analysis of Oligarchy and Democracy".

**F. Read *Politics* Book V.**

Causes of change in and ways of preserving constitutions.

**G. Read *Politics* Book VI.**

Mixed constitutions; types and main features of democracy; equality in democracy and ways of attaining it; ranking democracies; again, ways of preserving democracies and oligarchies.

**Course Requirements:** In addition to the readings and lectures, there are two written requirements for the course. The latter consist of two papers of about 8-10 pages long each. The first paper will be due in class on Tuesday of the sixth week of classes (Feb. 10). The second paper will be due on the day on which the Final Exam for the class has been scheduled. For each paper, a number of topics or questions will be handed out at least two weeks before the paper is due.