

## PHILOSOPHY 101: ARISTOTLE

**Professor Monte Johnson (monte@ucsd.edu)**

Teaching Assistant Dafna Mark – Ben Shabat (dmarkben@ucsd.edu)

Lectures: MWF 12-12:50pm RWAC 0426

Final Exam: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 11:30am-2:30pm (location TBA)

Office Hour (Johnson): M 1:30-2:30pm RWAC 451

Office Hour (Mark – Ben Shabat): T 9-10am RWAC 439

**Course Description:** Aristotle's writings on practical philosophy have had a massive influence on the lexicon and subsequent development of philosophical rhetoric, ethics, economics, and politics. Being an election year in this country, this course will focus on his political philosophy, which is preserved in the seven books of his *Politics* and in the *Constitution of the Athenians* (an historical work rediscovered in the nineteenth century). We will read these works in their entirety. The course will focus on the following topics:

- (1) the methodology of political science, and its relationship to anthropology, ethics, economics, natural science, and metaphysics;
- (2) the human being in the state of nature and the origin of the family, village, and city;
- (3) the role of political history and utopian theorizing in political science;
- (4) the natural equality or inequality of human beings, and the justification of slavery, patriarchy, and political rule;
- (5) the definition of the citizen and the state, and the necessary and elements and functions of the state;
- (6) the classification of constitutions, and the criterion of their legitimacy or illegitimacy;
- (7) the account of political stability and revolution;
- (8) the mechanisms of political appointment, including rotation, lots, and voting;
- (9) the combinatorial theory of political structure, and the mixture of democratic and oligarchic elements in republican government;
- (10) the historical development of kingship, tyranny, and democracy;
- (11) the determination of the absolutely best state, the best state for most people, and the best state possible in hypothetical circumstances;
- (12) the establishment of new states (colonies); and
- (13) the importance of education as the principle and ultimate end of the state.

The Professor will make available his own recorded lectures covering all the readings from the *Politics*; class meetings will be devoted to questions about the details of the readings and discussion and criticism of the ideas. Periodic quizzes will test reading comprehension, and oral exams will test recitation and criticism of the philosophical concepts and theories. Towards the end of the course, students will play a board-game designed by the Professor to teach Aristotle's theory of constitutional change. Optionally, students will have an opportunity to do an 3000-word research project guided by the Professor over several drafts on a subject of their own interest. All students will have an opportunity to interact directly with the professor and the graduate teaching assistant in oral exams and optional office hour visits.

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**Textbooks:** The textbooks for the course have been selected from among those in the public domain by the Professor and uploaded to the Canvas website in PDF format. Students are required to download and read these textbooks (and encouraged to print them out for ease of reference during lectures and discussions) and must quote and cite from these provided texts in all graded discussion posts and exams.

**Schedule of required meetings, readings, and activities:** All registered students are required to attend all meetings below [except where noted]. An \* indicates a week in which there will be a quiz in-class or assignment due.

Week	M	W	F
1	Introduction to Aristotle	<i>Politics</i> I	<i>Politics</i> I
2	<b>[No class, no discussion]</b>	<i>Politics</i> I	<i>Politics</i> I*
3	<i>Politics</i> II	<i>Politics</i> II	<i>Politics</i> II
4	<i>Politics</i> III	<i>Politics</i> III	<i>Politics</i> III*
5	<b>Midterm Oral Exam</b>	<b>Midterm Oral Exam</b>	<b>Midterm Oral Exam</b>
6	<i>Politics</i> IV	<i>Politics</i> IV	<i>Politics</i> V*
7	<b>[No class, no discussion]</b>	<i>Politics</i> VI	<i>Politics</i> VI
8	<i>Politics</i> VII	<i>Politics</i> VII	<i>Politics</i> VIII*
9	Game setup	Game play	Game discussion
10	<b>Final Oral Exam</b>	<b>Final Oral Exam</b>	<b>Final Oral Exam</b>
11	<b>[No class, no discussion]</b>	<b>[No class]</b>	<b>Final Oral Exam (8-11am)</b>

**Evaluation:** Students may earn points on weekly discussion boards (up to 3 points each week for a maximum of 30 points), on quizzes (up to 5 points for each quiz for a maximum of 20 points), on oral examinations (up to 10 points for the midterm, and 20 points for the final exam), and for attendance and oral participation (up to 10 points). Final grades: A (=>90); B (=>80); C (=>70); D/P (=>60); F/NP (<60).

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory: all absences require written documentation (e.g. a note from a doctor or coach), or will result in the following penalties applied to final grades: 3-4 absences (-1 letter grade), 5-6 absences (-2 letter grades), 7-8 absences (-3 letter grades), 9+ absences (automatic F/NP).