

Political Science 250
Politics and Political Inquiry I
Claire P. Curtis
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This course will introduce you to thinking about politics and political activity conceptually, analytically and historically. We will explore the meaning of some basic theoretical concepts related to politics and we will trace how those concepts have been understood in other contexts. We will examine in detail Plato's Republic, which sets out both a definition of justice and an outline for an ideal city with ideal rulers. Using Plato as our initial foundation we will examine contrasting arguments about some of Plato's basic conclusions. In addition to Plato we will read a number of political philosophers, from a variety of time periods who themselves present arguments concerning the key issues that Plato addresses. We will use these works as settings within which theoretical ideas come to life. In a somewhat different context we will also read a selection of stories from Octavia Butler's collection of short fiction Bloodchild. At the end of the semester you will have a variety of answers to some of the following questions: What is justice? Is freedom desirable? What are the origins of the State? What makes an ideal ruler? Which form of government is best? What role should women play in politics? What makes a good citizen? What kind of education is needed for citizenship? What stories do we tell to improve citizenship? How can we change the world?

There are four paper due dates (9/11, 10/2, 10/23, 11/20). There are two papers for the class. You may choose from these four due dates, although you are required to use one of the first two due dates. Unexcused late papers will be down-graded one third of a grade a day. Papers handed in during any of the first three due dates may be rewritten.

Required Books:

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|-------------------------|---|
| Plato | <i>Republic</i> |
| Octavia Butler | <i>Bloodchild</i> |
| Goodin and Pettit, Eds. | <i>Contemporary Political Philosophy, an Anthology (CPPA)</i> |
| Course Packet | Available at SASE Ink (219 Calhoun St) |

Course Requirements:

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|----------------------|-----------|
| Two papers | 20 % each |
| Two midterms: | 15 % each |
| One final: | 20% |
| Class participation: | 10% |

This includes attendance and any possible reading quizzes, missing (excused or unexcused) more than 5 classes will result in a one letter grade drop in your final grade

August 26: Intro
August 28: Octavia Butler “Amnesty” in *Bloodchild*

August 31: Plato, *Republic* Book I
September 2: Plato, *Republic* Book I
September 4: Plato, “Crito” Course Packet (CP) pp. 2-14

September 7: Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
CP pp. 15-26
September 9: Bernard Williams “The Idea of Equality” pp. 451-461 in *CPPA*
September 11: Amartya Sen “Equality of What?” pp. 473-483 in *CPPA*
Paper Due Date

September 14: Plato, *Republic* Bk II
September 16: Plato, *Republic* Bk II
September 18: Hobbes *Leviathan* CP, pp 27-35

September 21: Hobbes *Leviathan* CP, pp 27-35
September 23: Locke *Second Treatise* CP, pp. 35-42
September 25: Locke *Second Treatise* CP, pp. 35-42

September 28: No Class, Yom Kippur
September 30: Rousseau *On the Social Contract* CP, pp. 43-53
October 2: Rousseau *On the Social Contract* CP, pp. 43-53
Paper Due Date

October 5: Carole Pateman “The Fraternal Social Contract” pp. 73-87 in *CPPA*
October 7: Butler “Speech Sounds”
October 9: **Exam**

October 12: No Class, Fall Break
October 14: Republic Bks II-III
October 16: Republic Bks II-III

October 19: Mill “On Liberty” CP 53-85
October 21: Mill “On Liberty” CP 53-85
October 23: Republic Bk IV
Paper Due Date

October 26: Republic Bk IV
October 28: John Rawls “Justice as Fairness” pp. 185-200 in *CPPA*
October 30: No Class, SUS conference

November 2: John Rawls “Justice as Fairness” pp. 185-200 in *CPPA*
November 4: Republic Bk V
November 6: Republic Bk V

November 9: Susan Moller Okin “Mistresses of Their Own Destiny, Group Rights, Gender and Realistic Rights of Exit” pp. 575-590 in *CPPA*

November 11: Butler “Bloodchild” in *Bloodchild*

November 13: **Exam**

November: 16: Republic Bks VI-VII

November 18: Peter Jones “Bearing the Consequences of Belief” pp. 607-619 in *CPPA*

November 20: Republic Bks VIII-IX
Paper Due Date

November 23: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* CP, pp. 85-99

November 25: No Class, Thanksgiving

November 27: No Class, Thanksgiving

November 30: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* CP, pp. 85-99

December 2: Brian Barry “Humanity and Justice in Global Perspective” pp. 721-736 in *CPPA*

December 4: Republic, Bk X

December 7: Butler “The Book of Martha”

Final Exam: Monday, December 14, 8-11

Exams

All exams will include a take home essay. If you miss the class where that essay topic is handed out it is your responsibility to get it from me. All essays are due in class the day of the exam. The exams will also include in class short answer and passage explication. **Students who miss any exam must contact me within 24 hours of missing with a documented excuse.**

Paper Guidelines

- 1) All papers must be typed, double-spaced and stapled
- 2) Attach the paper worksheet to all papers (2 copies in syllabus)
- 3) All papers must be handed in hard copy, no papers sent via e-mail will be accepted
- 4) All citations must be in accordance with the departmental referencing guide:
<http://polisci.cofc.edu/PDF/POLSCitationGuide5-16-6.pdf>
- 5) Extensions must be approved 24 hours before the paper is due
- 6) Students must retain a copy of the paper, either on disk or in hard copy
- 7) Plagiarism will be prosecuted by the honor board and **students who plagiarize will fail this class**

Papers that do not meet these guidelines will not be accepted

Paper Expectations

The papers that you write for this class will involve explication of arguments that you have read for class and analysis of those arguments based on your own view or perspective. This means that you are expected to

- 1) **Explain** the argument of your chosen text
- 2) **Present** an argument about that text based upon your own opinion
- 3) **Defend** your argument using evidence from the text

You should use quotations from the texts in question in order to provide evidence for both your explication and your analysis. You will be graded on the clarity of your analysis (this is more important than whether I agree with your particular argument). You may choose to rewrite papers (but you must speak to me first about the rewrite deadline). If you hand in a paper on the last paper due date you may not rewrite that paper.

Papers and take home exam essays **must** be properly cited. All citations should be made in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Political Science Department's referencing guide (available online at <http://www.polisci.cofc.edu/PDF/POLSCitationGuide5-16-6.pdf>). Any failure to cite materials used for papers in this class is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is pretending as if the words and ideas of another are in fact yours. This includes a failure to use quotations, a failure to indicate when you are paraphrasing and the failure to give credit to the author whose ideas you are using. **Plagiarism is a violation of the Honor Code and will be treated as such.**

Paper Worksheet

Please check off the appropriate boxes and sign below:

My paper is:

Yes

No

Proofread
Spellchecked
Double-Spaced
Stapled

My paper includes:

A Thesis
An argument to support my thesis
Quotations to support my argument
Proper citation format

My thesis is:

In writing the paper I consulted the following sources for background/inspiration (anything that appears here should also be cited in your bibliography):

Please sign and date: _____

Paper Worksheet

Please check off the appropriate boxes and sign below:

My paper is:

Yes

No

Proofread

Spellchecked

Double-Spaced

Stapled

My paper includes:

A Thesis

An argument to support my thesis

Quotations to support my argument

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