This course will introduce you to thinking about the idea of politics and political activity conceptually, analytically and historically. This course focuses on political philosophy: a method of thinking about politics that centers on normative questions (e.g. how should we live together?). 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?

**Course Objectives**

This course focuses on the explication, analysis and comparison of political philosophy texts. We read works from figures ancient, modern and contemporary. Students will acquire skills in **explication**: the explanation of what a text is saying; **analysis**: the interpretation of what a text means, both in its own context and for us; and **comparison**: the ways in which arguments about equality or freedom (for example) relate to one another. In class discussion, papers and exams students will learn to examine, interpret and relate texts and arguments.

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- **demonstrate knowledge** of key thinkers and concepts over time (exams and papers)
- **compare thinkers** on similar concepts (papers and exam essays)
- **use concepts** to analyze new situations (short story responses, papers, exam essays)
- **evaluate interpretations** of concepts (papers and exam essays)
- **explain** the nature and value of normative thinking (papers and exam essays)

**Required Books:**
- Plato *Republic*
- Octavia Butler *Bloodchild*
- Course Packet Available at SASE Ink (219 Calhoun St).
Assignments:

Two papers  15 % each
Two midterm exams:  10 % each
Short story responses (5)  20%
Final exam:  20%
Class participation:  10%

The class participation grade 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. Absences in you synthesis seminar will count for an absence in this class as well.

You are assigned two papers, two midterm exams, five short story responses and one final. I also expect regular participation based on your reading of the course material. Students will come to class ready to discuss the material assigned for that class. If you do not understand the argument(s) being made in the reading then you should come to class with questions based on the reading.

Each exam will have a take home essay portion. This means that over the course of the semester you will write 2 papers, 5 story responses and 3 exam essays. You will notice 4 paper due dates in the syllabus (9/9, 10/4, 11/1, 11/22). This gives you some flexibility in deciding when to write your papers. You must write papers for two (2) of these due dates. One paper must be handed in in one of the first two due dates (9/9 or 10/4). Papers handed in for the first three due dates may be rewritten. More information about exams, papers and the short story responses is at the end of the syllabus.

Exams may only be made up if students a) contact me at least an hour before the exam (e-mail is fine); b) schedule a make-up within 3 days of the assigned exam; c) present a documented, written excuse explaining the extraordinary circumstances that led to an inability to take an exam in the scheduled time (not being prepared is not an extraordinary circumstance, breaking your leg is).

Accommodations: Any students who have special learning needs or concerns are urged to speak with me during the first week of the semester if accommodations are needed. The Center for Disability Services provides a comprehensive list of accessibility resources available at the College on the following website: http://spinner.cofc.edu/~cds .

Grading scale:

A (93-100) A- (90-92) B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83) C+ (77-79)
C (74-76) C- (70-73) D+ (67-69) D (64-66) D- (60-63) F (0-59)

Schedule of Readings

8/21: Introduction
8/23: Leo Strauss “What is Political Philosophy” (on OAKS)
8/26: Octavia Butler, “Amnesty” in Bloodchild, (response due)
8/28: Plato, Republic, Book I, ll. 327a-336a10
8/30: Plato, Republic, Book I, ll.336b-354c

9/2: Plato, “Crito” (Course Packet -- CP)
9/4: Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (CP)
9/6: Plato, Republic Bk II, ll.357a-376d
9/9: Plato, Republic Bk II, ll.357a-376d

**Paper Due Date**


9/12: Constitution Day Lecture, 7:30 pm, Paul Horwitz
“Honor, the Oath and the Constitution”

9/16: Locke Second Treatise, CP, pp. 35-42
9/18: Locke Second Treatise, CP, pp. 35-42

9/27: **Exam 1**

9/30: Republic Bks II-III, ll. 376d-417b
10/2: Republic Bks II-III, ll. 376d-417b
10/4: Mill “On Liberty” CP 53-85

**Paper Due Date**

10/7: Mill “On Liberty” CP 53-85
10/9: Butler “The Evening and the Morning and the Night” in Bloodchild (response due)
10/11: Republic Bk IV, ll. 419a-445e

10/14: **Fall Break**
10/16: Republic Bk IV, ll. 419a-445e
10/18: Republic Bk IV, ll. 419a-445e

10/21: John Rawls “Justice as Fairness” (on OAKS)
10/23: John Rawls “Justice as Fairness” (on OAKS)
10/25: **Exam 2**

10/28: Republic, Bk V , ll. 449a-473c5
10/30: Republic, Bk V , ll. 449a-473c5

**Paper Due Date**

11/8: Butler “Bloodchild” in Bloodchild (response due)
11/11: Republic Bks V-VI, ll. 473d-507a
11/13: Republic Bks VI-VII, ll. 507b-541b
11/15: No Class
11/18: Republic Bks VIII, ll. 543a-562a
11/20: Republic Bks VIII-IX, ll. 562a5-592b5
11/22: Republic, Bk X, ll. 595a-621c5

**Paper Due Date**

12/2: Review

**Final Exam is Wednesday, December 11, 8am**

**Short story responses**

You will write responses to each of the five short stories that we read from Octavia Butler’s collection *Bloodchild*. Check the syllabus for those due dates. The responses are due in the OAKS dropbox before class on the day the story is being discussed. The OAKS dropbox will not accept your submission after class has started on the day the response is due. There will be no late responses accepted. Responses MUST be submitted via the dropbox. I will accept no submissions in hardcopy.

Responses can take one of two forms:

1) Focus on a passage/quote from the story that you found particularly interesting/insightful/important. Include the passage (no more the 5 sentences is enough for a good passage) and analyze what the passage is saying and why you think the passage matters either to the story or to the theme that the story is addressing.

2) Focus on a theme from our class discussions and other readings and explain (with examples) how the story connects to that theme.

Response papers will be at least one page, double spaced (and should not be more than two pages, double-spaced). You should give a focused and detailed, but brief, explanation of either the passage you chose or the theme you are addressing. Do not summarize the story. I would suggest reading the story and then taking notes on what captured your imagination. Then look back over the class notes for the preceding classes and see where there might be connections. Be sure that your responses show an engagement with the story and a use of details to explain your interest in the story. The highest grade one can earn on a response paper is a 10.

The rubric used for this assignment is on the next page:
### Short story response rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent (2 pts)</th>
<th>Average (1 pt)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (0 pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the response focused on either a passage or a clearly set out theme?</td>
<td>Clearly stated passage or theme</td>
<td>Gesture towards a passage or theme</td>
<td>No passage or theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the passage explained? Is the theme from class explained?</td>
<td>Detailed explanation</td>
<td>An attempt at explanation</td>
<td>No explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the response paper include details and examples from the story?</td>
<td>At least two clear examples or details from story that are connected to the theme or passage</td>
<td>One detail or details included but never connected to theme or passage</td>
<td>No details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the response paper clearly written, spell-checked and submitted on time?</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td>A few errors</td>
<td>Sloppy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall does this response paper engage with the story in a compelling way?</td>
<td>Fully</td>
<td>Seems dashed off with ideas not fully worked out</td>
<td>Little to no engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Exams

All exams will include both an in class portion and a take home essay. These take home essay topics will be handed out in class in the week prior to the scheduled exam. If you miss the class when that essay topic is handed out it is your responsibility to get the take home topic from me. All essays are due in class at the time and the day of the exam. The exams will also include in class short answer and passage explication (we will discuss these closer to the first exam).

### Papers:

There will be paper topics for each of the proposed paper due dates. Topics are particular to due dates. 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 interpretation  
3) **Defend** your argument using evidence from the text

You must 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 any paper handed in during the first three paper due dates (but you must speak to me first about the rewrite deadline). Papers handed in for the last due date may not be rewritten.
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 Political Science Department webpage: http://polisci.cofc.edu/documents/12policitationguide.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.

1) All papers will be typed, double-spaced and stapled
2) Attach the paper worksheet to all papers (2 copies in syllabus)
3) All papers will be handed in hard copy, no papers sent via e-mail will be accepted
4) All citations will be in accordance with the departmental referencing guide. http://polisci.cofc.edu/documents/12policitationguide.pdf
5) Extensions will be approved 24 hours before the paper is due
6) Students will retain a copy of the paper, either on your computer or in hard copy
7) Plagiarism will be prosecuted by the honor board and students who plagiarize will fail this class. Further information about the Honor Code and Academic Integrity can be found at: http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

Papers that do not meet these guidelines will not be accepted
Paper Worksheet – to be attached to your paper

Please check off the appropriate boxes and sign below:

My paper is: 

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 – to be attached to your paper

Please check off the appropriate boxes and sign below:

My paper is:  

Proofread  
Spellchecked  
Double-Spaced  
Stapled  

My paper includes:

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