

**Political Science 120, Spring 2006
Introduction to Political Thinking**

T/TH, 10:3-11:10, Comenius 305

Professor K. Haddad
Office hours:
T/TH, 1:45-3:30 p.m.
and by appointment

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What is justice?

“I say that the just is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger.” (337c)

Thus begins Thrasymachus’ attack on Socrates in the opening book of Plato’s *Republic*. However offensive this formulation may strike us, Thrasymachus’ initial definition of justice stands as one of the clearest and least ambiguous in the history of political thinking. How might we define justice otherwise? While we may cherish definitions that appear more benevolent or virtuous, defining justice beyond the most general of ideas is rarely easy. This course pushes beyond the unexamined assumptions we may hold regarding justice by closely examining pivotal works of political theory. The objective of this course is twofold: 1) To introduce students to texts of central significance for the discipline; 2) To challenge students to move beyond the study of texts to their own active efforts to theorize justice.

Tuesday, January 17	Introduction: What is Political Theory? What is Justice?
Thursday, January 19	Plato, <i>The Apology</i> (17-30b)
Tuesday, January 24	<i>Apology</i> (30c to end)
Thursday, January 26	Plato, <i>The Crito</i> Instructions for paper #1
Tuesday, January 31	7 p.m. Lecture: Dr. L. Steffen presents “Justice, Morality, and the Death Penalty”

Thursday, February 2	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Book I
Tuesday, February 7	Book II
Thursday, February 9	Book III
Friday, February 10	Paper #1 due at 4 p.m. to Mrs. Ortiz in Comenius 206
Tuesday, February 14	Book IV
Thursday, February 16	Book V
Tuesday, February 21	Book VI
Thursday, February 23	Book VII
Tuesday, February 28	Book VIII
Thursday, March 2	Book IX
	Spring Recess
Tuesday, March 14	Book X, Review of <i>Republic</i>
Thursday, March 16	In-class midterm
Tuesday, March 21	Niccolo Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , "The Dedicatory Letter," Chapters 1-7
Thursday, March 23	<i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 8-14
Tuesday, March 28	<i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 15-22
Thursday, March 30	<i>The Prince</i> , Chapters 23-26 & Appendix
	Instructions for paper #2
Tuesday, April 4	Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , Chapters 1-3
Thursday, April 6	<i>Eichmann</i> , Chapters 4-6
Tuesday, April 11	<i>Eichmann</i> , Chapters 7-10
Thursday, April 13	<i>Eichmann</i> , Chapters 11-15 <i>Epilogue & Postscript</i>
	Paper #2 due at 4 .p.m. to Mrs. Ortiz in Comenius 206
	Easter Recess

Tuesday, April 18	<i>Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). This document is online. Please print and review. Micheline Ishay, The History of Human Rights from Ancient Times to the Globalization Era, “Chapter 1: Early Ethical Contributions to Human Rights”</i>
Thursday, April 20	History of Human Rights, “Chapter 5: Globalization and Its Impact on Human Rights”
Tuesday, April 25	History of Human Rights, “Chapter 6: Promoting Human Rights in the 21 st Century: The Changing Arena of Struggle”
Thursday, April 27	Opening of original essays and review for final examination
May 1-6	Final Examinations, time and room TBA

Readings

- 1) All books are available for purchase at Moravian College Bookstore.
 - a) Plato, *The Republic*
 - b) Plato, *Apology, Crito, and Phaedo* in *Trial and Death of Socrates*
 - c) Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*
 - d) Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*
 - e) Micheline Ishay, *The History of Human Rights – From Ancient Times to the Globalization*

- 2) Additional texts will be available as copies or on reserve at Reeves Library.

Textual Evidence

Learning how to use textual evidence is one of the top priorities of this course. We cannot work without the text. **It is an explicit requirement that you bring your impulsively highlighted and passionately marked up books or articles to every meeting. If you prefer not to write in books, you should take detailed notes on the text, including the page numbers of critical passages.** The highest form of participation is to take the voice of the author seriously, to be able to reconstruct and reconsider the argument, and to direct others to critical passages. Unsupported answers will be less valued than those that draw the discussion back into the text.

Evaluation

Activity	Calendar	Requirement	Final Grade %
Paper #1	2/10	Five pages	15%
Midterm	3/16	In-class examination	20%
Paper #2	4/13	Seven pages	20%
Final Exam	TBA	TBA	20%
Engagement (participation, including presentation of the text)			25%

Engagement

Political theory is a discipline that relies heavily on close readings of texts and argumentative and exploratory discussion. As a teacher of political theory, I am committed to helping students learn how to theorize, not just how to regurgitate the positions and arguments of others. It goes almost, but perhaps not quite, without saying that this requires a well-prepared, proactive, and energized group of students who take thinking out loud together seriously. Make it a point to keep the discussion strong and lively! This will be easy to do, if you come to every class with your prepared texts, highlighted passages, and good questions. Don't regard the text as a smooth surface; find the subtexts, contradictions, and implications that fuel political debate. When you speak, use the names of other students. Make it a habit to respond to or at least refer to their questions and comments. Learn how to differ respectfully, and don't be afraid to change your mind. Discussion is generative when it allows all participants to voice a position, to receive feedback from others, to reconsider, and to possibly revise the initial claim. Don't expect to get a passing grade for being a warm body in the room. That said, I was a student once, and I struggled mightily to participate in discussions. Please let me know if you are having difficulties of any kind. We can strategize together. Because I had a hard time speaking up as a student, I have many ideas for helping others. On a final note, I consider e-mail exchanges, discussions in office hours, and other forms of engagement when grading time rolls around. The formal elements of your engagement grade include the presentation of a text in class and your regular participation. You will receive instructions for the presentation and must sign up for a presentation day.

General Housekeeping

- 1) Expect to work six hours on average outside of class per week. Some weeks the reading load will be lighter, some weeks it will be considerably heavier.
- 2) We will discuss all assignments two weeks in advance of a given due date. Please be in touch over e-mail and make use of my office hours with any questions and thoughts you may have about our work together. I am happy to help you with outlines, and I welcome the discussion of drafts.
- 3) I do not accept late assignments, except in appropriately documented emergency situations. For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment.
- 4) Students with a documented learning disability who desire accommodations for this course must first visit the Office of Learning Services (ext. 1510) and follow college procedures on receiving accommodations.
- 5) Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment in this class. Please see *Moravian College Student Handbook* for an account of academic honesty. See <http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>
- 6) Do not miss class. Undocumented absences *beyond the first* will harm your engagement grade at the rate of 5% per absence.
- 7) No food in the classroom, please.
- 8) ***Turn your cell phone off before class.***