**History of Political Thought I: Introduction**

**Spring 2016**

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

**Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts—Bratislava, Slovakia**

**Instructor:** James Griffith

**Contact Information:** [griffith@bisla.sk](mailto:griffith@bisla.sk)

**Office Hours:** Fridays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**Course Description**

This class will introduce us to some major works and themes in the history of Western political philosophy. We will begin with ancient Greek philosophy, specifically with Plato’s account of Socrates’ speech defending his life, the *Apology*, and selections from Aristotle’s *Politics*. We will then move into the Roman world, at its height with the emperor Marcus Aurelius’ personal notes, titled the *Meditations*, and then at its collapse with Augustine’s sermon on the sack of Rome. We will then turn to the Renaissance with essential moments from Machiavelli’s handbook for leadership, *The Prince*. Moving into the early modern world, we turn to Rousseau’s *Social Contract*, and then Kant’s famous essay, “What Is Enlightenment?” We conclude with a selection from one of existentialism’s major works, Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, on freedom and responsibility, and then with Isaiah Berlin’s autobiographical essay dealing with ethical and political philosophy, “On the Pursuit of the Ideal.” Several of these readings will be supplemented by Steven B. Smith’s book, *Political Philosophy*.

**Texts**

Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*, tr. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), ISBN: 978-0-87220-339-6.

Augustine, *Political Writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins and R.J. Dodaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), ISBN: 0-521-44172-2.

Berlin, Isaiah, “On the Pursuit of the Ideal,” *New York Review of Books*, 35:4 (1988).

Kant, Immanuel, *Political Writings*, tr. H.B. Nisbet, ed. Hans Reiss, 2 enlarged ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ISBN: 9780521398374.

Machiavelli, Niccolò, *The Prince*, tr. Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ISBN: 0-19-280426-X.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, tr. A.S.L. Farquharson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ISBN: 978-0-19-954059-4.

Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), ISBN: 978-0-87220-349-5.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), ISBN: 978-0-521-42446-2.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, tr. Bernard Frechtman and Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Citadel Press, 1985), ISBN: 0-8065-0902-3.

Smith, Steven B., *Political Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), ISBN: 978-0-300-18180-7.

**Course Requirements and Grade Distribution**

75%: *Five papers*, each worth 15% of the final grade. 750-1500 words for each paper. Topics will be dealt with as the term progresses.

10%: Two to three *Text Questions* on the text at hand due each week. These should be thoughtful engagements with the text, not merely questions of factual clarification, and will frequently serve as the basis of our discussion.

10%: *Class Participation* is encouraged and expected. Attendance does not qualify as participation.

5%: *Attendance* is mandatory. I will allow two unexcused absences for the term. Lateness of more than 10 minutes qualifies as an absence.

**Other Issues and Concerns**

Academic Integrity

In this context, “academic integrity” primarily refers to plagiarism. Plagiarism is the taking of anyone’s previously written work and attempting to pass it off as new and/or your own. This includes not citing material that should be cited, even if you are not directly quoting a given source. It is a serious offense and BISLA’s Plagiarism and Cheating Policy will be followed strictly if it occurs. This policy can be found in the Google Drive folder for this course. *NB:*This document also has helpful strategies for avoiding plagiarism.

Expectations in the Classroom

You are all adults and should expect to be treated that way, by everyone in the classroom. You are also expected to treat others like adults. If you have questions, you need to ask them, in and out of class. If you are busy with other aspects of your life, they cannot interfere here—in other words, turn off your cell phones and other such devices, including WiFi access. If you have to use the bathroom, you do not need to ask me, but bear in mind how distracting that can be for others. If you have something to say that does not pertain to the discussion, wait until after class. In short, act like the adult you are and respect the classroom environment.

Writing Expectations

To be able to write clearly means you are thinking clearly. Thus, even your Text Questions should reflect a clarity of thought, a clarity of questioning. This does not mean that you are expected to write publishable papers. What it means is that you are expected to think about the sentences and paragraphs you write, whether they express your thoughts clearly and accurately, and if there may be better ways of expressing those thoughts.

If you are having trouble finding the right words, sentences, or paragraphs—or discover you are having trouble when you thought you were not—you should come see me and/or consult the Writing Tutors.

**\*\*\*\*\*This syllabus is subject to change.\*\*\*\*\***

**Course Schedule**

Week 1—Monday, February 15: Introduction

Wednesday, February 17: **read for class:** Plato, *Apology*, 17a-24b

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 3

Week 2—Monday, February 22: **read for class:** Plato, *Apology*, 24b-34b

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 3

Wednesday, February 24: **read for class:** Plato, *Apology*, 34b-42a

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 3

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 3—Monday, February 29: **read for class:** Aristotle; *Politics*; Book I, ch. 2, & Book III, ch. 1

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 5

Wednesday, March 2: **read for class:** Aristotle; *Politics*; Book III, chs. 4 & 11

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 5

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 4—Monday, March 7: **read for class:** Aristotle; *Politics*; Book VII, chs. 1 & 2

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 5

Wednesday, March 9: **read for class:** Aristotle; *Politics*; Book VII, chs. 13 & 15

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 5

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 5—Monday, March 14: **read for class:** Marcus; *Meditations*; Book IV, chs. 1-28

**bring to class:** Paper on Plato and/or Aristotle

Wednesday, March 16: **read for class:** Marcus; *Meditations*; Book IV, chs. 29-51

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 6—Monday, March 21: **read for class:** Augustine, “The sacking of the city of Rome,” §§1-4

Wednesday, March 23: **read for class:** Augustine, “The sacking of the city of Rome,” §§5-9

**bring to class:** Text Questions

READING WEEK—NO CLASS

Week 7—Monday, April 4: **read for class:** Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. XV-XVII

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 7

**bring to class:** Paper on Marcus and/or Augustine

Wednesday, April 6: **read for class:** Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. XVIII

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 7

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 8—Monday, April 11: **read for class:** Machiavelli; *The Prince*; ch. XIX, pp. 62-67

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 7

Wednesday, April 13: **read for class:** Machiavelli; *The Prince*; ch. XIX, pp. 67-71

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 7

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 9—Monday, April 18: **read for class:** Rousseau; *The Social Contract*; Book I, chs. 1-3

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 10

Wednesday, April 20: **read for class:** Rousseau; *The Social Contract*; Book I, chs. 4 & 5

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 10

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 10—Monday, April 25: **read for class:** Rousseau; *The Social Contract*; Book I, chs. 6 & 7

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 10

Wednesday, April 27: **read for class:** Rousseau; *The Social Contract*; Book I, chs. 8 & 9

**supplemental reading:** Smith, *Political Philosophy*, ch. 10

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 11—Monday, May 2: **read for class:** Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?” pp. 54-57

**bring to class:** Paper on Machiavelli and/or Rousseau

Wednesday, May 4: **read for class:** Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?” pp. 57-60

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 12—Monday, May 9: **read for class:** Sartre, “Freedom and Responsibility,” pp. 52-56

Wednesday, May 11: **read for class:** Sartre, “Freedom and Responsibility,” pp. 56-59

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 13—Monday, May 16: **read for class:** Berlin, “On the Pursuit of the Ideal,” pp. 1-3

**bring to class:** Paper on Kant and/or Sartre

Wednesday, May 18: **read for class:** Berlin, “On the Pursuit of the Ideal,” pp. 3-7

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 14—Monday, May 23: **read for class:** Berlin, “On the Pursuit of the Ideal,” pp. 7-9

Wednesday, May 25: **read for class:** Berlin, “On the Pursuit of the Ideal,” pp. 10-11

**bring to class:** Text Questions

Week 15—Monday, May 30: Paper on Berlin