Justice, the Best Regime, and the Good Life

This course provides an introduction to the comprehensive political questions: justice (Who deserves what?), the best regime (Who should rule?) and the good human life—the kind of life a good regime should encourage, or at least not obstruct. We will examine these questions by reading some of the best texts ever written about them: Plato’s *Republic*, selections from Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica* and his *On Kingship*, Machiavelli’s *Prince*, John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*, and Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*. These texts present powerful but competing views of the questions of justice, the best regime, and the good life, in the light of which we will attempt to reassess our own views. Every text we study is of the highest quality, and we will try to give them the careful reading they merit. In exploring them, this course should provide the student with the beginnings of an understanding of the enduring philosophical problems toward which our everyday political disagreements point. It should also provide them with an opportunity to reflect on the question of how to live as an individual and a member of a political community.

NOTA BENE: This is an “unplugged course.” The use of all electronic devices—cell phones, laptops, etc.—is prohibited in the classroom at all times.

BOOKS FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE

Plato, *Republic*, tr. Allan Bloom (Basic Books)


Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, tr. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago)

John Locke, *Political Writings*, Ed. David Wootton (Hackett)


DAILY SCHEDULE

August 25-September 23: Plato’s *Republic* and Classical Political Philosophy

August 25: Introduction/ Begin Book I

**August 28: No Class (Storey Conference Travel)**

September 1: Plato, *Republic*, Books I and II (through 368b only).

September 3: *Republic*, Books II-III.

September 8: *Republic*, Book IV. **Paper I by class time by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu.**

September 10: *Republic*, Books V-VI (through 497d only).

September 15: *Republic*, Book VI-VII.
September 17: Republic, Book VIII.
September 22: Republic, Book IX.
September 23: Paper II due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 8:00 am.

September 24-October 15: Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Political Philosophy

Note: For day-by-day Aquinas readings, refer to the Aquinas Packet on Moodle.

September 24: Aquinas, Class 1.
September 29: Aquinas, Class 2.
October 1: Aquinas, Class 3.
October 6: Aquinas, Class 4.
October 8: Aquinas, Class 5.
October 13: No Class (Fall Break)
October 15: Aquinas, Class 6. Optional Paper A1 due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 pm.

Interlude: Natural Law in the 20th Century
October 20: C. S. Lewis, “Illustrations of the Tao” from The Abolition of Man (Moodle); Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (Moodle).

October 22-November 3: Machiavelli’s Prince and Modern Political Philosophy

October 22: The Prince, Dedication Letter, chapters I-VI; Discourses (Moodle), Dedication Letter, Book I, Preface, Chapters 9-10, 19-20. Compare the dedication letter of The Prince to that of the Discourses and the preface to Book I; Prince Chapter II to Discourses I.19-20; Prince Chapter VI to Discourses I.9-10.


October 27: The Prince Chapters VII-X; Discourses I, 18 (last two paragraphs only), 26-27, and 58. Compare Prince Chapter VIII to Discourses I 18.4, 26-27; Prince Chapter IX to Discourses I. 58.
October 29: Prince Chapters XI-XVIII, Discourses I.11-12 and II.2; 1 Samuel 17:12 to 18:9 (Moodle). Compare Prince Chapter XI to Discourses I.11-12 and II.2, and Prince Chapter XIII to 1 Samuel 17:12-18:9.
November 3: The Prince Chapters XIX-XXVI; Discourses III 9. Compare Prince XXV to Discourses III 9. Optional Paper A2 due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 PM.

November 5-November 16: John Locke’s Liberal Political Philosophy

November 5: Second Treatise of Government, chapters I-V.
November 10: Second Treatise of Government, chapter VI-IX.
November 12: Second Treatise, chapters X-XV.
November 16: Optional Paper B1 due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 8:00 am.
November 17-December 8: Alexis de Tocqueville’s Political Philosophy and American Democracy

November 19: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.1.3-5 (through “Of Town Spirit in New England” only); I.2.7 (selections); I.2.10 (beginning) (p. 74-114, 402-407, 410-423, 515-521).

**November 26: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)**

Optional Paper B2 due by email to benjamin.storey@furman.edu by 4:30 pm.

**Tuesday, November 15, 12:00 noon: Final Exam.**

**ASSIGNMENTS, PARTICIPATION, AND GRADING**

Breakdown of Course Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Quizzes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Paper:</td>
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This element of your grade will be composed of three elements: attendance, active participation in class, and several pop quizzes given over the course of the term.

- Attendance at every class meeting is expected. After 3 absences of any kind—there is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences in PSC-103—every further absence results in the loss of one partial letter grade (B becomes B-, B- becomes C+, and so on).
- You are expected to be present not only physically but mentally: perfect attendance without active class participation amounts to a C for this portion of your grade; the
addition of regular participation earns a B; frequent, helpful, intelligent participation earns an A.

- **Quizzes**: On quiz days, you will be asked to take five to ten minutes to summarize that day’s reading. I recommend preparing for quizzes by doing the reading carefully and then taking a few minutes to summarize what you have read.

**Papers**: The first and second papers—two interpretive essays on Plato’s *Republic*—are required. After that, you must choose to write two of the four optional papers: you must write on *either* St. Thomas or Machiavelli (options A1 and A2), and you must write on either Locke or Tocqueville (options B1 and B2). You must email your fourth paper (on Locke or Tocqueville) to both me and PS Department Assistant Lori Schoen (lori.schoen@furman.edu) for assessment purposes.

**Exam**: The final exam will ask you to write an essay comparing several of the authors we have read this term on one of the course’s major themes.

**Academic Integrity**: In your papers, you must cite our primary texts frequently; more precise instructions on how to do so can be found on the page below entitled “Citation Format.” You need not consult other sources for this class; please base all of your written work simply on what you learn from your own reading of the primary sources. If you consult any source beyond the assigned reading for an assignment, you must also cite that source. This includes electronic resources. Quotations or paraphrases from any source that are not accompanied by proper citations constitute plagiarism and will be treated as academic integrity violations. If you have questions about plagiarism and proper citation methods, I am happy to discuss them with you, and it is your responsibility to ask. PLAGIARISM MAY RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE. You may also find it useful to consult Furman’s academic integrity page: (http://www.furman.edu/academics/academics/academic-resources/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx).

**Grade Scale:**

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<th>Grade Values</th>
<th>Grade Ranges</th>
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<td>A-</td>
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Grade Values: 4.00, 3.83, 3.50, 3.33, 3.00, 2.75, 2.33, 2.00, 1.75, 1.33, 1.00, 0.75, 0.50, 0.25, 0.00.

Grade Ranges: 3.83-4.00, 3.50-3.83, 3.17-3.50, 2.83-3.17, 2.50-2.83, 2.17-2.50, 1.83-2.17, 1.50-1.83, 1.17-1.50, 0.83-1.17, 0.50-0.83, 0.00-0.50.
Writing Guidelines I: Interpretive Essays

You will write at least 4 short interpretive essays over the course of the term. Interpretive essays will show that the student (1) understands the text to be interpreted and appreciates its significance; (2) has asked and answered a genuine question or made the case for a contestable yet defensible thesis; (3) has organized his or her essay with an introduction, a conclusion, and a logical sequence of paragraphs that advance an argument from the introduction to the conclusion; (4) has marshaled specific evidence from the text to support his or her argument in a manner that demonstrates independent engagement with the text; (5) has carefully edited and proofread his or her writing to produce a compact and compelling style.

Length: Your summary must fit on a single sheet of paper (you may use both sides), in 12-point font with 1-inch margins; you may decide whether to use single- or double-spacing.

Specific Grades:

A: An outstanding essay, marked by unusual clarity of description, force of argument, richness and precision of language, inventiveness, or wit. Shows substantial reflection on the theme and makes a compelling argument to answer a question or defend a thesis. Carefully organized and well-written, usually as a result of several drafts and extensive polishing. Makes detailed reference to the text in question.
B: A good essay that makes a consistent case for a thesis or the answer to a question. The writing is competent, but undistinguished; “B” papers tend to be more informational than thoughtful. Evidence of substantial specific knowledge of the text.
C: A lackluster essay that fails to ask and answer a genuine question or make the case for a contestable yet defensible thesis. Deficient in understanding, textual specificity, or quality of writing.
D: Fails to make an argument or makes it in a completely unconvincing way. May contain some relevant points, but they are hard to recognize. Typically lacks understanding, textual specificity, and polish.
F: No evidence of serious work.

For all papers written in PSC-103, please underline the overall thesis or question of your paper and italicize the thesis of each paragraph. This requirement is intended to help you organize your writing and discipline your argument.

Make ample use of the Oxford English Dictionary Online (oed.com), and the Chicago Manual of Style Online (chicagomanualofstyle.org) while writing. You will need to access both through the library’s webpage (library.furman.edu); the class moodle site has links.
Writing Guidelines II: Citation Format

I. For our primary sources, use parenthetical citations. Parenthetical citations should appear at the end of a sentence, after any quotation marks, but before the period. Several examples:

- In Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates argues that justice is “the minding of one’s own business” (433a).
- Socrates argues that “[u]nless . . . the philosophers rule as kings or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize . . . there is no rest from the ills of the cities,” even though he is aware that the change he speaks of in politics is exceedingly unlikely (472d; see also 499b-c and 541a).

II. Pagination for each source:

- For Plato’s *Republic*, give the Stephanus numbers and letters in the margin for your citations (443a, 457c-d, etc.)
- For St. Thomas, give the article number from the *Summa Theologica* (i.e., I-I.5) or, for *On Kingship*, the title and page number from the assigned translation (i.e., *On Kingship*, 37).
- For Machiavelli, give the brief title and page number from the assigned translations (*Prince*, 17; *Discourses*, 112).
- For Locke, give the page number for the assigned edition (265).
- For Tocqueville, give the volume, part, chapter, and page number (i.e., II.1.1.698).

III. Your paper should include a bibliography. The relevant bibliographic information for Plato’s *Republic* is as follows:


Citations of our other primary text should follow this format.

**Correct citation format is a graded element of your written work for PSC-103.**
Writing Guidelines III: Be Your Author’s Lawyer

The texts we read in this course have been consistently earning readers’ respect—albeit grudging respect, in some cases—for at least 180 years. Your main task in your essays for this course is not to judge our authors, but to demonstrate that you understand why these books have come to be regarded as “Great Books.” In this, you will be following the example of one of our authors, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who describes his own great books education, acquired without teachers in a remote farmhouse, in the following way:

I began with some book of philosophy, such as the Logic of Port-Royal, Locke’s Essay, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, and so on. I soon noticed that all these authors were in almost perpetual contradiction with each other, and I formed the chimerical project of reconciling them, which tired me out very much and made me lose a lot of time. . . . Finally renouncing this method also, I acquired an infinitely better one, to which I attribute all the progress I have been able to make, in spite of my lack of capacity; for it is certain that I have always had extremely little for study. While reading each Author, I made it a law for myself to adopt and follow all his ideas without mixing in my own or those of anyone else, and without ever disputing with him. . . . Then when trips and business deprived me of the means of consulting books, I amused myself by thinking over and comparing what I had read, by weighing each thing in the scale of reason, and sometimes by judging my masters. I did not find that my faculty of judging had lost its vigor because it had been put into use late, and when I published my own ideas, I was not accused of being a servile disciple. (Rousseau, Confessions, tr. Christopher Kelly [Dartmouth: UPNE, 1995], 199)

In the body of your paper, follow Rousseau’s example and “[make] it a law for [yourself] to adopt and follow all [your author’s] ideas without mixing in [your] own or those of anyone else, and without ever disputing with him.” In your final paragraph, you may give your judgment of the ideas the author you have presented in your paper, and your reasons for judging those ideas as you do.
Writing Guidelines IV: The Art of Quotation

Principle: A sentence containing a quotation should be as grammatically complete and readable as any other sentence.

Tools:
1. Quotation marks, double (“”) and single (”). Double quotation marks are more common, and mark the beginning and ending of a series of words taken from another author. Single quotation marks are used to indicate quotations within quotations.
2. Ellipses, three dot (….) and four dot (.....). Ellipses indicate elisions: that words from the original have been left out of a quotation. Three dots indicate words dropped from a single sentence; four dots indicate that a period or other end punctuation has been dropped.
3. Square brackets ([ ]). Brackets are used to indicate the insertion or change of words within a quotation.
4. Indentation: for quotations of 4 lines or more, use a separate, indented paragraph, without quotation marks.
5. Forethought: think about how the quote will fit into the grammar of your sentence before you begin to write it.

Examples:
1. (Incorrect): Adam learns that he will get his bread “by the sweat of your brow,” and, worse, that “dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

2. (Correct): Adam learns that he will get his bread “by the sweat of [his] brow,” and, worse, that “dust [he is], and to dust [he] shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

3. (Incorrect): Adam learns that: “till you return to the soil, for from there you were taken” (Genesis 3:19).

4. (Correct): God drives a wedge between human and animal nature: “And the Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed be you of all beasts of the field. . . . Enmity will I set between you and the woman, between your seed and hers’” (Genesis 3:14-15).

5. (Incorrect): The Babylonians build their tower, “. . . let us build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, that we may make us a name, lest” (Genesis 11:4).

6. (Correct): God’s first words to Abram are demanding and mysterious: “Go forth from your land . . . to the land I will show you,” which God leaves pointedly unspecified (Genesis 12:1).
Writing Guidelines V: Punctuation with Parenthetical Citations

**Principle:** Parenthetical citations go at the end of your sentence, *after* your end quotation marks, *but before* your closing punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point). Closing punctuation that forms an integral part of the quoted material (such as a question mark or exclamation point) goes within the quotation marks but before the parenthetical citation.

**Examples (all correct):**

1. According to Pascal, “we do not prove that we should be loved by displaying in order the causes of love. That would be absurd” (s329, 91).

2. As Montaigne remarks, “how many condemnations have I seen more criminal than the crime!” (III.13.999).

3. Pascal makes his argument against philosophy in rhetorical questions: “Shall it be the philosophers, who propose the good within us as our good? . . . . Have they found the remedy of our ills? Does placing man as the equal with God cure his presumption?” (s182, 46).

4. What does Tocqueville mean when he claims that “America is one of the countries of the world where the precepts of Descartes are least studied and best followed” (II.i.1.699)?
Writing Guidelines VI: Arguments and Outlines

A. Arguments
The purpose of writing an outline is to help you think through the argument of your paper, which will form the paper's principle of organization.

What is an argument? For our purposes, an argument is a contestable yet defensible proposition about the text in question. As such, an argument is different from a topic sentence, which merely states a subject to be treated. You may shape your argument around either a thesis that states the argument in compact form, or as the answer to a genuine question you pose in your opening paragraph.

Examples:
1. Topic Sentence (Incorrect): “This paper will discuss self-knowledge in Montaigne’s Essays.”
2. Uncontestable Argument (Incorrect): “Montaigne’s Essays deal with self-knowledge.”
3. Indefensible Argument (Incorrect): “Montaigne’s Essays were actually written by me in a previous life.”
4. Contestable Yet Defensible Argument (Correct): “Despite his protestations of orthodoxy, the chapter Of Repentance makes clear that Montaigne’s conception of the self is profoundly irreligious.”
5. Genuine Question (Correct): “How does Rousseau separate the natural from the artificial in the constitution of man?”
6. Tee-Ball Question (Incorrect): “Does Tocqueville think equality of conditions is an important fact about America?”

B. Outlines

Argumentative Structure: An outline should consist of a series of arguments: contestable yet defensible propositions about the text in question. The argument of each body paragraph should support the main argument of the paper, the thesis, or respond to the paper's question. As a whole, the paper should consist of a logical sequence of paragraphs that advance an argument from the introduction to the conclusion.
Examples:
Outline I (Incorrect):
1. Rousseau presents his quest for self-knowledge in autobiographical form.
2. Self-knowledge is an important subject of the Confessions.
3. Rousseau's meeting with Mme de Warens is very important to him.
4. The Confessions is an autobiography.

Outline II (Correct):
1. Whether Socrates is discussing love, madness, or rhetoric, the soul is always the true subject of Plato's Phaedrus.
2. Socrates' discussion of love is really a discussion of the soul, because, for Socrates, the soul is love.
3. Socrates' discussion of madness is also, in truth, a discussion of the soul, because, for Socrates, the soul is not fully intelligible, and therefore looks mad to us.
4. Socrates' discussion of rhetoric, finally, is also a discussion of the soul, because rhetoric is "an art of leading the soul by means of speech" (261b).
5. The unity of the Phaedrus, which scholars have wondered about for so long, is readily apparent when we understand that love, madness, and rhetoric—indeed, all truly human things—are all about the soul.

C. Paragraphs

Paragraph Organization: The paragraph is the logical unit of meaning in written prose. In each paragraph, you should: (A) spell out the logical connection between the previous paragraph and the present one. (B) state the main argument of the paragraph. (C) give reasons and evidence to support that argument.