“It has been well said of Aristotle, ‘Solet Aristoteles quaerere pugnam’; ‘Aristotle has a habit of seeking a fight.’ He is seeking a fight not because he loves fight and enmity but because he loves peace and friendship; but true peace and friendship can only be found in the truth.”
— Leo Strauss [quoted in Thomas Pangle, Leo Strauss. p.6]

Political Science 7991
Special Topics in Political Theory: Aristotelian Realism
Fall 2015

Political Science, like many other academic disciplines, counts Aristotle among its founders, though in the Renaissance and modern ages, his authority was widely repudiated in this as in other fields of learning. In this course, we will read closely his Politics, in the context of his philosophy more generally and of political history in his time, asking what remains vital in his thought as well as what has been superseded. Examining his influence in medieval and early modern times, we will consider what he has to contribute to the study of politics today.

Instructor: James Stoner, Stubbs 214
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poston@lsu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:30
Thursdays, 10:00-11:30, and by appointment

Books available for purchase:
• Robert C. Bartlett & Susan D. Collins, trans., Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226026756]
• Carnes Lord, trans., Aristotle’s Politics (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226921846]
• Dino Bigongiari, ed., The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas (Free Press) [ISBN 9780684836416]
• Hugo Grotuis, The Rights of War and Peace (Liberty Fund) [ISBN 9780865974322]

Course requirements:
• Attendance at all class sessions and participation in discussions [absence penalized]
• Five 500-word papers on the assigned reading, due before class (& read aloud) [40%] [team A: 9/1, 9/15, 9/29, 10/13, & 11/10; team B: 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, & 11/17]
• One-page review of secondary materials on Aristotle [due in class on 11/3] [10%]
• Research paper, 20-25 pages, on a topic approved by the instructor (preliminary presentation on 11/24 or 12/1; final paper due 12/11) [50%]

Grading scale: A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%), B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%), etc.
SYLLABUS:

I. Aristotle in Context: Political Science Today, and Politics in Classical Greece

Leo Strauss, “Aristotle,” in The City and Man, ch. 1

Tues., 9/1  Thucydides, Peloponnesian War, books I, II.1-78, III.1-85, V.84-116

II. Aristotle

Tues., 9/8  Aristotle, Categories (complete)
Aristotle, Physics, Book II, IV
Aristotle, De Anima, Book I, ch. 1; Book II, ch. 1-2; Book III, ch. 4-13
Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book I

Tues., 9/15  Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, I-V
Tues., 9/22  Nicomachean Ethics, VI-X

Tues., 9/29  Aristotle, Politics, I-II
Tues., 10/6  Politics, III
Tues., 10/13  Politics, IV-VI
Tues., 10/20  Politics, VII-VIII

Tues., 10/27  Rhetoric, I-II

Tues., 11/3  Workshop on secondary literature on Aristotle

III. Aristotelians

Tues., 11/10  Thomas Aquinas, Political Ideas (complete)
Fri., 11/13  PAPER TOPIC DUE
Tues., 11/17  Hugo Grotius, On the Right of War and Peace
Book I: Preliminary Discourse, ch. 1-2, 4-5
Book II: ch. 1, 3, 5, 22-25
Book III: ch. 1

IV. Workshop: Presentation of Research

Tues., 11/24  Presenting:
Tues., 12/1  Presenting:

Fri., 12/11  PAPERS DUE