August 28:  INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEOLOGY

“An immutable facet of human existence seems to be the desire for metaphysical solace, or a sense of being beyond oneself, in short, of transcendence. We call it by many names, construct myths about it, tell stories of its power and presence, and construct symbols that evoke it. Equally inevitable, it appears, is that this desire incudes a sense of the good, the ethical, which beckons us to a standard of conduct, both individual and social. As we construct our social institutions, we are motivated to shape them in a fashion that respects and resembles those ethical codes. Thus, our politics is shaped by a sense of transcendence, (a God, the Gods, the Good, or Justice are just some of the names we give it), and we are in this fashion the creators and possessors of a political theology.”

September 4 & 11:  MYTHOPOEIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOOD

When [man] honors the laws of the land and the gods’ sworn right, high indeed is his city; but stateless the man who dares to dwell with dishonor.”

Sophocles

Required Reading:  Sophocles, Oedipus Rex, Antigone, Oedipus at Colonus
Euripides, Trojan Women, Bacchae
Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy

Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, & Crito
David D. Corey, “Socratic Citizenship: Delphic Oracle and Divine Sign,” The Review of Politics, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Spring, 2005), pp. 201-228 (E-reserve)

September 18 & 25:  ANCIENT COVENANTS, THE PROPHETIC VOICE AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Wherever you live, it is probably Egypt. There is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land. The way to that land is through the wilderness.”

M. Walzer

Required Reading:  Exodus & Deuteronomy
M. Walzer, Exodus and Revolution

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, & Isaiah
W. Brueggemann, Hopeful Imagination, Prophetic Voices in Exile
A. Heschel, “What Manner of Man was the Prophet,” and “Justice,” in The Prophets, Harper Modern Classics, 1962. (E-reserve)
October 2 & 9:  

**AUGUSTINIAN REALISM**

I... believe... that love may be the motive of social action, but... justice must be the instrument of love in a world in which self-interest is bound to defy the canons of love at every level.”

R. Niebuhr

**Required Reading:**  
Augustine, *The Political Writings of St. Augustine*, Edited by Henry Paolucci  
Augustine, Jean Bethke Elshstain, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*. Edited by Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (E-reserve)

Rinehold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*

October 16 & 23:  

**NATURAL ORDER AND THE LAW**

It must not be supposed that the Church so concentrates her energies on caring for souls as to overlook things which pertain to mortal and earthly life.  

*Rerum Novarum*

**Required Reading:**  
Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Edited by Dino Bigongiari  

Catholic Social Teaching:

“After Forty Years” (*Quadragesimo Anno*), Pope Pius XI, 1931  
“Christianity & Social Progress” (*Mater et Magistra*), Pope John XXIII, 1961  
“Peace on Earth” (*Pacem in Terris*), Pope John XXIII, 1963  
“Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” (*Gaudium et Spes*), Vatican Council II, 1965  
“A Call to Action” (*Octogesima Adveniens*), Pope Paul VI, 1971  
“Justice in the World” (*Justicia in Mundo*), Synod of Bishops, 1971  
“On Social Concern” (*Solicitudo Rei Socialis*), Pope John Paul II, 1987  
“The Hundreth Year” (*Centesimus Annus*), Pope John Paul II, 1991  
“God is Love” (*Deus Caritas Est*), Pope Benedict XVI, 2005  
[http://www.cctwincities.org/CatholicSocialTeachingMajorDocuments]
**PATHOS AND POLITICS**

There are . . . three possibilities for action that the church can take vis-à-vis the state: *first* . . . questioning the state as to the legitimate state character of its actions, that is, making the state responsible for what it does. *Second* is service to the victims of the state’s actions. The church has an unconditional obligation toward the victims of any social order, even if they do not belong to the Christian community. . . . The *third* possibility is not just to bind up the wounds of the victims beneath the wheel but to seize the wheel itself.

D. Bonhoeffer

**Required Reading:**  
D. Bonheffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (On Cheap Grace)  
D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*  
S. Hauerwas, Bonhoeffer, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology.* Edited by Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (E-reserve)

**THE TRACE OF THE OTHER**

For me, the negative element, the element of violence in the state, in the hierarchy, appears even when the hierarchy functions perfectly, when everyone submits to universal ideas. There are cruelties which are terrible because they proceed from the necessity of the reasonable order. There are, if you like, the tears that a civil servant cannot see, the tears of the Other (Autrui).”

E. Levinas

**Required Reading:**  
Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*  
(http://www.academia.edu/2327965/The_Third_Levinas_theoretical_move_from_anarchical_ethics_to_the_realm_of_ju

**EXILE, JUDGEMENT, AND THE KINGDOM**

[He] knew that the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts, despite their personal afflictions, by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers.

A. Camus

**Required Reading:**  
A. Camus, *The Plague*  
E. Voegelin, *Anamnesis* (Commentary on Camus) (E-reserve)
Course Requirements:

In each seminar session, the focus of our attention will be a particular set of readings. *Emphasis will be placed, therefore, on a careful and thorough understanding, interpretation, and analysis of these readings.* Part of my evaluation of your performance in the seminar will depend upon my assessment of how effectively you accomplish this exegetical and interpretive task.

Each week, approximately one-half of the class will be responsible for preparing an interpretive essay on the readings for that week. These essays should be from 3-5 pages in length. They will provide the basis of our discussion for that class. Most of the time, these interpretive essays will focus on the assigned readings; on occasion you may be asked to focus on an analytical issue I raise about the readings. In preparing your interpretive essays, you may consult sources other than those assigned. Your essays will be submitted electronically to the class Moodle site, on Mondays at 3:00 p.m. You will be asked to present all or a portion of them in class on the following Wednesday.

Finally, in addition to the interpretive essays you will be asked to choose one of two options. You may prepare and write an individual research project on some topic relating to the course; or, you may take a final examination (take-home), in which you will be asked a broad analytical question covering the course material. What follows is a guide to how the class requirements described above will be factored into my evaluation of your class performance:

Six Interpretive Essays..........................60%
Oral Presentations & Class Discussion.......10%
Research Project or Final Examination.......30%

Office Hours: MWF from 9 to 10:30 — or— By appointment at your convenience.