POLI 4081: POLITICAL THEORY FROM PLATO TO SIR JOHN FORTESCUE

Fall Semester 2012

10:40-Noon, TTh, Stubbs Hall 220

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Required Texts:

* Plato. Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. Rouse (NAL/Signet)
* Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, trans. Ostwald (LLA/Macmillan)
* Aquinas, Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Bigongiari (Free Press)
* Bonaventure, Journey of the Mind to God, ed. S. F. Brown (Hackett)
* Corwin, Edward S. Higher Law Background of American Constitutional Law (Liberty Fund/Arnagi Bks)

* Needed immediately!

Course & Requirements: The purpose of the course is to acquaint advanced undergraduates and entering graduate students with some classics of ancient and medieval political philosophy through a close reading of a few texts, thereby tracing the lines of development of philosophical reflection on human reality from Hellenic antiquity to the Renaissance. The importance of this subject matter for Anglo-American constitutionalism and political theory is stressed; so also is the relation of classical and Christian theory to the restoration of political science so that it, once again, attains the status of a comprehensive philosophical science of human affairs. Hence we will emphasize theoretical understanding of personal, social, and historical dimensions of reality and their participatory connections.

All students are expected to: attend every class; keep up with the reading; and be prepared to enter into class discussion of assigned material. Bring to class the text under discussion! Grades are based on three (3) essay exams weighted at 30% each 40% (final). Review questions will be provided and review sessions organized. Graduate students only will be required to do a research paper of 6000+ words extent (see instructor by 9/13); a grade of AT LEAST "B" on the paper is necessary in order to qualify for a possible "A" in the course. Tests will cover the reading material as well as—and independently of—the lectures; you should, therefore, take notes on the reading so you know the contents and can review! Group study and outside discussion groups are effective means of thinking through & mastering the material. Makeup tests incur 7% penalty if unexcused & must be taken within a week or the grade goes to zero. The Final Exam is cumulative, i.e., covers the entire course!  N.B.: Cheaters will not fare well!

2012 Weekly Schedule & Calendar

Aug. 21: Introduction, read Plato's Apology, Crito, & Phaedo —bring the book to class!
   "  28: Cont’d

Sept.  4: Cont’d; Plato, Symposium; Voegelin, NSP, Intro (pp.1-26)
   " 11: Plato, Republic, Bks. I-VII;
   " 18: Plato, Republic, Bks. VIII-X
   " 25: >>> TEST I on Sept. 27: counts as Mid-Term. Absence means 7% penalty on makeup, without ironclad excuse; must take by Oct. 4 or grade goes to zero.

   9: Aristotle, Nic. Ethics, Bks. V-IX; Voegelin, NSP, Chaps. 1-3 (pp. 27-106)
   " 16: Aristotle, Politics, Bks. I-IV
      >>> Fall holiday Oct. 18-22
   " 23: Aristotle, Politics, Bks. V-VIII
      >>> TEST II on 10/25 covers everything since Test I
   " 30: Aquinas, Political Writings, pp. 1-91; (final day to drop/resign is Nov. 2)

Nov.  6: Aquinas, Political Writings, pp. 92-195; Bonaventure, Journey of the Mind to God, pp. 1-39 & notes
   * Election Day—VOTE!!
   " 13: Cont’d & Fortescue, In Praise of the Laws & Governance of England, pp. 3-123; Voegelin, NSP, Chap. 4 (pp. 107-132);
   " 20: Cont’d;
      >>> Thanksgiving, Nov. 22
   " 27: Corwin, Higher Law Background, Parts 1-3 (pp. 1-54); Course review—Nov. 29 = last class meeting!
      Grad. Students: Research papers due:

Dec.  5: FINAL EXAM 12:30 - 2:30 PM -- Exam cumulative but concentrates on the material assigned since Test II.