POLI 4081: POLITICAL THEORY FROM PLATO TO SIR JOHN FORTECUE

Fall Semester 2010

10:40-Noon, TTh, Stubbs Hall 220

Required Texts:
*Plato, Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. Rouse (NAL/Sigle)
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, Parts 1-3 (pp.1-54); Course review—Dec. 2 = last class meeting!

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 readings 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%, 30%, and 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 9/14): 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 of the grade goes to zero. The Final Exam is cumulative, i.e., covers the entire course. N.B.: Cheaters will not fare well!

2010 Weekly Schedule & Calendar

Aug. 24: Introduction; read Plato's Apology, Crito, & Phaedo—bring the book to class!

Sept. 7: Cont'd; Plato, Symposium.

14: Plato, Republic, Bks. I-VII; Voegelin, NSP, Intro (pp.1-26)
21: Cont'd
28: Plato, Republic, Bks. VIII-X

Oct. 5: >>> TEST I: counts as Mid-Term. Absence means 7% penalty on makeup, without ironclad excuse; must take by Oct. 12 or grade goes to zero. Counts as Mid-term. Start Aristotle on Oct. 7!

19: Aristotle, Nic. Ethics, Bks. VI-IX; Voegelin, NSP, Chaps. 1-3 (pp. 27-106)

>>> Fall Holiday Oct. 21-25

26: Aristotle, Politics, Bks. I-IV

Nov. 2: Aristotle, Politics, Bks. V-VIII

>>> TEST II on 11/4 covers everything since Test I (final day to drop/resign is Nov. 5); begin Aquinas!

9: Aquinas, Political Writings, pp. 1-91;
16: Aquinas, pp. 92-195; Bonaventure, Journey of the Mind to God, pp. 1-39 & notes;
23: Cont’d: Fortescue, In Praise of the Laws & Governance of England, pp. 3-123; Voegelin, NSP, Chap. 4 (pp. 107-132); Grad. Students: Research papers due!

>>> Thanksgiving, Nov. 25

Dec. 10: FINAL EXAM. 3-5 PM: Exam cumulative but concentrates on the material assigned since Test II. Take-home EXAM possible, stay tuned!