

CLASSICS 0084: GREEK POLITICAL THOUGHT

Syllabus

Class Meetings - ANDN 309
Tuesday 10:30-11:45 am
Thursday: 10:30-11:45 am

Course Instructor

Monica Berti
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Office Hours

Tuesday 12:00-3:00 pm; or by appointment
Eaton 326

Textbook

RYAN K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006) ISBN 1-4051-0030-3 (paperback)

Other Readings and Texts

Other readings and texts listed in the syllabus will be given to the students during classes and posted on the course Trunk site (<https://trunk.tufts.edu>).

Course Description

The modern term 'politics' comes from the Greek *politikos* (of, or pertaining to, citizens and the city) and the reflection about political life and constitutional forms is one of the most important contributions of ancient Greece. The aim of this course is to explore origin and development of Greek political thought because it is essential for our understanding of contemporary world, especially when we discuss themes such as democracy, equality, justice, and the confrontation between East and West. The course will be a survey of Greek thought in English translation from Archaic times to the Hellenistic age. Students will also have the opportunity to learn Greek words of the political language by searching new digital tools available through the Perseus Digital Library (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>), in order to understand the etymology of much of our political terminology. Homeric epics, Hesiod, and the lyric poets reveal the first political reflection that testifies the change from the world of the kings to the new role of the aristocracy and the emerging needs of oppressed people. The search for justice and new solutions to civic coexistence permeate the poetry of Solon and the action of archaic lawgivers. In the Fifth and Fourth century we have the great explosion of the democratic political thinking and the debate about Athenian imperialism, which are expressed by many different media, as the Greek drama, the works of the great historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, orators' speeches, and Sophists' arguing about ethics, politics, and the relationship between law and nature. The discussion about the meaning of 'law', the relationship between the citizen and the city, and the teaching of virtue strongly emerge in the trial of Socrates and in the reconstruction of his personality by Plato, who speculates on philosopher rulers, justice, the good city, and practical politics in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Aristotle is the first political scientist and his natural philosophy greatly influences his ideas about household, slavery, justice, and the distribution of power in the city, together with his classification of constitutions and theories about their evolution and change. With Alexander the Great and the end of Greek cities' freedom we enter a new age where individual needs and a different way of conceiving politics are expressed by Cynics, Stoics, and the Epicureans, while Hellenistic theories concerning kingship develop a new conception of rulership before Greece is conquered by Rome.

Course Requirements and Expectations

- Preparation for attendance and participation in seminar discussions.
- Assigned Readings: to be read before class.
- Assigned Texts: to be read and discussed in class with the instructor.
- Written assignments: weekly journaling exercises of roughly two pages double-spaced that engage critically with the Texts read and discussed in class during the week. A printed copy of the journal is due on Tuesday before class.
- Research Project abstract of 1-2 pages double-spaced with preliminary bibliography (March 7) that results in a Paper of 8-10 pages (April 18). The aim of the Research Paper is to analyze topics treated in class focusing on the terminology of Greek political thought. Students are expected to use search tools available through the Perseus Digital Library to find words of the political language in Classical sources.

N.B. Written assignments that are submitted late will be penalized one-half letter grade per day late.

Examinations

- Midterm Examination (Tuesday, March 12).
- Final Examination (Thursday, April 25).

Topics and Reading Assignments

WEEK ONE

1. Introduction to the Course

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 1-15 (Chapter 1. Introduction: How to Do Greek Political Thought)

Text: Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a.24-1253a.29

WEEK TWO

2. Justice in Homer and Hesiod

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 16-37 (Chapter 2. Archaic Greece and the Centrality of Justice. Achilles, Agamemnon, and Fair Distribution. Justice as “Distinctively Human”. Institutions and Values of the Early Polis. What is Justice? The Voice of the Oppressed and the Origins of Political Thought. The Egalitarian Response. The Elitist Response)

Text: Homer, *Iliad* 18.478-607; Homer, *Iliad* 2.207-282; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 11-46, 213-285

3. Archaic Lawgivers and Archaic Sparta

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24

Readings: K.A. RAAFLAUB, ‘Poets, Lawgivers, and the Beginning of Political Reflection in Archaic Greece’, in C. ROWE & M. SCHOFIELD (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge 2008), pp. 42-48 (7. Archaic lawgivers); R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 37-41 (Case Study: Sparta and the Politics of “Courage”)

Texts: Plutarch, *The Life of Lycurgus* 1, 4-6; Xenophon, *The Spartan Constitution* 2-4

WEEK THREE

4. Democracy at Athens

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 41-57 (A Second Case Study: Archaic Athens and the Search for Justice. Chapter 3. Democratic Political Thinking at Athens. Evidence and Sources. Democracy Ancient and Modern)

Texts: Plutarch, *The Life of Solon* 13-16; Herodotus 3.80-82

5. Democracy and Freedom

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 57-63 (Democratic Conceptions of Freedom)

Text: Thucydides 2.35-46

WEEK FOUR

6. Democracy and Deliberation

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 63-68 (Democratic Deliberation)

Texts: Plutarch, *The Life of Aristides* 7; Pseudo-Andocides, *Against Alcibiades* 2-6

7. Democracy and Leadership

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 68-73 (Courage, Trust, and Leadership)

Texts: Aristophanes, *Knights* 40-68, 125-144, 179-193, 211-219, 225-229, 667-682, 1110-1150

WEEK FIVE

8. Democratic Political Thought

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 73-85 (Democratic Political Thought outside Athens? Protagorean Arguments for Democracy. Democratic Conceptions of Equality. Justice and the Demos)

Texts: Diodorus of Sicily 11.86.4-87.6; Plato, *Protagoras* 320d-328d

9. Democracy and Tragedy

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Reading: S. GOLDHILL, 'Greek Drama and Political Theory', in C. ROWE & M. SCHOFIELD (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge 2008), pp. 60-81 (1. The Institution of the Theatre. 2. Political Themes of Tragic Writing. 3. The Oresteia)

Text: Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 443-753

WEEK SIX

10. Criticizing Athenian Democracy

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 86-97 (Chapter 4. Criticizing Democracy in Late Fifth-Century Athens. Mapping out the Problem: The "Old Oligarch"); P. CARTLEDGE, *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge 2009), pp. 140-142 (Appendix II: The 'Old Oligarch': a close reading)

Texts: Thucydides 1.23, 3.82-84; The 'Old Oligarch' (*Constitution of the Athenians*) 1

11. Law, Nature, and Athenian Imperialism

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 97-113 (Modern and Ancient Quandaries. *Nomos* and *Physis*. The Challenge of Trasymachus and Calicles. Thucydidean Imperialists Revisit *Nomos* and *Physis*)

Text: Thucydides 5.84-116

WEEK SEVEN

12. Socrates and Athens

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 113-137 (Socrates and *Nomos*. *Logos* and *Ergon*. Democratic Epistemology and Relativism. Democratic Epistemology and Untrustworthy Rhetoric – or, Where Does the Truth Lie? Socrates and Athens)

Texts: Plato, *Crito* 49e-54d; Plato, *Apology* 28a-34b

13. Imperialism in Fifth-Century Greece

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 138-176 (Chapter 5. Imperialism. Aristotle Analyzes Imperialism. Definitions and History. Monarchic Imperialism. Natural Superiority? Debating Athenian Imperialism. Final Thoughts)

Texts: Thucydides 1.68-88; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.1.1-5, 8.8

WEEK EIGHT

14. The Debate on Athenian Imperialism and the Democracy of the Fathers

TUESDAY, MARCH 5

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 177-187 (Chapter 6. Fourth-Century Revisions. The Ancestral Republican “Solutions”. The Monarchic “Solution”)

Texts: Lysias, *Funeral Oration* 17-57; Isocrates, *On the Peace* 95-135; Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 20-55; Xenophon, *Agésilaois* 5-8

15. Plato and the Superiority of Philosophy to Politics

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 187-197 (Plato’s “Solutions”. Criticizing Contemporary Politics. Plato on Rhetoric and Order in the *Gorgias*)

Texts: Plato, *Republic* 7.514a-520a; Plato, *Gorgias* 506c-523a

WEEK NINE

16. MIDTERM EXAMINATION - TUESDAY, MARCH 12

17. The Ideal City of Plato

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 197-209 (The Priority of Reason in City and Soul: Plato’s *Republic*. Educating Citizens in the Classical Context. Politics and Ethics. Philosophical Rulers)

Texts: Plato, *Republic* 4.434d-445e; 5.449a-464b; 6.484a-502b

WEEK TEN

18. Plato’s Political Philosophy in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*

TUESDAY, MARCH 26

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 210-226 (Platonic Political Philosophy after the *Republic*)

Texts: Plato, *Statesman* 287b-305e; *Laws* 12.960b-969d

19. Aristotle and the Analysis of Constitutions

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 227-234 (Chapter 7. Aristotle’s Political Thought. Civic Conflict, Emotion, and Injustice: Observing the Polis as It Is)

Texts: Aristotle, *Politics* 4.1288b.9-1290a.29, 5.1301a.19-1304b-19; *Constitution of the Athenians* 41

WEEK ELEVEN

20. Naturalism and Slavery in Aristotle

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 234-245 (Exploring What Ought To Be: Aristotle's Naturalism. Aristotle on the Good Life. Nature in the *Politics*. Aristotle on Slavery)

Text: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1094a.1-1094b.11; *Politics* 1.1252a.1-1255b.40

21. Citizens and Citizenship in Aristotle

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 245-257 (Polis and Citizenship in General. Aristotle's Best Polis. Political Possibilities in Existing Cities)

Texts: Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1274b.33-1275b.23, 3.1284a.1-1284b.34, 4.1293b.22-1294b.43, 4.1295a.25-1296b.13, 7.1328a.23-1329a.39

WEEK TWELVE

22. Aristotle and the Classification of Constitutions

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 257-261 (The Best Constitution in Relation to Existing Conditions. Classification of Constitutions)

Text: Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1278b.6-1281a.11

23. Aristotle and the Masses

THURSDAY, APRIL 11

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 261-265 (The Power of the Masses. Conclusion)

Text: Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1281a.12-1283a.22

WEEK THIRTEEN

24. Political Thought in the Hellenistic Age

TUESDAY, APRIL 16

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 266-280 (Chapter 8. Hellenistic Political Thought. Theory of Kingship. The Traditional Schools)

Texts: Diodorus of Sicily 17.117; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1420a.6-1421b.7; *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates* 9-11, 184-202

25. Cynicism, Stoics, and Epicureans

THURSDAY, APRIL 18

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 280-297 (New Directions: Cynics, Stoics, and Epicureans. The Politics of Cynicism? Stoicism and Epicureanism)

Texts: Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* 6.21-38, 7.110-126, 10.117-121a, 10.139-154

WEEK FOURTEEN

26. *Graecia capta*: Greek Thought and Roman Conquests

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 298-302 (Chapter 9. Epilogue: The Question of Politics); P. CARTLEDGE, *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge 2009), pp. 131-137 ('The Greek Legacy and Democracy Today')

Texts: Polybius, *Histories* 6.3-4, 6.11-14

27. FINAL EXAMINATION - THURSDAY, APRIL 25