

## CLASSICS 0084: GREEK POLITICAL THOUGHT

### Syllabus

Class Meetings - EATN 202  
Tuesday 9:30-10:20 am  
Wednesday 9:30-10:20 am  
Friday 9:30-10:20 am

### Course Instructor

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Monica Berti  
Department of Classics - 321 Eaton Hall  
x72437  
monica.berti@tufts.edu

### Office Hours

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Wednesday 10:30-1:00; or by appointment  
Eaton 329

### Textbook

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

### Other Readings and Texts

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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

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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

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- 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 13) that results in a Paper of 8-10 pages (April 27). 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

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- Midterm Examination (Wednesday, March 7).
- Final Examination (Tuesday, May 8).

### Topics and Reading Assignments

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#### WEEK ONE

#### 1. Introduction to the course

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

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

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 16-22 (Chapter 2. Archaic Greece and the Centrality of Justice. Achilles, Agamemnon, and Fair Distribution. Justice as “Distinctively Human”)

Text: Homer, *Iliad* 18.478-607

#### 3. Justice in Hesiod

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 22-37 (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)

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

#### 4. Archaic Lawgivers

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

Reading: 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)

Texts: Plutarch, *The Life of Lycurgus* 1, 4-6

### WEEK THREE

#### 5. Archaic Sparta

TUESDAY, JANURAY 31

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 37-41 (Case Study: Sparta and the Politics of “Courage”)

Text: Xenophon, *The Spartan Constitution* 2-4

#### 6. Archaic Athens

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 41-47 (A Second Case Study: Archaic Athens and the Search for Justice)

Text: Plutarch, *The Life of Solon* 13-16

#### 7. Democracy at Athens

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 48-57 (Chapter 3. Democratic Political Thinking at Athens. Evidence and Sources. Democracy Ancient and Modern)

Text: Herodotus 3.80-82

### WEEK FOUR

#### 8. Democracy and Freedom

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

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

Text: Thucydides 2.35-46

#### 9. Democracy and Deliberation

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

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

#### 10. Democracy and Leadership

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

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

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

### WEEK FIVE

#### 11. Democratic Political Thought

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

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

#### 12. Democracy and War

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 86-92 (Chapter 4. Criticizing Democracy in Late Fifth-Century Athens)

Texts: Thucydides 1.23, 3.82-84

### 13. Democracy and Tragedy

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

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

### 14. Criticizing Athenian Democracy

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 92-97 (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)

Text: The 'Old Oligarch' (*Constitution of the Athenians*) 1

### 15. Law, Nature, and Athenian Imperialism

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

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

Text: Thucydides 5.84-116

### 16. Socrates and the Laws

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 113-131 (Socrates and *Nomos*. *Logos* and *Ergon*. Democratic Epistemology and Relativism. Democratic Epistemology and Untrustworthy Rhetoric – or, Where Does the Truth Lie?)

Text: Plato, *Crito* 49e-54d

## WEEK SEVEN

### 17. Socrates and Athens

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 131-137 (Socrates and Athens)

Text: Plato, *Apology* 28a-34b

### 18. Imperialism in Fifth-Century Greece

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 138-146 (Chapter 5. Imperialism. Aristotle Analyzes Imperialism. Definitions and History)

Text: Thucydides 1.68-88

### 19. Greeks vs. Persians

FRIDAY, MARCH 2

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 146-156 (Monarchic Imperialism. Natural Superiority?)

Texts: Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.1.1-5, 8.8

## WEEK EIGHT

### 20. The Debate on Athenian Imperialism

TUESDAY, MARCH 6

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 156-169 (Debating Athenian Imperialism)

Texts: Lysias, *Funeral Oration* 17-57

### 21. MIDTERM EXAMINATION - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

### 22. Democracy and Imperialism

FRIDAY, MARCH 9

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 170-176 (Final Thoughts)

Text: Isocrates, *On the Peace* 95-135

## WEEK NINE

### 23. Isocrates and the Democracy of the Fathers

TUESDAY, MARCH 13

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 177-184 (Chapter 6. Fourth-Century Revisions. The Ancestral Republican "Solution")

Text: Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 20-55

### 24. Xenophon's *Agesilaos* and the Monarchic Ideal

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 184-187 (The Monarchic "Solution")

Text: Xenophon, *Agesilaos* 5-8

### 25. Plato's Cave and Contemporary Politics

FRIDAY, MARCH 16

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 187-191 (Plato's "Solutions". Criticizing Contemporary Politics)

Text: Plato, *Republic* 7.514a-520a

## WEEK TEN

### 26. Plato's *Gorgias* and the Superiority of Philosophy to Politics

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 191-197 (Plato on Rhetoric and Order in the *Gorgias*)

Text: Plato, *Gorgias* 506c-523a

### 27. The Ideal City of Plato

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 197-205 (The Priority of Reason in City and Soul: Plato's *Republic*. Educating Citizens in the Classical Context. Politics and Ethics)

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

### 28. Philosopher Kings as Rulers

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 205-209 (Philosophical Rulers)

Text: Plato, *Republic* 6.484a-502b

### WEEK ELEVEN

#### 29. Plato's Political Philosophy in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*

TUESDAY, APRIL 3

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

#### 30. Aristotle and the Analysis of Constitutions

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 227-230 (Chapter 7. Aristotle's Political Thought)

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

#### 31. Aristotle and the Observation of Constitutional Changes

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 230-234 (Civic Conflict, Emotion, and Injustice: Observing the Polis as It Is)

Text: Aristotle, *Politics* 5.1301a.19-1304b.19

### WEEK TWELVE

#### 32. Naturalism and Slavery in Aristotle

TUESDAY, APRIL 10

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

#### 33. Citizens and Citizenship in Aristotle

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 245-254 (Polis and Citizenship in General. Aristotle's Best Polis)

Texts: Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1274b.33-1275b.23, 3.1284a.1-1284b.34, 7.1328a.23-1329a.39

#### 34. Political Justice and Good Government in Aristotle

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 255-257 (Political Possibilities in Existing Cities)

Texts: Aristotle, *Politics* 4.1293b.22-1294b.43, 4.1295a.25-1296b.13

### WEEK THIRTEEN

#### 35. Aristotle and the Classification of Constitutions

TUESDAY, APRIL 17

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

#### 36. Aristotle and the Masses

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18

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

**37. Political Thought in the Hellenistic Age**

FRIDAY, APRIL 20

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 266-269 (Chapter 8. Hellenistic Political Thought)

Texts: Diodorus of Sicily 17.117; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1420a.6-1421b.7

**WEEK FOURTEEN**

**38. The Theory of Kingship**

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

Reading: R.K. BALOT, *Greek Political Thought*, Blackwell Publishing (Malden, MA 2006), pp. 269-280 (Theory of Kingship. The Traditional Schools)

Texts: *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates* 9-11, 184-202

**39. Cynicism, Stoics, and Epicureans**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

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

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

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

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

**FINAL EXAMINATION - Tuesday, May 8 - 12:00-2:00 pm**