Instructor: Dr. Ömür Birler
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Office Hours: Wednesday 11 am to 1 pm.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to political thought. It involves a close reading of the texts which are decisive in the formation of Western consciousness. We will focus on ancient Greek philosophy and medieval Christianity, which form the foundations of the contemporary political theory. In reading these texts, we will address the following fundamental questions of politics: “What is justice?” “What is the good life?” “What is the proper role and scope of the state?” “What are the virtues of citizenship?” “What is freedom?”

Course Requirements and Grading

1- Attendance and participation in class discussion: 20%

The class format is centered on lectures and on in-class discussions. Regular attendance and participation are required. Students must have completed the reading(s) listed for each session before the class.

2-Mid-term exam: 30% (December 1, 2008)

3-Final Exam: 50% (TBA)

Required Readings:

Sabine, G. H. A History of Political Theory (Holt)
Plato, Apology, (Hackett)
Plato, Republic, (Basic Books)
Aristotle, Politics, (Penguin Books)
Thomas Aquinas, Political Writings, (Cambridge)
Schedule of Classes:

September 22: What is political theory?
Introductory remarks

September 29: NO CLASS –Religious Holiday

October 6: Greek Polis and Socrates

October 13: Socrates and Justice
Plato Apology

October 20: Plato and Kallipolis I
Plato Republic, Book I

October 27: Plato and Kallipolis II
Plato Republic, Book II

November 3: Plato on Philosopher Kings
Plato Republic, Book V

November 10: Plato on Philosopher Kings II
Plato Republic, Book VII

November 17: Aristotle on the Nature of the State

November 24: Aristotle on Ideal States and Plato

December 1: Aristotle on Constitutions

December 8: NO CLASS –Religious Holiday

December 15: Greek and Christians
Sabine, G. H. A History of Political Theory Chap.: 13

December 22: Thomas Aquinas on Justice and Politics
Aquinas Political Writings, Chap.: 3 pp: 76-95.

December 29: Aquinas and Natural Law
Aquinas Political Writings, Chap.: 3 pp: 114-126.

January 5: Concluding Remarks