

POL 269C: Democracy and the Ancient Greeks
Spring 2007

Instructor: Alisa Kessel
Office: Tribble C313
Email: kesselas@wfu.edu

TTh 1:30-2:45
Tribble C316

OH: TTh 11:00-11:55 (and by appointment)

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

--Sir Winston Churchill, 1947

Course goals and description

This course in political theory is designed to accomplish two goals. First, it explores the conceptions and problems of democratic governance of the ancient Athenians. Second, it seeks to apply these conceptions and problems to contemporary problems and institutions in America's democratic society. By reading and exploring the literature of ancient Athens, students will consider the problems of democracy that are revealed there and the institutions and mechanisms that have subsequently arisen to respond to those problems. But these institutions and mechanisms pose their own distinct problems for democracy, so a portion of our attention will be devoted to considering whether the Athenians did a better job of undertaking democracy than Americans do, whether the problems of democracy are surmountable, and whether democracy is, on balance, superior to the other forms of governance “that have been tried from time to time.”

Course policies

- 1) **Ethical obligations:** By registering for this course, you have agreed to abide by the Wake Forest University honor code, available in the Undergraduate Bulletin (page 14):
<http://www.wfu.edu/new/publications/academics/ugb2006-2007.pdf>
- 2) **Laptops:** The policy of the department of political science is that laptop computers only be used in classrooms for note taking and other academic purposes as designated by the instructor. Individual faculty members further reserve the right to ban computer use in their courses, should this policy be violated. *Rather than take this course of action, I will ask that you turn off your wireless while you are in class. Computers should only be used for note-taking or presentations.*
- 3) **Special accommodations:** You must give me advanced notification if you require special accommodation for class activities or exams. Also, if you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-5929) within the first two weeks of the semester.
- 4) **Attendance policy:** If you are absent for 1/3 or more of the class periods (without a university-sanctioned excuse), *you will automatically receive a failing grade for the course.*

Books for purchase (available at the WFU Bookstore)

Aristophanes, *The Complete Plays*, Paul Roche
Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*
Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. Tredennick
Sophocles, *The Theban Plays*, trans. Woodruff
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Lattimore

**All other reading available electronically

PLEASE NOTE: In these instances, I have provided you with URL or database information. They *should* work, but obviously, you are required to obtain the reading for each day and complete it before you come to class, *even if they don't*. I have included extensive citation information so that you can locate the articles, even if the web information is inaccurate. Please take advantage of the reference librarians if you have trouble using a database or locating a resource. (The only exception to this is electronic course reserves that are unobtainable due to technical problems at the library).

Course requirements

Midterm exam #1	20%
Midterm exam #2	20%
Paper	25%
Class participation	5%
Final examination	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Midterm exams: Midterms will be given on February 15 and April 3, 2007. Details to follow.

Paper: The paper will be due on March 29, 2007. The paper will be assigned on March 1, 2007.

Class participation: Throughout the semester, you will be asked to participate in class activities. Your participation in these activities will be evaluated; if you participate thoughtfully and enthusiastically, you will succeed in this component of the course.

Final exam: The final exam will be administered during the final exam period. Details to follow.

Course schedule

Week 1: Course introduction

January 18: Course introduction (Democracy in Athens)

Week 2: Thucydides

January 23: *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book I, sections 20-24, 67-88, 139-146; Book 2, sections 1-9, 34-46

January 25: NO CLASS TODAY

Week 3: Thucydides, continued . . .

January 30: Book 3, sections 36-50, 70-86; Book 4, sections 47-48

February 1: Book 5, 84-116; Book 6, 2-32

Week 4: Thucydides & war

February 6: Book 6, 42-87; Book 8, 63-77

February 8: Bush Doctrine, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>; Noorani, "The Rhetoric of Security," *CR: The New Centennial Review* (5:1), Spring 2005, pp. 13-41, available on Project Muse; Victor Davis Hanson, "A Voice from the Past," *National Review Online*, November 27, 2001, available online at <http://www.nationalreview.com/hanson/hanson112701.shtml>.

Week 5: The collective action problem

February 13: Aristophanes, *A Parliament of Women*; Olson, "Collective Action: The Logic," available on e-reserve

February 15: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 6: Oedipus

February 20: *Oedipus Tyrannus*, lines 1-862

February 22: *Oedipus Tyrannus*, lines 863-end

Week 7: Antigone

February 27: *Antigone*, lines 1-383

March 1: *Antigone*, lines 384-end

Week 8: Sophocles & Aristophanes

March 6: Howenstein, Mark S. "The Tragedy of Law and the Law of Tragedy in Sophocles' *Antigone*" *Legal Studies Forum* (24:3-4), 2000, available online at

<http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/lpop/etext/lsf/howenstein24.htm>.

March 8: Aristophanes, *Clouds*

March 10-17: Spring Break**Week 9: Socrates: the Democratic Exemplar?**

March 20: Plato, *Euthyphro*

March 22: Euben, "Corrupting Socrates" and "When there are gray skies," both available on e-reserve

Week 10: Plato

March 27: Plato, *Apology*

March 29: *Apology*, continued; PAPER DUE

Week 11: Democracy and the mob

April 3: Madison, *Federalist #10 & #51*, available on e-reserve; Huntington, *Crises of Democracy*, excerpts (available on e-reserve)

April 5: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 12: Corrupting youth?

April 10: "Academic Bill of Rights" and "Student Bill of Rights" available online at <http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/> (hyperlinked in "Basic Texts" in the far right column); Berube, "What Does "Academic Freedom" Mean?" *Academe Today*, November-

December 2006, available online at

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2006/ND/Feat/beru.htm>; Giroux, "Democracy's Promise & the Politics of Worldiness," *Afterimage*, May/June 2006, (33:6), p. 20, available on Proquest

April 12: Socrates on trial

Week 13: The death of Socrates

April 17: Socrates on trial

April 19: *Crito* and *Phaedo*

Week 14: Athenian democracy in the modern world

April 24: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 1-6, 22-49

April 26: Arendt, pp. 50-78, 175-188

Week 15: Athenian democracy in the modern world, continued . . .

May 1: Arendt, pp. 192-207, 230-247