

## History of Political Thought: Antiquity

<b>Code:</b>	
<b>Term:</b>	Spring/Fall
<b>ECTS credits:</b>	6
<b>Lessons per week:</b>	90 + 90 min
<b>Language:</b>	Slovak/Eng.
<b>Instructor:</b>	James Griffith
<b>Form of study:</b>	lecture+seminar

### Prerequisites

Introduction to Philosophy, Critical Thinking

### Course Objectives

Here, we will read ancient Greek and Roman philosophy as well as touch on medieval philosophy with a focus on the political aspects of that thought. The thread that will be followed throughout all these readings, then, is the relationship between reason and power. That is, whether power depends on reason, whether reason should advise power, how reason should advise power if it can, and so on.

### Contents

### Themes and Readings involved

Our approach demands that we spend a reasonable amount of time on the mytho-religious and poetic precursors to Greek philosophy, represented here by Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Hesiod represents the background from out of which Greek philosophy and Sophistic thought emerges. The pre-Socratics, with their turn to reason (*logos*) as distinct from mytho-religious tradition (though the distinction can never be pure), give birth to what we can call *philosophia*. The Sophists, with their attention to words (*logoi*), will make the relationship between reason and mytho-religious and political tradition even more complex, as Plato will relentlessly point out. Aristotle will give us one of the most complete considerations of the relationship between reason, ethics, and the political. In the wake of the collapse of the Greek

empires and the rise of Rome, we turn to two other major philosophical traditions in the ancient world, Epicureanism (by reading Epicurus himself) and Stoicism (by reading the private thoughts of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius). Finally, to close the term, we will look at the transition from the ancient to the medieval worlds through Augustine and at the high water mark of medieval thought by reading Thomas Aquinas.

## Obligatory Readings

### Primary Sources

Aquinas, Thomas, *An Aquinas Reader*, ed. Mary T. Clark (New York: Fordham University Press, 1972), ISBN: 978-0823212068.

Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*, tr. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), ISBN: 978-0872203396.

Augustine, *Political Writings*, ed. E.M. Atkins and R.J. Dodaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), ISBN: 0-521-44172-2.

Epicurus, *Letters, Principal Doctrines, and Vatican Sayings*, tr. Russel M. Geer (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1964), ISBN: 978-0023412004.

Hyland, Drew A., *The Origins of Philosophy: Its Rise in Myth and the Pre-Socratics* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press), ISBN: 978-1573923507.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, tr. A.S.L. Farquharson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ISBN: 978-0199540594.

Plato, *Complete Works*, eds. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), ISBN: 978-0872203495.

### Secondary Sources

Nails, Debra, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), ISBN: 978-0872205642.

## Supplementary Readings and Sources

## Evaluation Criteria

40% Writing work – essays (5 -6 short essays (400-500 words), 1–2 should be longer (1000-1200 words))

30% Active participation on classes, class discussions, class preparation

30% Short tests in class

Instructor is expected to provide a midterm evaluation.

## Course Evaluation (%)

A – excellent: 100-93%,

B – very good: 92-84%,

C – good: 83-74%,

D – satisfactory: 73-63%,

E – sufficient: 62-51%,

Fx – fail: 50-0%.

Passing a course assumes that student was not absent at more than 4 lessons.