

CLAS 520A Honors: Democracies and Republics
Dr. R. Scott Smith
MW 2:10–3:30, HUDD 224A
Office hours: 1:30–2:00, 3:30–4:00 in Huddleston XX

Course Objectives

This course is an introduction to two major polities (< Greek *polis*, city-state) in the Ancient Mediterranean, the Athenian Democracy and the Roman Republic, and to the influence that they exerted on later political thought and the founding figures of our own constitution. However, these polities emerged at a time when the Greeks were thinking *theoretically* about ruling and being ruled. Because of this, we're also going to read and study ancient theories of *politeia* (< Greek *politeia*, unwritten "constitution") and debate the positives and negatives of individual forms of government and how it pertains to the culmination of human happiness. Key themes are: citizenship (and so inclusion/exclusion), responsibility, education, leadership, factions, empire, and power dynamics. We are also going to take a brief look at the afterlife of the Greek and Roman ideas in the Renaissance and 18th-century America, and then turn to the modern period to put what we've learned into "practice."

This course is experimental, meaning that 1) it's the first time that I've taught it and 2) I'm trying something absolutely insane, by which I mean the final weeks will be a collaborative effort for us to re-write our own constitution. Yikes—could be amazing, could be a disaster. But, I think it's important not just to be receptacles of learning but, as Aristotle remarks, the *telos* (fulfillment) of human life is active and participatory—knowledge gained must be put into practice.

In this course there are four units which serve as the "big picture:"

- 1) Political Theory: do humans need society? If so, how can societies be governed?
- 2) Athenian Democracy: what were the aspects of Athenian self-governance that allowed it to thrive, and what were the challenges and critiques?
- 3) The Roman Republic: how did Rome's "mixed" constitution allow it to thrive? How did it form the backbone of our "indirect democracy"?
- 4) Enacting a constitution: by reviewing the arguments and debates on the foundation of our own constitution, we'll craft our new constitution, or at least modify ours in specific ways.

Required Books (available in Bookstore)

- 1) *Readings in Classical Political Thought*, ed. by Peter J. Steinberger (Hackett Publishing)
- 2) *Essential Federalist and Antifederalist Papers*, ed. by Wootton (Hackett Publishing)

In addition, **you will be asked to read on your own** about political issues in respectable sources (books, newspapers, magazines, academic posts, etc.) for your journal entries.

Course Requirements

Most importantly, I want engagement. Because of this, the most important aspect is consistent thinking about the course materials, close study, and active participation in sharing your considered thoughts. In view of this, a great deal of the assessment will be attributed to

attendance in class, participation in discussions/break-out sessions, annotation of texts and journal entries. Since it's an honors class, I expect diligent work (reading texts, thinking about them) and high-level discussion. These are serious topics that deserve serious thought. Additionally, there will be a policing exam on Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic and other written work in the process of writing the constitution.

Assessment

Attendance (.5 points each, 28 meetings)	14 points
Active Participation in Discussion = bringing in specific readings, thoughtful engagement, considerate responses	28 points
Annotation of texts = additional points available for <i>excellent</i> annotations (6 maximum)	30 points*
Weekly* Journal Entry (6* of 15) = additional point available for <i>excellent</i> journals (6 maximum) or two additional reflections (2 maximum). Excellent reflections draw on unexpected sources. you choose when you write	24 points*
Constitution Writing = additional points available for <i>excellent</i> work (4 maximum) includes reading of current events	18 points*
Quizzes (Jan. 27, Feb. 26) =	20 points
Examination (March 26) = open book/journal/annotation	50 points
Final Reflection Essay =	30 points

Grades:

205+	A	154–164	C
197–204	A-	147–153	C-
190–196	B+	140–146	D+
178–189	B	130–139	D
171–177	B-	122–129	D-
165–170	C+	121-	F

Schedule of Classes (up to week 10)

Week 1 Political Theory Unit

(W) Jan. 22 Overview and Introduction to the Ancient World

Week 2

(M) Jan. 27 **Do Humans Need Society? Nature and Rule. Annotation Practice.**

***Quiz 1: map, basic timeline, terms

Readings: Plato's *Protagoras* (CPT pp. 20–25)
Anonymous Iamblich (CPT pp. 26–28)
Aristotle *Politics* Book 1, chapters 1–7 (pp. CPT 377–382)

(W) Jan. 29 Citizens; Forms of Government

Readings: Hesiod, *Theogony* (CPT p. 10)
Tyrtaeus of Sparta (CPT p. 13)
Aristotle, *Politics* book 3 (CPT pp. 394–402)
Herodotus, *Histories* Persian debate (CPT pp. 32–33)

Week 3 Freedom and Justice

(M) Feb. 3 Concepts of Freedom (*eleutheria*)

Readings: Herodotus 7.223–226 (Canvas)
Katrina van Amsterdam “When in Greece, Do as the Persians Don’t” (Canvas)
Aristotle, *Politics* book 6, chapter 2–3 (CPT 418–419)
Optional: Hansen (2010) on Freedom (Canvas)

(W) Feb. 5 Plato I (LONG READING)

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, books 1, 2 + ch. 409–end of book 3 (pp. 166–196, 209–214)

Week 4 Athenian Democracy I

(M) Feb. 10 Plato II

Reading: Plato, *Republic*, books 6 & 7 (pp. 247–276)

(W) Feb. 12 Solon and Tyrants

Reading: Solon (CPT pp. 14–15)
Plutarch, *Solon*, selections (Canvas)
Aristotle, *Politics* book 4 (CPT 402–416)
Plato, book 8 (CPT 276–290)

Week 5 Athenian Democracy II

(M) Feb. 17 Cleisthenes’ Reforms, Ephialties

Reading: Stockton, ch. 2 (Canvas)
Thucydides, *Histories* Funeral Oration (CPT 39–42)

(W) Feb. 19 More on Athenian Democracy (lottery, ostracism);

Reading: Stockton, ch. 3

Week 6 Athenian Democracy III; Rome

(M) Feb. 24 Criticisms of Democracy I

Reading: *Old Oligarch* (Canvas)

(W) Feb. 26 Criticisms of Democracy II

Reading: Thucydides, *Histories* on Melian Dialogue (CPT 54–58)
Reread Plato on Tyranny, book 9 to 580c (CPT 290–296)

Week 7 The Roman Republic

(M) March 3 Roman Institutions

***Quiz 2: map, dates, terms

Reading: Livy, books 1 & 3, selections (Canvas) fall of monarchy, 12 tables

(W) March 5 Roman Republic I

Reading: Polybius, selections (Canvas)
Legal Texts: Citizenship (Canvas)

Week 8

(M) March 10 Roman Republic II & the Two Catos

Reading: M. Cicero, *Republic* (CPT 446–460)

(W) March 12 Roman Republic III

Reading: Q. Cicero, *How to Run for Office* (Canvas)

Spring Break!

March 17–21

Week 9 Roman Influences I

(M) March 24 Review Session: Athens and Rome

(W) March 26 Policing Exam—open journal/annotations

Week 10 Constitution Week

(M) March 31 Reading the Constitutions

Readings: US Constitution + Bill of Rights (Amendments 1–10)

(W) April 2 Understanding the Constitution

Readings: *The Essential Federalist...* Introduction, pp. ix–xlii
The other amendments.

Week 11

(M) April 7: No to Federalism!

Reading: Speech of Patrick Henry’s Speech before the Virginia Convention, *Essential Federalist* pp. 25–41.

(W) April 9: Yes to Federalism!

Reading: Speech of James Wilson before the Pennsylvania Convention, *Essential Federalist* pp. 97–110.

Week 12

(M) April 14 An American Republic?

Reading: *Federalist* #1 (pp. 140–143) and #9–10 (pp. 162–174).

(W) April 16 Republican Principles

Reading: *Federalist* #14 (pp. 179–183), #39 (pp. 225–231)

Week 13

(M) April 21 Separation of Powers

Reading: *Federalist* #47–49 (pp. 231–245)

(W) April 23 House of Representatives

Reading: *Federalist* #51, 52 and 57 (pp. 245–254, 258–263)

Week 14

(M) April 28 **Senate and Executive**

Reading: *Federalist* #62–63, 70 (pp. 263–282)

(W) April 30 **Judicial**

Reading: *Federalist* #78 (pp. 283–289)

Week 15

(M) May 5 **Workshop, finish up writing**

No exam. Final Reflection Papers, and Constitution Writing, due on Saturday, May 10.

Constitution Writing (18 points, with 4 additional points available)

Each student will work on three aspects of the Constitution (6 points each); two will be in teams, one will be individual:

- a) Schedule A: Monday workshops
- b) Schedule B: Wednesday workshops
- c) Individual Amendment

Two groups—red team and blue team—will be working simultaneously on the same material and will exchange work for review and comment.

Group Work Goals:

- 1) Research fully the history of the text, identifying any important court cases that pertain. Learn how to cite court cases. Write up a brief report (1 pg.).
 - 2) Propose a rewrite of any section of the text, with clarity and brevity as main principles.
 - 3) Provide rationale and argumentation for the change, citing specific relevant issues, cases, concerns. (1–2 pgs.). Dissents among group must be noted in footnote form.
- Total length: 3–4 pages. Note! Each student must contribute to the document, with initials placed at the end of paragraphs for the principal writer. E.g., “[RSS] Adding ideas gained from the first part of class would be a great benefit (that is, using precedents to argue is always good).

Individual Work Goals:

Identify a place in our constitution that you feel needs redress and propose the amendment in the fashion of the above. It must be on a different article or amendment than your group work.

Suggested Schedule of Events:

- Week of April 7: Initial Team meetings, review of task, initial research into topic, assigning team roles
- Week of April 14: Research and discussion, initial drafting
- Week of April 21: Finalizing first draft
- Week of April 28: Teams exchange drafts, review, comment
- Week of May 5: Finalize drafts, submission

Final Reflection Guidance!

There is no final exam. Instead, this is a **personal reflection essay** consisting of two parts. The total length should be between 12–15 pages, double spaced in New York Times font with a reasonable margin (1 inch). More is never bad if you feel the need! This is NOT an academic paper. Instead, use this time to review your notes and synthesize (bring together) what you learned over the course of the semester. Outstanding reflections **be clear and readable, will cite specifics from the course, and be thoughtful about the course material.** This is a chance for you to think about the big takeaways from the class!

I. What did I learn over the course of the semester? (8ish pages)

Make sure you cover, to some degree, each part of the course: theoretical discussions (do we need community?), Athenian direct democracy, Roman Republic, American government and

civics. But most important is to outline what intellectual development you experienced in this class.

II. The United States: Democracy, Republic or Monarchy? (5ish pages)

From your work over the last five weeks of the course, respond to the question that was (sort of) asked of Benjamin Franklin: what kind of government do we have here, a republic or a monarchy? (paraphrased). In addition, I'd like you to think about where democratic principles might be found. In other words, analyze our own structures like a political theorist like Aristotle!