

COURSE OUTLINE
PHIL 345 GREEK POLITICAL THEORY

Winter term 2015: TTH 10:00 – 11:30

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This course is an introduction to ancient Greek political philosophy. We will read and discuss the two great classics that first distinguished political philosophy as a field of study, Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, supplemented by passages from other works. Both Plato and Aristotle begin with an understanding of the project of politics as one that is up to us: we have to decide how to live, not only as individuals but, especially, as communities. And they agree that the aim of our political associations should be to become virtuous as people: in both the *Republic* and the *Politics*, we are offered some account of what it is to live well, as a person, and in a political context. On many other issues, Plato and Aristotle disagree. They engage in these works with a wide range of fundamental political questions, some of which we will take up: What constitutes a political community, and what is its aim? What is citizenship, what is it to be a good citizen, and who should be excluded from citizenship? What is rule, who should rule, and why? What is the common good, and how should we achieve it? How should we educate the young in order to make them good people and good citizens? What is justice? Which political institutions and practices might ensure justice?

While the course is intended as an introduction to the central questions of ancient Greek political theory, we will be concerned with two particular themes throughout:

- 1) political differences among people and hierarchical structures of rule.
- 2) the relation between the notion of a soul (*psyche*) and a political community (*polis*).

Texts (required):

The Politics. Aristotle. Trans. Carnes Lord. U. of Chicago Press

Plato's Republic. Trans. Grube and Reeve. Hackett

Both are available at the Word Bookstore, 469 Milton Street.

Supplementary readings will be posted on the MyCourses page for the course.

Course requirements: One assignment in analysis (25%), one mid-term exam (35%), one take-home exam (40%).

Be advised that written work for this course may be submitted to text-matching software.

Policy on the use of technology in the classroom:

Pursuant to McGill University's policy regarding electronics in the classroom, **the use of electronic devices (computers, iPads, cell phones, etc.) is not permitted in lectures.**

All electronic devices must be turned off and stored during the lecture period. Students who wish to be able to use an electronic device in class must apply by e-mail for permission from the instructor. The recording of lectures is not permitted and is illegal without the consent of the instructor. Please consider these policies before enrolling in this course.

Policy on extensions:

No extensions will be granted without an appropriate medical note. Late work will be penalized at the rate of a third of a grade per calendar day past the due date. For example, an assignment

that is evaluated as a B, if one day late, will be assigned a grade of B-; the same paper, if two days late, would receive a C+.

Required syllabus statements:

McGill University values academic integrity. All students must, therefore, understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.