

**INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL AND LEGAL THINKING**<http://homepages.gac.edu/~arosenh/160index.html>Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:30-11:20  
Confer 125**Office:** 204H Old Main**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 8:30-10:00am, and by appointment**Email:** arosenth@gustavus.edu**Phone:** 933-7437**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

---

What makes government legitimate? What makes it stable? What are the strengths and weaknesses of democracy? Can democracy tolerate critics who wish to destroy it? Are democratic states especially prone to imperialism? What are the obligations of the rich to the poor, and vice versa? What is the proper role of the state in educating its citizens? What role does gender play in questions of governance? Is violence ever justified to overcome injustice?

These are some of the questions we will ask in this course. At times we will try to answer these questions through traditional lecture and discussion, yet we will also explore these issues by engaging in two elaborate games -- one set in Athens in 403 B.C. and centered on Plato's Republic and one set in revolutionary France and centered on the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Edmund Burke. At the beginning of each simulation, I will provide some historical and philosophical background, then you will be assigned roles based on historical figures. During our class meetings, you will divide up into factions and attempt to achieve your goals. Students whose characters function in a supervisory capacity (president of the Athenian Assembly or of the French National Assembly) will preside over what transpires. During the simulations, I will only intrude to resolve disputes or issue rulings on other matters. The heart of each game will be persuasion. For nearly every role to which you will be assigned, you will need to persuade others of your views. Influential works of political thought will inform your arguments. (For more about these simulations, see the "Intro to Reacting" page on the course website.

If you encounter difficulty with these simulations, the readings, or the assignments, please do not hesitate to speak to me after class, during office hours or arrange another time to meet.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

---

This course is designed to aid students in

- developing familiarity with significant works of political thought
- enriching reading skills appropriate to advanced theoretical and philosophical texts;
- improving writing skills and expressive abilities, both technically and aesthetically;
- expanding independent critical capacities, both in analyzing moral arguments on their own merits and in relating those arguments to their own lives
- enhancing capacity to work with and learn from other members of the class.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

---

- Plato, *Republic*
- Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
- Mark Carnes and Josiah Ober, *The Threshold of Democracy*
- Mark Carnes and Gary Kates, *Rousseau, Burke, and the French Revolution*
- Additional readings available on-line. These must be printed and brought to class on days for which they are assigned. I have placed all the reserve readings for POL 160 on the Readings page of the course website.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

---

This course is time-intensive. You should plan on spending *at the very minimum* 3 hours outside of class for each hour of class. That means you should budget at least 9-10 hours per week outside of class for reading, writing, meeting in small groups, and preparing for the simulations. Sometimes you will need more. If you do not feel that your schedule or interest will support such a heavy reading load and time commitment, **please do not take this class.**

### **Attendance**

Consistent attendance is a minimum condition of class membership in general and all the more in a course designed around simulations. In a class such as this one, missing class is missing coursework that cannot be made up.

### **Participation**

Come to class ready to participate in simulations and engage in debate. Since this class requires a variety of voices, I expect all participants to be present both physically and mentally. Regular and active participation may nudge your grade upwards (at my discretion) and repeated absences will propel your grade downwards.

Approach all of your work with thoughtfulness, especially your oral and written presentations. Thoughtfulness in this course involves both care and creativity. Your work should exhibit a clear and coherent argument, adequate textual support, impeccable grammar, and precise sentence structure. Yet it should also exhibit intellectual daring.

Late arrivals are distracting and disrespectful. Persistent tardiness will lower your participation grade.

### **Simulations and Dialogue Assignments**

Each simulation will require you to inhabit an assigned role, participate in decisions of the assembly, and produce written work (essays, poems, sermons, newspaper articles, diary entry, or whatever you think will persuade your opponents). You will be graded on your oral participation and written work. You will also be asked to write a dialogue after the simulation, exploring the theoretical arguments presented in the simulation.

For each simulation, your grade will be calculated in the following way:

- Written Work (20% of course grade)
- Oral Participation (10% of course grade)
- Dialogue Assignment (20% of course grade)

### **Portfolios**

The portfolio is an opportunity to gather together all of the work that you have produced during the term and reflect on what you have learned. It should include all of your work this semester as well as a short reflection (1-2 pages). The reflection essay is your chance to articulate your thoughts about your work in the course.

Here are a few topics you might address:

- You could discuss the piece(s) that you most enjoyed reading and discussing (and why).
- You could discuss the essay, speech, or newspaper article that you are most proud of producing (and why).
- You could consider a specific instance in which your critical capacities to analyze arguments were challenged or improved.

- Or you could discuss the specific ways in which you improved your ability to work and learn from others in the class.

In each case be sure to be as specific as possible, describing a particular reading, essay or event but also reflecting on its significance for your intellectual development.

Your portfolio should include:

Reflection on your work during the term (1-2 pages).

- All quizzes and assignments completed during the term.
- The written work for the Athens simulation that has been graded.
- The written work for the French Revolution simulation that has been graded.
- Any other written work that has not been submitted or graded (This might include speeches, prayers (remember the heralds?), notes, laws, that you wrote but did not submit as part of your assignment).

### **N.B.**

Failure to complete any major component of the course (e.g., failure to attend an adequate number of classes, failing to adequately prepare for substantial numbers of classes, or failing to complete assignments related to the simulations) may entail failing the course as a whole, regardless of performance on the completed components.

Late assignments will be docked at least 1 full grade per day for 2 days after the original due date. Except under extraordinary circumstances and with prior permission, assignments will not be accepted if more than 24 hours have passed since the assignment was due. No extensions will be permitted on the submission of casebooks. Assignments will not be accepted via e-mail without prior permission.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

I take the principles of academic honesty seriously and will uphold the policies and procedures of Gustavus Adolphus College. Your continued presence in this class indicates that your work for this course will comply with the academic honesty policy and the Honor Code.

Dishonesty of any kind with respect to examinations, course assignments, alteration of records, or illegal possession of examinations is considered cheating. Students are responsible not only to abstain from cheating, but also to avoid making it possible for others to cheat. Submitting someone else's work as your own constitutes plagiarism. Academic honesty requires the full acknowledgement of ideas taken from another source for use in a course paper or project. You must include citations for material that you quote or paraphrase from another text; in general, it is better to overcite than to undercite.

All work that you submit for this course may be submitted only to this course and should be based upon work and thought undertaken only for this course.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy will result in at least a grade of 0 for the specific assignment and/or failure of the course. Students accused and/or penalized for these violations and students who become aware of such violations have specific rights and responsibilities as outlined in the Honor Code section of the College Catalogue.

Please see Appendix I to this syllabus for copies of the relevant policies.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) work together to ensure 'reasonable accommodation' and non-discrimination for students with disabilities in higher education. A student who has a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, learning, or attentional

disability that may have an effect on the student's ability to complete assigned course work should contact the Disability Services Coordinator in the Advising Center, who will review the concerns and decide with the student what accommodations are necessary. Upon receipt of documentation from Laurie Bickett, Disability Services Coordinator, I will be happy to work with you on appropriate accommodations.

**CLASS SCHEDULE** (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NECESSARY)

---

**February 8**

*Course Introduction*

Letter of Introduction due via email by 5pm on February 9, 2010.

**Ancient Democracy and Its Discontents**

---

**February 10**

Paul Woodruff, The Life and Death of Democracy (online); *Threshold of Democracy* 103-115.

1. According to Ober, what persistent conflict (or stasis) defined Greek political life? How did this conflict manifest itself in philosophical and dramatic works?
2. Woodruff offers us a quick overview of democratic practices in Athens. What surprises you most? What were the strengths and weaknesses of this system? How does Athenian democracy differ from American democracy?

**February 12**

*The Threshold of Democracy* 59-69, 73-102.

1. What is Pericles' goal in his funeral oration? What does he find most praiseworthy about Athens? How does he distinguish Athens from its enemies?
2. What is Ischomachus especially proud of (in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*)? What needs to be done to run a household well? What parallels might we draw for the government of a city?

**February 15**

Plato, Apology

1. Explain the older and newer accusations that Socrates mentions. Why does Socrates find this older accusation harder to deal with than the present ones?
2. How did Socrates respond to the Delphic Oracle? What was his final interpretation of its claim?
3. Explain the nature of Socrates' "divine guide" or daemon. How has this guide affected his life? What does he mean by the "unexamined life is not worth living...?"

**February 17**

Plato, Crito

1. What does Socrates say about majorities? Can the many hurt you? Why does Crito think so? Why does Socrates think not?
2. What reasons does Crito give in favor of escape? What arguments does Socrates give to show that escape is unjust?
3. What do you make of Socrates' claim that to violate the laws is to wrong the city? How does this fit with the arguments of the *Apology*?

**February 19**

Plato, *The Republic* Books I and II.

1. So what is justice? What does Cephalus say? What does Polemarchus say? Why is Thrasymachus so angry about this conversation? How does he describe justice? Why does Socrates say at the end of Book I that he has not refuted Thrasymachus' position? (336b-354b)
2. Why does Glaucon bring up the Myth of Gyges? (359d ff) Why does he think that a complete response to Thrasymachus must take into account this myth?

3. Instead of direct rebuttal, Socrates invites Glaucon and Adeimantus to found a city of speech or the good city (*kallipolis*). Why? Why this shift in focus? Is the analogy between soul and city convincing to you? Why or why not? (368d-369a)

### **February 22**

Plato, *The Republic* Books III-V.

Simulation role questionnaires distributed.

1. What type of education does Socrates think the guardians must have? What is the purpose of this education? Do you think the means he calls for will help achieve his ends? Why or why not?
2. What is the "noble falsehood"? Why is it necessary? What is true and what is false about this "falsehood"? (414c-415c)
3. In Book V Socrates proposes a series of three reforms that he fears will provoke laughter. What are these three proposals? Do you think they are feasible? Why or why not?

### **February 24**

Plato, *The Republic* Books VI and VII.

Simulation role questionnaires collected.

1. Socrates offers an extended defense of the philosopher in Book VI. How does he argue for the political "usefulness" of philosophy? Are you convinced? Why or why not?
2. Instead of talking directly about the Good, Socrates offers us two images of enlightenment, the divided line (509d-511e) and the cave (514a-521b). Consider the details of each image or allegory. What do they mean? What type of political and pedagogical structures would best encourage this type of enlightenment?

### **February 26**

Plato, *The Republic* Books VII-X.

### **March 1**

Athens Game Preparation

Read *The Threshold of Democracy* 1-58. Pretest, portfolio assignment, role distribution.

### **March 3**

Faction meetings

### **March 5**

*Public Session #1 (Reconciliation)*

Paper #1: at least two from each faction.

### **March 8**

*Public Session #2 (Government Agency)*

Paper #1: at least two from each faction; 3 indeterminates.

### **March 10**

*Public Session #3 (Social Welfare)*

Paper #1: all remaining students.

### **March 12**

*Public Session #4 (Possible Court Day/Open)*

Paper #2: at least two from each faction.

**March 15**

Public Session #5 (Possible Court Day/Electorate)

Paper #2: at least two from each faction; 3 indeterminates.

**March 17**

Public Session #6 (Remilitarization)

Paper #2: all remaining students.

**March 19**

Post-mortem

Post-test, dialogue assignment, online evaluations.

**March 22**

Post-mortem, day 2

**Modern Liberalism and Its Discontents**

---

**March 24**

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, selections (online). Also see the frontispiece to *Leviathan* (online).

1. In his introduction, Hobbes introduces the great Leviathan, the "artificial man." What is it and what are its parts? In what way does its construction require the observation of "natural man"? How are we going to know if we have it right?
2. How does Hobbes describe the state of nature? What is "justice" in such a state? How is the commonwealth a solution to the problem of our natural condition? Who or what is the sovereign for Hobbes and why does the sovereign require so many rights?
3. How does Hobbes distinguish between right and law? What does he mean by "laws of nature"? Why do individuals have a natural propensity to form commonwealths?

**March 26**

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, selections (online).

Athens portfolios due.

1. Hobbes argues that there should be no limit to the rights of the Sovereign. Why must that be the case?
2. What type of liberty does Hobbes argue exists within the commonwealth for subjects? How does this compare with the liberty of the ancients? What are the limits of this liberty?
3. What are the diseases or infirmities of the commonwealth according to Hobbes? What should be done to maintain its health?

**March 29**

Spring Break

**March 31**

Spring Break

**April 2**

Spring Break

**April 5**

Spring Break

**April 7**

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, selections (online).

1. How does Locke describe the State of Nature? Does (or did) this state actually exist? How does his description of this state compare with that of Hobbes?
2. What is the law of nature according to Locke? How are violators of that law punished? Why is this method of punishment problematic in the state of nature? Why does this difficulty lead to the establishment of the commonwealth?
3. Whose property is man (that is, who "owns" an individual) according to Locke? How is property rightfully acquired in the state of nature? What are the limits to this acquisition? How does money arise, and what is its significance?

### April 9

Voltaire, *The Philosophical Dictionary*, selections; Denis Diderot, *Encyclopedia*, selections. For additional Encyclopedia entries, see The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert at the University of Michigan. Athens dialogue assignment due.

1. What are the diseases or infirmities of the commonwealth according to Hobbes? What should be done to maintain its health?
2. Voltaire both defends openness and learning and shows his readers what it looks like. Find an example of how Voltaire demonstrates the toleration that he praises. Find an example of how he uses his biting wit to ridicule his opponents.
3. Consider several of Diderot's entries (some important ones include Atheists, Beast, Bible, Craft, Encyclopedia, Fanaticism, Farm Laborer, Government, Humanity, Intolerance, Jew, Natural, Equality/Natural Law, Natural Rights, Political Authority, Political Economy, Salve Trade, Reason, Representation). In what way is this encyclopedia cynical? In what way is it optimistic? In what way revolutionary?

### April 12

Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France 68-80. Begin reading *The Social Contract*.

1. In what way is Rousseau arguing against the common assumptions of his age in the First Discourse? What does he think is so bad about the "arts and letters" defended by Voltaire and Diderot?
2. What societies does Rousseau point to as morally superior to his own?
3. According to Rousseau, how does the advancement of knowledge relate to luxury? Why is this so detrimental for society? How does it reinforce pernicious social distinctions and inequality?

### April 14

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, I and II.

1. Freedom is a crucial theme in *The Social Contract*. What does Rousseau mean by the first line of chapter one? What does he mean later in the first book, when he says that it is slavery to be under the impulse of appetite, but freedom to obey a law which we prescribe to ourselves? Do you think, as Rousseau does, that we can be "forced to be free"?
2. How does Rousseau describe the terms of social contract? Why does he insist that the "total alienation" of all rights to the whole community is necessary for a fair and equal society? How does this relate to his notion of the "general will"?

### April 16

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, III and IV.

1. Who or what is the legislator? Why does Rousseau insist that he be so extraordinary? How can he argue that his function has nothing to do with domination? Explain his claim that the legislative authority can "compel without violence and persuade without convincing."
2. What does Rousseau consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of democracy? aristocracy? monarchy? Carefully consider his discussion of "deputies and representatives." Why are the English not truly free?

3. Rousseau defends several seemingly "undemocratic" institutions in order to maintain a regime based on the General Will. What exactly does he say about dictatorships and censorship? Does this remind you of some of Plato's proposals?
4. What does Rousseau have to say about Christianity? Why does he think that a civil religion -- understood "not as dogmas but as sentiments of sociability" -- is essential for a stable and just society? Is this religion a tolerant or an intolerant faith?

### **April 19**

Burke Selections in *Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France* 81-118.

1. Consider how Burke explains the relationship between nature and "artificial institutions." Why is nature, as Burke defines it, a vital component in the maintenance of civil society and political culture? To what extent, at this point and elsewhere, does Burke value reason?
2. Burke suggests that chivalry is central to his ideal of civic life and governance. How do you understand the term "chivalry," and why is it so important to Burke's argument? How is this term connected to the concept of social rank or status?
3. How does Burke portray gender roles in his depiction of the mob's storming of Versailles in the opening stages of the French Revolution? Why are these depictions of gender roles significant for his critique of the French Revolution?
4. What is wrong with the philosophy of the revolutionaries and what bad consequences, according to Burke, will flow from their errors?

### **April 21**

French Revolution Game Preparation

Read *Rousseau, Burke, and the French Revolution* 119-169. Pretest, portfolio assignment, role distribution.

### **April 23**

French Revolution Game Preparation

Faction meetings

### **April 26**

*National Assembly #1*

### **April 28**

MayDay!

Newspapers, vol. 1, due for each faction, indeterminates turn in biographical sketch.

### **April 30**

*National Assembly #2*

### **May 3**

*National Assembly #3*

### **May 5**

*National Assembly #4*

Newspapers, vol. 2, due for each faction.

### **May 7**

*National Assembly #5*

**May 10**

*National Assembly #6*

Newspapers, vol. 3, due for each faction.

**May 12**

*National Assembly #7*

**May 14**

*Post-mortem 1*

Post-test, dialogue and portfolio assignments, online evaluations.

**May 17**

*Post-mortem 2*

Read *Rousseau, Burke, and the French Revolution 170-182*.

**May 19**

*Wrap-up*

Portfolios due.

## APPENDIX I

### ***Gustavus Adolphus College Honor Code***

Every Gustavus Adolphus College student is required to sign the following statement before final admittance into the College:

As a community of scholars, the faculty and students of Gustavus Adolphus College have formulated an academic honesty policy and honor code system, which is printed in the Academic Bulletin and in the Gustavus Guide. As a student at Gustavus Adolphus College I agree to uphold the honor code. This means that I will abide by the academic honesty policy, and abide by decisions of the joint student/faculty Honor Board.

Through information provided in syllabi and/or other means, faculty members will explain to students how the Honor Code will operate in their respective courses. The following statement is suggested as a pledge for students to sign on all graded assignments and projects:

On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.

A similar statement may be signed by students at the beginning of a course, indicating that their work for that course will comply with the academic honesty policy and the Honor Code.

Gustavus Adolphus College is proud to operate under an honor system. The faculty and students have jointly created an Honor Board to enforce this policy. In signing this statement a student is promising that his or her work complies fully with the authorized aid as defined by the professor. It is each professor's responsibility to state course penalties for academic honesty policy violations, and to define the level of authorized aid appropriate to the work in the course or to the particular assignment. However, the student is responsible to ask questions about any reasonable doubt regarding the professor's definition.

### ***Academic Honesty Policy***

The faculty of Gustavus Adolphus College expects all students to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty, and to refrain from any action that impinges upon academic freedom of other members of the college community. In all academic exercises, examinations, presentations, speeches, papers, and reports, students shall submit their own work. Footnotes or some other acceptable form of citation must accompany any use of another's words or ideas. Students are especially cautioned that quoting or paraphrasing from electronic sources without proper citation is as serious a violation as copying from a book or other printed source.

In the case of cheating or plagiarism, the instructor will inform the student and the Office of the Provost of the nature of the offense, the penalty within the course, and the recommendation of the instructor as to whether further disciplinary action is warranted. Another instance of academic dishonesty will result in review of the student's record by the probation committee and may result in the student being placed on academic probation. If a pattern of academic dishonesty continues, the student may be permanently dismissed from the College.

A student may not submit work that is substantially the same in two courses without first gaining permission of both instructors if the courses are taken concurrently, or permission of the current instructor if the work had been submitted in a previous semester.

The faculty regards the damaging of library materials and failing to sign out or to return them properly, and the misuse of computer files and programs as equally serious violations of the ethical standards of courtesy, fairness, and honesty that bind together a community of scholars.

Individuals who use the College's computer facilities assume the responsibility of seeing that these resources are used in an appropriate manner. Misuse of computer hardware, software, data, and output is a violation of College policy and regulations and may also be a violation of law if data of other computer users are disturbed or the privacy of individuals is violated.

Finally, students who serve the College in positions of responsibility in which they deal with test materials, letters of recommendation, and other matters that must be held in confidence are expected to maintain confidentiality and to adhere to the same high standards of personal integrity.