

Political Science 250  
Politics and Political Inquiry I  
Claire P. Curtis  
Office: 114 Wentworth, #206  
Office Hours: M/W 1-3  
Phone: 953-6510  
e-mail: [curtisc@cofc.edu](mailto:curtisc@cofc.edu)

This course will introduce you to thinking about politics and political activity conceptually, analytically and historically. We will explore the meaning of some basic theoretical concepts related to politics and we will trace how those concepts have been understood in other contexts. We will examine in detail Plato's Republic, which sets out both a definition of justice and an outline for an ideal city with ideal rulers. Using Plato as our initial foundation we will examine contrasting arguments about some of Plato's basic conclusions. In addition to Plato we will read a number of political philosophers, from a variety of time periods who themselves have arguments to make concerning the key issues that Plato addresses. We will use these works as settings within which theoretical ideas come to life. In a somewhat different context we will also read a selection of stories from Octavia Butler's collection of short fiction Bloodchild. At the end of the semester you will have a variety of answers to some of the following questions: What is justice? Is freedom desirable? What are the origins of the State? What makes an ideal ruler? Which form of government is best? What role should women play in politics? What makes a good citizen? What kind of education is needed for citizenship? What stories do we tell to improve citizenship? How can we change the world?

There are four paper due dates (9/12, 10/3, 10/29, 12/5). There are two papers for the class. You may choose from these four due dates, although you are required to use one of the first two due dates. Unexcused late papers will be down-graded one third of a grade a day. Papers handed in during any of the first three due dates may be rewritten.

**Required Books:**

Plato	<i>Republic</i>
Octavia Butler	<i>Bloodchild</i>
Goodin and Pettit, Eds.	<i>Contemporary Political Philosophy, an Anthology (CPPA)</i>
Course Packet	Available at SASE Ink (79 Wentworth St.)

**Course Requirements:**

Two papers	20 % each
Two midterms:	15 % each
One final:	20%
Class participation:	10%

**This includes attendance and any possible reading quizzes, missing (excused or unexcused) more than 4 classes will result in a one letter grade drop in your final grade**

August 27:	Introduction
August 29:	Octavia Butler “Amnesty” (in <i>Bloodchild</i> )
September 1:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book I
September 3:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book I
September 5:	Plato, “Crito” Course Packet (CP) pp. 2-14
September 8:	Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” CP pp. 15-26
September 10:	Cass Sunstein “Preferences and Politics” pp. 126-143 and Anne Phillips “Dealing with Difference” pp. 171-181 in <i>CPPA</i>
September 12:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Bk II <b>Paper Due Date</b>
September 15:	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Bk II
September 17:	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> CP, pp. 27-35
September 19:	Hobbes <i>Leviathan</i> CP, pp 27-35
September 22:	Locke <i>Second Treatise</i> CP, pp 35-42
September 24:	Locke <i>Second Treatise</i> CP, pp. 35-42
September 26:	Rousseau <i>On the Social Contract</i> CP, pp 43-53
September 29:	Rousseau <i>On the Social Contract</i> CP, pp. 43-53
October 1:	Butler “Speech Sounds”
October 3:	David Gauthier “The Social Contract as Ideology” and Carole Pateman “The Fraternal Social Contract” in <i>CPPA</i> <b>Paper Due Date</b>
October 6:	Exam
October 8:	<i>Republic</i> Bks II-III
October 10:	<i>Republic</i> Bks II-III
October 13:	Fall Break, No Class
October 15:	Mill “On Liberty” CP, 53-85
October 17:	Mill “On Liberty” CP 53-85
October 20:	William Galston “Liberal Pluralism and Constitutional Democracy” in <i>CPPA</i>
October 22:	<i>Republic</i> Bk IV
October 24:	<i>Republic</i> Bk IV
October 27:	John Rawls “Justice as Fairness” in <i>CPPA</i>
October 29:	HLA Hart “Are there any Natural Rights?” and Henry Shue “Basic Rights” in <i>CPPA</i> <b>Paper Due Date</b>
October 31:	SUS, no class
November 3:	<b>Exam</b>

- November 5: Republic Bk V  
 November 7: Republic Bk V
- November 10: Martha Minow, "Justice Engendered" and Susan Moller Okin  
 "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny, Group Rights, Gender and  
 Realistic Rights of Exit" in *CPPA*
- November 12: Butler "Bloodchild"  
 November 14: TBA
- November 17: Republic Bks VI-VII  
 November 19: Republic Bks VI-VII  
 November 21: David Held "Democracy: From City-states to a Cosmopolitan  
 World Order?" pp. 674-696
- November 24: Republic Bks VIII-IX  
 November 26: Thanksgiving Break, No Class  
 November 28: Thanksgiving Break, No Class
- December 1: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* CP, pp. 85-99  
 December 3: Brian Barry "Humanity and Justice in Global Perspective" *CPPA*  
 December 5: Republic, Bk X  
**Paper Due Date**
- December 8: Butler "The Book of Martha"

**Final Exam Wednesday, December 10, 8-11**

## Exams

All exams will include a take home component based on your analysis of an op-ed piece that takes up one of the thematic issues we are considering (justice, equality, origin of the state, etc.). Your essay will explain the standpoint of the author of the op-ed piece and then compare and contrast that author with the theorists we have been studying during that particular portion of the semester. Start looking for op-ed pieces that take up issues that relate to this class so that you have some choices to work with when it comes time to write the three exam essays you will have to write. The exams will also include in class short answer and passage explication.

## Paper Guidelines

- 1) All papers must be typed, double-spaced and stapled
- 2) All papers must be handed in hard copy, no papers sent via e-mail will be accepted
- 3) All citations must be in accordance with the departmental referencing guide:  
<http://polisci.cofc.edu/PDF/POLSCitationGuide5-16-6.pdf>
- 4) Extensions must be approved 24 hours before the paper is due
- 5) Students must retain a copy of the paper, either on disk or in hard copy
- 6) Plagiarism will be prosecuted by the honor board and **students who plagiarize will fail this class**

**Papers that do not meet these guidelines will not be accepted**

## Paper Expectations

The papers that you write for this class will involve explication of arguments that you have read for class and analysis of those arguments based on your own view or perspective. This means that you are expected to

- 1) **Explain** the argument of your chosen text
- 2) **Present** an argument about that text based upon your own opinion
- 3) **Defend** your argument using evidence from the text

You should use quotations from the texts in question in order to provide evidence for both your explication and your analysis. You will be graded on the clarity of your analysis (this is more important than whether I agree with your particular argument). You may choose to rewrite papers (but you must speak to me first about the rewrite deadline). If you hand in a paper on the last paper due date you may not rewrite that paper.

All citations should be made in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Political Science Department's referencing guide (available online at <http://polisci.cofc.edu/PDF/POLSCitationGuide5-16-6.pdf>). Any failure to cite materials used for papers in this class is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is pretending as if the words and ideas of another are in fact yours. This includes a failure to use quotations, a failure to indicate when you are paraphrasing and the failure to give credit to the author whose ideas you are using. **Plagiarism is a violation of the Honor Code and will be treated as such.**

## Paper Worksheet

Please check off the appropriate boxes and sign below:

My paper is:

Yes  
No

Proofread  
Spellchecked  
Double-Spaced  
Stapled

My paper includes:

A Thesis  
An argument to support my thesis  
Quotations to support my argument  
Proper citation format

My thesis is:

In writing the paper I consulted the following sources for background/inspiration (anything that appears here should also be cited in your bibliography):

Please sign and date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paper Worksheet

Please check off the appropriate boxes and sign below:

My paper is:

Yes

No

Proofread  
Spellchecked  
Double-Spaced  
Stapled

My paper includes:

A Thesis  
An argument to support my thesis  
Quotations to support my argument  
Proper citation format

My thesis is:

In writing the paper I consulted the following sources for background/inspiration  
(anything that appears here should also be cited in a bibliography):

Please sign and date:

---

