

Sex, Lies, and the Founding of the City
Phil 3190 – Topics in History/Genealogy (Fall 2010)
Dr. Gordon Hull
MW 11:00, Belk Gymnasium 232

Description: These days, we tend to take it for granted that all humans are fundamentally equal, that politicians should tell the truth, and that our political philosophy is based on reason. In this course, we will look at texts which take a considerably different view of these topics. Specifically, we will look at select medieval and renaissance treatments at the intersection of views of human nature, gender, the role of truth in politics, and the status of legitimating narratives in political philosophy. The course begins with reading Kant's "What is Enlightenment" essay as exemplary of the sorts of assumptions that we make now. Then we will read significant sections from Plato's *Republic*, including his banishment of the poets and the enigmatic Myth of Er; Averröes's (Ibn Rushd's) medieval "Decisive Treatise" (which discusses the role of philosophy and faith, and how to write philosophy that doesn't destroy faith) and selections from his commentary on Plato; Machiavelli's *Prince* (most of it!); and selections from Hobbes's *Leviathan* on the status and role of philosophy and religion, and the imagery and rhetoric behind his famous discussions of the state of nature and social contract.

Books (to get):

Plato, *The Republic*, 2nd ed. trans. Allan Bloom. NY: Basic Books, 1991, ISBN 0465069347

Averröes, *Averröes on Plato's Republic*, trans. Ralph Lerner. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005, ISBN 080148975X

Averröes, *Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth. Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2002, ISBN 0842524797

Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince*, trans. Harvey Mansfield (2nd ed). Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1998, ISBN 0226500446

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994. ISBN 0872201775

Other Texts:

Kant, Immanuel. "What is Enlightenment," at <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>

Requirements/Grading:

Short Paper: 15%
Thesis/outline: 10%
Long Paper: 20%
Short assignments: 20%
Debate: 15%
Final: 20%

Short Paper: This is a 4-6 page paper on an assigned topic (TBA). You will be graded on the quality of your argument and your development of it. You should have a clear thesis statement: “In this paper I will argue that…” If you can’t finish that sentence with a straight face, you don’t have a thesis.

Thesis/Outline: This is a brief statement of where you’re going with your long paper. It should include (a) a thesis. Even if you can’t have a thesis fully ready, you should have a topic, along with a justification/explanation of why that topic is worth looking at and a direction you want to take it; (b) a rough outline of how you plan to structure the paper. This assignment is for your own benefit, so the more you can put into it, the more it will help you – even if you end up changing a lot of what you are doing between writing the prospectus and the final paper

Long Paper: This is a 6-8 page paper due on the last day of class. Topics will be assigned (there will be several to pick from); you will need to specifically reference/cite and discuss at least *two* of the readings from the semester. By “specifically reference/cite,” I mean quote and discuss in a way that indicates you have assimilated the material. For the sake of your grade, you should have a clear thesis and an “In this paper I will argue that x” sentence, somewhere in the first paragraph. I’ll have more details for you closer to the due date.

Short Assignments: These will mostly be **Mini-Debates:** These are designed to get you some hands-on practice formulating and defending policy-oriented (“applied”) arguments. The debates will be informal. For each debate, each student should produce an argument for each side of the proposition (*i.e.*, one for and one against), and a response to each of these arguments (Example. Topic: “Suicide is wrong.” Argument 1: “Suicide makes the victim’s relatives unhappy.” Answer: “They didn’t like the schmo anyway.”). You will turn these in (**typed – not handwritten**) for your grade. In class, then, we will “crowdsource” the debate: I will divide you into small groups (each group will be on one side or the other), and each group will produce the best case they can, selecting from the arguments available to them. We’ll then map out the arguments on the board and discuss them. Other short assignments may include occasional **response pieces** (1-2 pages of informal reflection on a prompt having to do with the day’s reading; you’ll get specific instructions for each of these).

Debates: We will have several in-class, semi-formal debates over the semester; everybody will get to debate once. In each of these, two teams of two students each will debate a proposition of philosophy central to the texts in question (for example, “For most people, philosophy destroys faith”). One team’s job will be to affirm the proposition; the other’s is to negate it. There will be constructive arguments, rebuttals, and cross-examination on both sides. Members of the class will then judge which side “won” (in the sense that their presentation was more compelling – don’t vote for which side you personally think is right!). I will have a separate handout doing into much more detail on this. I will assign people more or less randomly to debate topics and to partners; you do not need to advocate the side you personally agree with (in fact, it’s sometimes better if you don’t – if it’s good to read your enemies, it’s even better to try to advocate their position). Your grade derives from how well you debate, not whether you win.

Final: This is a written exam (essay and/or short answer) designed to test your comprehension of the material. I will give you questions in advance, and you’ll write answers to some of them during the test period.

Attendance/Participation: You can’t learn very much in philosophy by just sitting there. You learn even less if you’re not there at all. Attendance is expected. I’m not going to formally measure attendance, as traditionally in my courses attendance correlates pretty well with grade. **Note**, also, that if you’re not there when we do in-class assignments, you can’t get credit for them.

Contact Information/Getting Assistance: It is important that you not fall behind. I want to help you avoid doing so. To get help from me:

1. Speak to me before or after class; we can set an appointment to meet at a later time if need be.
2. Email me at ghull@uncc.edu. This is probably the best way to get in touch outside of class.
3. Call my office: 7-2182 and leave a voicemail. This is less effective than email because I’m bad about checking my messages.
4. **Office hours** are MW 9:30-10:30, or by appointment, in Winningham 105C (in the Ethics Center suite)

Disabilities: I share UNCC’s commitment to provide reasonable accommodations to enable students with disabilities to access course material. Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. You’ll also need to contact disability services, 704-687-4355 (230 Fretwell).

Academic Integrity: University academic integrity guidelines can be found at: <http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html#VI>. You are required to follow them, and I will follow university procedure in dealing with academic integrity violations.

Course Outline (not a contract)

Wk			Text	Topic
1	M	8/23	First class	
	W	8/25	Kant, "What is Enlightenment"	
2	M	8/30	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book I (336b-end)	Is justice power?
	W	9/1	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book II (369a – end)	<u>Mini-debate</u> : the humpty-dumpty nominalism quote (handout)
3	M	9/6	Labor day – no class	
	W	9/8	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book III	Role of the poets
4	M	9/13	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book V (1)	<u>Mini debate</u> : it is important to regulate the output of the entertainment industry
	W	9/15	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book V (2)	
5	M	9/20	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book VIII (543a-545b; 555b-end)	Democracy and tyranny
	W	9/22	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book X	Poetry, art; Myth of Er
6	M	9/27		<u>Plato Debate</u> : It is better to have a professional ruling class than a democracy
	W	9/29	Averröes, <i>On Plato's...</i> , Translator's Introduction, text pp. 3-15t, 19m-30m, 57t-60m	Averröes' Aristotelian Plato
7	M	10/4	Averröes, <i>On Plato's...</i> , Book II (pp. 71-94)	
	W	10/6	Averröes, <i>On Plato's...</i> , Book III (pp. 104-49)	Short Paper Due <u>Mini-debate</u> : The goals of a city transcend those of the households that compose it
8	M	10/11	Fall Break – no class	
	W	10/13	Averröes, <i>Decisive Treatise</i> (1)	Philosophy and faith
9	M	10/18	Averröes, <i>Decisive Treatise</i> (2)	
	W	10/20		<u>Averröes Debate</u> : For most people, philosophy destroys faith.
10	M	10/25	Machiavelli, Dedicatory letter, chs. 1-3, 6	Imitation

	W	10/27	Machiavelli, chs. 6-7	<u>Mini-debate</u> : Ideal political theory is a waste of time
11	M	11/1	Machiavelli: 15, 17-8	The morality of a prince
	W	11/3	No class; professor at conference	
12	M	11/8	Machiavelli ch. 21, 25	Fortune is a woman
	W	11/10		<u>Machiavelli Debate 1</u> : In governing, having principles doesn't matter – one only needs to appear to have principles
13	M	11/15		<u>Machiavelli Debate 2</u> : The best way to learn techniques of governance is through the study of historical examples.
	W	11/17	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction, ch. 28.27, ch. 31.41 (last in the chapter), Review and Conclusion 1-4	Rhetorical Tropes in <i>Leviathan</i>
14	M	11/22	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , ch. 13	Thesis/Outline due The state of nature
	W	11/24	Thanksgiving – no class	
15	M		Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , 15.21, 20.5-10, 17.13-14	Equality, women, the social contract (political vs. paternal rule)
	W	12/1	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , ch. 32, 43 (I will refer to a few passages from ch 46)	<u>Mini-debate</u> : The right to religious interpretation should be vested in the sovereign
16	M			<u>Hobbes debate 1</u> : Human nature is such that people cannot live together without a strong government.
	W	12/8	Last Class	<u>Hobbes debate 2</u> : Equality is a better basis for political philosophy than natural difference Long Paper Due
	M	12/13	Exam (11:00-1:30)	