DEMOCRACY IN ATHENS AND AMERICA
CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT
POLITICAL SCIENCE 315
FALL 2008

Introduction
8-26 Receive syllabus; get acquainted; Thucydides on history and power
The Landmark Thucydides, 3-16; 76-79

8-28 Athenian self-government: how it worked
Alfred Zimmern, The Greek Commonwealth, 139-179
The Landmark Thucydides, 577-582

Query one: should the popular majority rule?
9-2 Athenian Democracy in practice: drama and justification
Aristophanes, The Complete Plays of Aristophanes (Clouds), 101-141

9-4 Democracy in history: elitist v. participatory varieties
Robert A. Dahl, Democracy and its Critics, 213-231
David Held, Models of Democracy, 174-198

9-9 Should the popular majority rule? Pro and Con arguments
Elaine Spitz, Majority Rule, 169-193

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

9-11 class debate: is participatory democracy desirable?
Frank Bryan, Real Democracy, 1-15; 57-81; 233-253

9-15 Micro-essay #1 due in CLA 251 by 4pm (participatory democracy)

Query two: how far should democratic authority reach into family and education?
9-16 The Greek city and the family I
Plato, The Last Days of Socrates (Euthyphro), 1-27

9-18 The Greek city and the family II
Sophocles, Sophocles I (Antigone), 159-204

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

9-23 The family state, the state of families, the state of individuals, the democratic state
Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education, 19-47

9-25 class debate: should state majorities (e.g., in Kansas) have the authority to mandate a high-school civics curriculum emphasizing that America was born a Christian nation?
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9-29 Micro-essay #2 due in CLA 251 by 4pm (democracy and education)
Query three: was Athenian patriotism justified on international terms?
9-30 The roots of Athenian nationalism: the liberation of Greece from Persian slavery
   The Landmark Thucydides, 16-49; 66-69

10-2 A liberal, internationalist nationalism: Pericles' funeral oration
   The Landmark Thucydides, 79-85; 89-128

10-7 The Mytilenean debate
   The Landmark Thucydides, 159-183
   THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

10-9 class debate: who has the better argument Cleon or Diodotus?
   Aristophanes, The Complete Plays of Aristophanes (Knights), 53, 75-96

10-13 Micro-essay #3 in CLA 251 by 4pm (justice and interest)

Query four: was the war inevitable?
10-14 Stasis: civil war, international chaos, and the security dilemma
   The Landmark Thucydides, 194-201

10-16 The peace treaty and the Melian dialogue
   The Landmark Thucydides, 301-317; 325-333; 350-357
   Richard Led Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Politics, 89-126
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10-21 Hubris and tragedy
   Sophocles, Sophocles I (Oedipus the King), 11-76
   Richard Led Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Politics, 126-141

10-23 class debate: does Thucydides present the war as inevitable or an avoidable breakdown of
   a socially-constructed value system?
   The Landmark Thucydides, 397-402; 427-435; 451-478
   Richard Led Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Politics, 141-167

10-27 Micro-essay #4 in CLA 251 by 4pm (realism versus constructivism)

Query five: under what conditions are dissenters against democratic states justified?
10-28 Socrates the dissenter
   Plato, The Last Days of Socrates (Apology), 31-67

10-30 Socrates the loyal citizen
   Plato, The Last Days of Socrates, Crito, 76-92

11-4 General duties and special obligations to obey the law
   George Klosko, “Multiple Principles of Political Obligation,” Political Theory (December 2004):801-824
   THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
11-6 class debate: should civil protestors accept their punishment? 
Abe Fortas, Concerning Dissent and Civil Disobedience, 9-40
Howard Zinn, Disobedience and Democracy, 3-38

11-10 Micro-essay #5 in CLA 251 by 4pm (democracy and obligation)

Query six: what ethical principles, if any, apply during times of war?

11-11 A modern challenge to the realist theory of war: distinguishing Mytilene and Melos
Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 3-33

11-13 Nixon in hell: the bombing of Cambodia
Samantha Power, “A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide, 111-169; 475-516

11-18 The source of the rules of war in the domestic analogy and the legal responses to aggression
Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 58-73; 86-108; 225-232; 239-263

11-20 class debate: were the Melian action and/or the bombing of Cambodia war crimes?
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11-24 Micro-essay #6 in CLA 251 by 4pm (jus in bello)

Query seven: what ethical principles, if any, govern starting a war?

11-25 Classical Realism and the Preemptive Strike
Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, 74-85; 225-268
Richard Ned Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Politics, 14-64; 216-256

11-26/11-30 Thanksgiving Break

12-2 The Neo-Conservatives and Unilateralism
Richard Ned Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Politics, 310-359

THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

12-4 class debate: is the Neo-Conservative case for American unilateralism, e.g. preemptive war, justified?
Francis Fukuyama, America at the Crossroads, 66-94
Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power, 105-158

12-11 Final exam 1:15 – 3:15

Required books (available at the IWU Bookstore)
Reserve reading
The class schedule also refers to several readings from the following books and articles that are held on e-reserve at the Ames Library. The password for this class is "theory" (all lower case letters).

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Social contract
Students are required to write six 750-word micro-essays. To conserve resources, please single space and print on both sides of a single sheet of paper. The class format will be to discuss and debate topics before you write on the material. We will debate seven queries, and in seven “three questions” sessions, students will have the opportunity to set the agenda for class discussion (see the class schedule for dates). For three questions sessions, students should prepare three queries suitable for discussion. Chosen at random, students are asked to lead the class in discussion of their question.

Micro-essays 60% (10% each)
Class Discussion 15%
Final Exam 25%

No student absent eight class sessions, for whatever reason, will receive a passing grade. After three absences, the class participation grade will be lowered.

All assignments and the final exam will be posted on my homepage. Micro-essay rewrites will be accepted up until the last day of class. Rewrites must be handed in with the original version, and students must visit me for a consultation before handing in any final drafts.

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