

CERS 5031: Western Social and Ethical Thought 1

Fall, 2006

Tuesday, 2:10-5:00 p.m.

CDSP 113

Instructor:

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Office hours: By appointment

Description:

This seminar provides students with an opportunity to read and discuss primary texts in the history of western social and ethical thought. The Fall term includes materials listed in the doctoral comprehensive exam 1 bibliography for Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin.

Texts:

The following texts are required, and are available at the GTU Bookstore:

Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992
ISBN 0-915144-03-4

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed., translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999 ISBN 0-87220-464-2

Augustine, *City of God*, translated by Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin/Pelican publishing, 1984 ISBN 0-140444-26-2

Luther, Martin. *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, edited by Timothy F. Lull. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989 ISBN 0-8006-2327-4

Course reader, available at Copy Central on the corner of Euclid and Hearst St. The reader contains all of the secondary material and two short selections of primary material for this course.

N.B.: Making multiple copies of copyrighted works requires payment of a copyright fee. The cost of the reader includes those fees. However, individuals making single copies for their private use are not required to pay copyright fees. A copy of the reader will be on reserve at the library, and I have a copy in loose-leaf form that you may borrow if you'd like to copy it yourself.

Structure:

Each writer will be considered for two class periods. Class discussion will center around the primary material assigned for the day. The secondary readings are required, but will be discussed specifically only if time permits. After the first week, students will be assigned a week for which he or she will be the principal discussion leader. Students covering the same figure would do well to coordinate their presentations.

Requirements and Grading:

Grades will be based on weekly 2-page (double spaced) reflection papers (40%), discussion leadership/participation (20%) and a take-home, timed, closed book final examination (40%). The lowest two reflection paper grades will be dropped, leaving 10 counting toward the final grade.

Reflection papers should be posted to the Blackboard site for this class by 5 p.m. of the Monday before class. The Blackboard site can be accessed at: <http://blackboard.gtu.edu>, where there are discussion forums set up for each class meeting.

A reflection paper is a thoughtful engagement with a text: you may pursue a particular aspect of the day's reading, evaluate one or more of the secondary readings in light of the primary text, compare the day's text to a previous author, etc. A summary of the text, or an opinion about it unsupported by argument (e.g., along the lines of "Thomas Aquinas is a jerk!" without substantiating that claim,) is not adequate. There will be more material than you can comment on, so you don't need to worry about including every aspect of the author's work. You should conclude your reflection paper with one or two questions you would like to pursue in class that day. All students have access to all posts: I expect that we will all have read all the class papers before class, so we begin the day's discussion on common ground. The nature of a discussion board is such that you may comment on another student's post, and start an e-discussion outside of class. I encourage you to do so, in accord with the same norms of collegial conversation that characterize class time.

When you lead discussion, your principal focus should be the primary text we're discussing. In addition to being prepared to trace the author's argument, however, you should also bring questions/comments designed to lead us to a more nuanced critical understanding of the text. General points to consider that might be helpful in this regard include:

Setting (historical, religious, etc.) of the person and the text

Intended audience

Influences on the author: intellectual, religious, political, psychological, etc.

Reception/influence/relevance to the contemporary scene

Questions to bring to the texts, as appropriate:

1. What is the good for human beings?
2. How do we know (or come to know) the good?
3. What is the best form of government for human beings?
4. What moral anthropology underlies the argument?
5. What theology underlies the argument?
6. In tracing the basic argument of the work at hand.
 - a. What other presuppositions are necessary to the argument?
 - b. Does the argument hold, given the necessary presuppositions?
 - c. What are the strengths of this argument?
 - d. How would you challenge the argument?

This is not an outline or a protocol: you may use these points if they are helpful to you.

Calendar (Subject to change)

Sept. 5 Introduction

Sept. 12 Plato 1

Plato, *Republic*, Books 1-5

Sept. 19 Plato 2

Plato, *Republic*, Books 6-10

Secondary readings for Plato:

Irwin, T.H. "Plato: the Intellectual Background." In *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, edited by Richard Kraut, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992.

Strauss, Leo. "Plato." In *History of Political Philosophy, 3rd Ed.*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987

Santas, Gerasimos. "Plato: Ethics." In *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*, edited by Christopher Shields. Malden: Blackwell, 2003

MacIntyre, Alasdair. "Plato: The Republic." In *A Short History of Ethics*. New York, Macmillan, 1966.

Kraut, Richard. "The Defense of Justice in Plato's *Republic*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, edited by Richard Kraut, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992.

Sept. 26 Aristotle 1

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 1-4

Oct. 3 Aristotle 2

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 6-10

Secondary Readings for Aristotle:

Lord, Carnes. "Aristotle." In *History of Political Philosophy, 3rd Ed.*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987

Shields, Christopher. "Aristotle: Introduction." In *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*, edited by Christopher Shields. Malden: Blackwell, 2003

Boulton, Robert. "Aristotle: Epistemology and Methodology." Ibid.

Miller, Fred D. "Aristotle: Ethics and Politics." Ibid.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. "Aristotle's Ethics." In *A Short History of Ethics*. New York, Macmillan, 1966.

Oct. 10 Augustine 1

Augustine, *City of God*, Books 5, 6, 8, 11

Oct. 17 Augustine 2

Augustine, *City of God*, Books 14, 19, 20

Secondary Readings for Augustine:

MacIntyre, Alasdair. "Christianity." In *A Short History of Ethics*. New York, Macmillan, 1966.

Fortin, Ernest L. "St. Augustine." In *History of Political Philosophy, 3rd Ed.*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987

Brown, Peter. "The Platonists." In *Augustine of Hippo*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969.

--"Senectus Mundi." Ibid.

--"Magnum Opus et Arduum." Ibid.

--“Civitas Peregrina” Ibid.

Oct. 24—Reading Week. No classes. Enjoy!

Oct. 31 Thomas Aquinas 1

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae* I-IIae, q. 1-8, 18-21, 49-67, 90-99; 106-7, 109.
Available on-line at <http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/home.html>

Nov. 7 Thomas Aquinas 2

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae* II-IIae, q. 47, 57-8, 61, 120, 123, 141.

Secondary readings for Thomas Aquinas:

Fortin, Ernest L. “St. Thomas Aquinas.” In *History of Political Philosophy, 3rd Ed.*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987

Boyle, Leonard E., O.P., “The Setting of the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas-- Revisited.” In *The Ethics of Aquinas*, edited by Stephen J. Pope. Washington: Georgetown Univ. Press, 2002.

Pinckaers, Servais-Theodore, O.P. “The Sources of the Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas.” Translated by Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. Ibid.

Pope, Stephen J. “Overview of the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas.” Ibid.

Nov. 14 Luther 1

Martin Luther, “Two Kinds of Righteousness,” “Freedom of a Christian,” “Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed.” in Lull

Nov. 21 American Academy of Religion Meeting. No class.

Nov. 28 Luther 2

Martin Luther, “Disputation Against Scholastic Theology,” “95 Theses,” in Lull
“The Fourth Commandment.” (Reader)

Secondary readings for Martin Luther:

Lohse, Bernhard. “The Situation in the Church around 1500.” In *Martin Luther’s Theology. Its Historical and Systematic Development*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999

--“The Theological Situation around 1500, Especially in Erfurt and Wittenberg.” Ibid.

Ozment, Steven. “The Mental World of Martin Luther.” In *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550. An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1980.

--“Society and Politics in the German Reformation.” Ibid.

Lazareth, William H. “Satan: God’s Foe, Human Woe.” In *Christians in Society. Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001

--“Cain and Abel: Law Judges Before God.” Ibid.

Steinmetz, David. “Luther and the Two Kingdoms.” In *Luther in Context*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002

Lindbeck, George. “Martin Luther and the Rabbinic Mind.” In *Understanding the Rabbinic Mind. Essays on the Hermeneutic of Max Kadushin*, edited by Peter Och. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990

Hendrix, Scott. “Martin Luther’s Reform of Spirituality.” In *Harvesting Martin Luther’s Reflections on Theology, Ethics and the Church*, edited by Timothy Wengert. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2004

Dec. 5 Calvin 1

John Calvin, Tables of contents/section descriptions of each of the four books of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by Henry Beveridge, at <http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/institutes/institutes.html>

--“Dedication to Francis I”

--“Of Christian Liberty” (Book 3, ch. 19)

--“Of Civil Government” (Book 4, Ch. 20)

Dec. 12 Calvin 2

John Calvin, Selections from the “Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans.” (Reader)

Selections from the “Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel.” (Reader)

Secondary readings for John Calvin:

Forrester, Duncan B. “Martin Luther. John Calvin.” In *History of Political Philosophy, 3rd Ed.*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987

Bouwsma, William J. “Humanism.” In *John Calvin. A Sixteenth Century Portrait*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988

--“Society” Ibid.

--“Polity” Ibid.

--“Church” Ibid.

--“Conclusion” Ibid.

Hancock, Ralph C. “Government and the People” In *Calvin and the Foundations of Modern Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1989.

--“Law and Ethics” Ibid.

--“Reason, Rationalism and History” Ibid.

Johnson, Merwyn S. “Calvin’s Ethical Legacy.” In *The Legacy of John Calvin. Papers presented at the 12th Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, April 22-24, 1999*, edited by David Foxgrover. Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society (CRC Product Services,) 2000
