

RETH 45502 Religion and the Political Order
Autumn 2019
Swift 400

Professor Richard Miller
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Office hours: Tues. 10:15am-
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Description

This is a seminar on religion and political order, drawing on Western theological and philosophical thinkers from Aristotle to Wollstonecraft. Focal topics include religious and political authority; the ends of politics; political rationality; law, obedience, and freedom; liberty and equality; and moral sources in nature or convention. Special attention will be paid to the role of religion in the political theories under review along with the norms and ideas that are used to conceptualize religion or to distinguish between religions in political life.

Format

For the first seminar, I will make some introductory remarks about the organizing ideas of the course and will sketch a plan for the following weeks. Then we will turn to the first reading for discussion, on Aristotle's *Politics*. We'll continue with that general format on Week 2, on Augustine's *City of God*.

Starting on week 3, one (or more) student(s) will provide a ~15 minute Seminar Presentation to launch the seminar discussion.

Each presentation should have three components: (a) a thesis, (b) a development of key points that flesh out the thesis, and (c) one or two focused, critical questions. The thesis is to be plainly stated in the presentation. The presentation is not to summarize the reading. Depending on the number of seminar enrollees, some seminars may have more than one presentation – one at the outset, one midway through the seminar meeting. Students assigned to a presentation are to send me **two** brief, focused questions via email to distribute to the rest of the seminar members by 5pm the day before class. Seminar discussion will take its bearings from the presentation(s) and should reference specific textual passages in order to advance an insight or question.

Specific guidelines, and an Assessment Form, for Seminar Presentations are on Canvas\Files. I will send presenters an email a week in advance of their presentations to put them in contact with each other if there is more than one presenter that week.

Assignments

1. Regular attendance and participation: 10%
2. Seminar Presentation: 20%.

3. Concept Paper: 30%. A 2-3 single-spaced 12 point font critical discussion of a concept that arises from one or more of the reading assignments. You should choose from one of these concepts: **liberty, nature, regime, contract, domination, toleration, consent, virtue, private/public, or community**. For this assignment, you may draw from more than one author, but you must draw from authors other than the one on whom you will focus for your Seminar Presentation. Due: Nov. 4 submitted to me as a Word document via email by 5pm. Please write your name and the course number in the subject heading, e.g., J. Jones RETH 45502/Concept Paper.

4. Final Paper on topic approved by the instructor: 40%. Each student should write a 15-18 page double-spaced, 12pt font critical paper on one or more of the texts read in the course on a topic approved by me. The Final Paper must focus on materials different from those you use in your Concept Paper. *Note: The paper title, 1-2 paragraph thesis, and brief bibliography are due on November 18.* The Final Paper is due December 13. Each of these written materials is to be submitted to me as a Word document via email by 5pm on the due dates. Please write your name and the course number in the subject heading, e.g., J. Jones RETH 45502/Final Paper.

Texts

Aristotle, *Aristotle's Politics*, trans., with an introduction by Carnes Lord, 2nd ed.
 Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson
 Aquinas, *Aquinas: Political Writings*, ed. R.W. Dyson
 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price, 2nd ed.
 Martin Luther, *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger
 John Calvin, from *Institutes on the Christian Religion*; excerpted on Canvas\Files
 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson
 Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, second edition; ed. Donald Cress
 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli

Recommended: Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*

Books have been ordered for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore.

P/F and Auditing Policy

Students may enroll P/F or as Auditors with my approval. All students, regardless of enrollment status, are expected to keep up with the readings, attend all sessions, and provide a Seminar Presentation with discussion questions. P/F Students must receive passing grades on each of the two written papers.

Schedule

1. Oct 2 Aristotle, *Politics*, 2nd ed., trans. Lord

Please read the Glossary first
 Book 1

Book 2: 1-5
Book 3: 1-13
Book 4: 1-11
Book 5: 1-5
Books 7-8

2. Oct. 9 Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Bettenson:

Book I, preface, chaps. 1-11, 16-27;
Book IV, chaps. 1-4;
Book XI, chaps. 1-3; 26;
Book XII, chaps. 1-8;
Book XIV, chaps. 10-14, 28;
Book XV, chap. 4;
Book XIX, entirely;
Book XXII, chaps. 1, 17, 24, 29-30.

3. Oct. 16 Aquinas: *Political Writings*, ed., Dyson:

De Regno
and

1. Natural Law: Law: *ST* I-II, Q. 94, aa. 1-6
2. Human Law: *ST* II-II, Q. 95, aa. 1-4
3. On Right, *ST* II-II, Q. 57, aa. 1-4
4. On Justice, *ST* II-II, Q. 58, aa. 1-12
5. On Property Relations, *ST* II-II, Q. 66, aa. 1-9
6. On War, *ST* II-II, Q. 40, a. 1
7. On Sedition, *ST* II-II, Q. 42, aa., 1-2
8. On Homicide, *ST* II-II, 64, a. 7
9. On Religion and Politics, *ST* Q. 10, aa. 8-11; Q. 11, a. 3; Q. 12, a. 2

N.B.: To navigate these materials (#s 1-9), I recommend that you consult two brief files: “On Aquinas and the Structure of the *ST*,” and “Roadmap of the Quaestio in the *Summa*” on Canvas\Files, which I designed for those who have never read Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*.

4. Oct. 23 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed., Skinner and Price

5. Oct. 30 Martin Luther, “The Freedom of the Christian,” and “On Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed,” in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, ed. Dillenberger

Monday, Nov. 4: Concept Paper due via email as a Word attachment at 5pm

6. Nov. 6 John Calvin, *Institutes on the Christian Religion*, excerpted on Canvas\Files:

Bk 3, Chap. 19, pars. 1-5, 15-16;
Bk 4, Chap. 20

7. Nov. 13 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Author's Introduction; Books 1, 2

8. Nov 20 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed., Macpherson

Monday, Nov. 18: Thesis statement, bibliography due via email as a Word attachment at 5pm

9. Nov. 27 John Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men* and *The Social Contract* from *The Basic Political Writings*, 2nd edition; ed. Cress

10. Dec. 4 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, ed. Tomaselli

Friday, Dec. 13: Final Paper due via email as a Word attachment at 5pm