

**LAH 350 / CTI 335 / GOV 379S: Jerusalem and Athens – Honors**

**Unique Numbers 30256, 33982, 38877**

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MWF 11-12, MEZ 1.120

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This class is a comparison of the roots of the two traditions which combined to form the modern West: Biblical revelation and classical rationalism. Though part of our purpose is to understand the roots of our own society, our chief goal will be to come to see that these traditions offer powerful answers to the basic questions of human life. We will compare the account each gives of what happiness and virtue are, who should govern in the political community and on what grounds, and how human beings should understand themselves in relation to the divine.

We will approach these two traditions exclusively through the careful reading of some of the most important source texts. In the first half of the course, we will study the Hebrew Bible, reading major parts of the Torah, and then comparing King David and King Solomon as representatives of different types of human virtue. In the second, we will read substantial portions of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* as well as Book III of his *Politics*, always bearing in mind the question of how his teaching compares to the Biblical one.

There are two assumptions that many in the modern world make which this course seeks to call into question. The first is that the classical and Biblical tradition are not in tension with each other, but can be synthesized. But if such a synthesis is possible, it is not easy, and so it is of the utmost importance to see the ways in which they differ. The second assumption is that both have been decisively disproven by the insights of modernity. My hope is that we will see this is not the case, and that facing the alternative embodied by Jerusalem and Athens is as urgent and as viable today as it was in the ancient world.

**CLASS POLICY**

This is a small, discussion-intensive seminar. Every student is expected to do every reading and to show up for class prepared to present interpretations of the texts we read, and arguments about them. The readings, on the whole, are rather short, but they are all very difficult. It is crucial that everyone does each reading very carefully. I recommend reading every assignment at least twice before class meetings.

Cell phones and laptops will *not* be permitted in class. You should silence and put away your cell phone before each meeting.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

For each of the required texts, it is crucial that you have the editions I have assigned so that you can follow along with class discussion.

1. Alter, Robert. *Five Books of Moses*. W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN 0393333930.
2. Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*. W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN 0393320774.
3. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Robert Bartlett and Susan Collins. The University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226026744.

Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy are included in the *Fives Books of Moses*. I and II Samuel, as well as I Kings 1-2, are included in *The David Story*. For the readings on February 20 and March 2, you may use any translation of the Bible that you wish. I will provide handouts for all other readings not included in the above.

## READING SCHEDULE

January 18: Introduction  
January 20: Genesis 1-3

January 23: Continued  
January 25: Genesis 4-11  
January 27: Genesis 12-21

January 30: Genesis 22-24  
February 1: Genesis 25-36  
February 3: Genesis 37-50

February 6: Exodus 1-14  
February 8: Exodus 15-20:21  
February 10: Exodus 20:22-26

February 13: Exodus 27-40  
February 15: Deuteronomy 1-12  
February 17: Deuteronomy 25-34

February 20: Joshua 1-8, 23-4; Judges 1-5 (find your own copy)  
February 22: I Samuel 1-15  
February 24: I Samuel 16 – II Samuel 5 (**Paper due**)

February 27: II Samuel 5 - 20  
February 29: II Samuel 21-end; I Kings 1-2  
March 2: I Kings 3-13 (find your own copy)

March 5: Selection of Psalms (handout)  
March 7: Qohelet (Ecclesiastes)  
March 9: Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) continued

March 12-16: **SPRING BREAK**

March 19: *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1-3  
March 21: *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.4-7  
March 23: *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.8-13

March 26: *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1-6  
March 28: *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.7-9  
March 30: *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.1-5

April 2: *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.6-9  
April 4: *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.10-12 (**Paper due**)  
April 6: GOOD FRIDAY – NO CLASS

April 9: *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.1-3  
April 11: *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.4-9  
April 13: *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.1-5

April 16: *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.6-8  
April 18: *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.9-11  
April 20: *Nicomachean Ethics* 6

April 23: *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.9-12, 10.1-5  
April 25: *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.6-8  
April 27: *Politics* 3.1-9 (handout)

April 30: *Politics* 3.10-14 (handout)  
May 2: *Politics* 3.15-18 (handout)  
May 4: Final day of class – review and discussion (**Paper due**)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE CALCULATION**

**60% - Three Papers (20% each):** You will write 3 3-5 papers on topics to be assigned in class. Papers will be due at the beginning of class on February 24, April 4, and May 4. In each case, please be sure to **bring two printed copies to class**; the second will be given to another student who will write a response to it. Your papers will be graded on their content, and also on the clarity and accuracy of your writing.

You will be given the opportunity to rewrite two of the three papers, at your choosing. In each case, the rewrite will be due one week after the paper is returned to you, and can bring your grade up by as much as one full letter grade.

**10% - Short Writing Assignments:** There will be a number of short writing assignments given out during the semester. These will include the paper reviews, as well as responses to a number of prompts which I will announce in class.

**10% - Reading Quizzes:** There will be short pop quizzes on the reading at the beginning of many of our classes. These will be averaged at the end of the semester, with the lowest score dropped. If you miss class, you will be allowed to make up the quiz *only* if your absence is excused.

**10% - Attendance:** Attendance is required at every class meeting. For every unexcused absence after the first, your attendance grade will drop by 10% (which is equal to 1% of your overall final grade). Missing more than 10 classes will result in automatic failure of the course. I will excuse absences only for serious reasons, such as illness (for which you have to bring in a doctor's note) or religious observances.

**10% - Class Participation:** Since this is a discussion-intensive class, participation makes up an important part of your grade. You will be graded, not on how often you speak up in class, but on whether you have prepared for class and have thought about the material. Speaking a lot if you have not prepared will be a *detriment* to your grade.

**Extra Credit:** You can earn extra credit by keeping a reading journal and turning it in at the end of the semester. There will also be opportunities to earn extra credit by attending public lectures and emailing me short responses: I will announce the lectures in class.

**Grade Calculation:** Papers and participation in discussions will be given letter grades. In order to calculate your final grade, these will be translated into number grades as follows:

A: 97; A-: 91; B+: 88; B: 84.5; B-: 81; C+: 78; C: 74.5; C-: 71; D: 65; F: 30

Final grades are calculated numerically, then translated into a letter grade using the following scale. Please note that your final grade will not be rounded.

A: 93.5-100; A-: 90-93.5; B+: 87-90; B: 83-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-80; C: 73-77; C-: 70-73; D+: 66-70; D: 60-66; F: below 60.

## **OTHER POLICIES**

**Students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

**Academic dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty will be treated extremely seriously. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. The university's policy on academic integrity may be found at the following website: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>

**Accommodations for religious holidays:** If anyone needs to miss class for a religious observance, I will hold a make-up session and the absence will be

excused. If anyone misses a religious observance for class, they can take it up with their god.