



University
of Victoria

POLI 300A

Ancient and Medieval Political Thought

Instructor Fall 2022: Dr. Andrew Wender

Course delivery: POLI 300A will be delivered face-to-face and on campus.

Course description:

POLI 300A examines political thinkers and themes running through the eras of ancient Greece, late antiquity, high medieval Europe, and classical Islam. The figures we will focus on – Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Ibn Khaldûn – asked fundamental political questions imaginable, addressing such matters as the nature of justice, the structure and life cycle of ideal (and essentially flawed) states and societies and the ultimate character and aims of law. They pursued these questions within the context of philosophical and religious schemas that have helped to construct the basic architecture of what might be termed (albeit not un-problematically) ‘the Western mind,’ and that have been immensely influential in non-‘Western’ settings, as well. Thus, as we explore these thinkers’ political ideas in their specific historical settings, we will be tracing the DNA not only of our own notions of what constitutes good or valid forms of social and political order, but also our ideas about what constitutes reality itself. I

Prerequisite: POLI 103 or 202, or permission of the department.

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Through close reading of texts, develop analytical and critical-thinking skills
- Understand how these influential texts inform current political debates
- Develop written and verbal communication through essay writing and discussion

Topics may include:

Politics and Morality

The Ideal State

Citizenship

Hierarchy and power

The influence of classical Greek thought on contemporary politics

This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is not an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.