

Athens and Jerusalem: Speech in Politics

PoliSci 690S-1

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Course Description:

The history of the West has been shaped profoundly by two poles: classical Greece and Judeo-Christianity (Athens and Jerusalem). This course examines the role of political rhetoric in these two traditions. What is the power of speech in political life? How can rhetoric shape political action? In what ways do speakers and audiences exercise reciprocal power over each other? How do demagogues differ from statesmen? What do different approaches to rhetoric suggest about human nature? The course will seek to answer these questions, or at least to explore them. Texts will include the Old and New Testaments, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Plato's *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, speeches drawn from Thucydides, Lysias, Isocrates, and more.

Course Books:

The following books are required reading and are available for purchase or rent through Duke's textbook partner or online. You may of course purchase books from other sources, provided you use the same editions and translations (see links below). It truly is important to get the same editions and translations; it helps keep all of us on the same page (literally) as we discuss the readings and when it comes time to write papers. All other texts will be posted on the Sakai site.

1. Plato's [*Gorgias, Menexenus, and Protagoras*](#).
2. [*Four Texts on Socrates*](#)
3. Aristotle's [*Rhetoric*](#)
4. [*Oxford Annotated Bible*](#)
5. Plato's [*Phaedrus*](#)

Course Requirements and Grading:

Your grade will consist of two components: papers and participation.

For the papers, you may choose to write *either* two 8-10 page papers *or* one 20-25 page paper. For students choosing the former, the first will be due the Friday before March break, and the second will be due on the 24th of April. Students choosing the latter option must turn in their paper by the 24th

of April as well. You can choose your own topic for the papers, in consultation with me. Expectations for the papers will be discussed later in the course.

Class participation reflects the fact that this is a seminar. I expect you to come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss it. You have an active obligation to contribute to the collective endeavor of learning in the class.

Course grade will be determined as follows:

Papers: 75%

Participation: 25%

Reading assignments:

Jan 11: Life With Speech

Genesis 1-4, 6-9, 11-12, 17, 22; Gospel of John chapter 1, verses 1-18; selection from Timaeus; selections from Aristotle's *Politics* and *Ethics*; selection from Hesiod's *Theogony* (all on Sakai)

Jan 18: The *Techné* of Rhetoric

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1.1-1.13, 2.1-2.17

Jan 25: Rhetoric as Sophistry?

Gorgias up through 481b

Feb 1: Rhetoric as Sophistry? (cont.)

Gorgias 481b-end

Feb 8: Rhetoric as Sophistry? (cont.)

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 2.18-end; Lysias 1, 31; Thucydides 6.88-6.93, 7.61-7.68 (On Sakai)

Feb 15: Rhetoric and Founding

Rousseau's *Social Contract* II:7 (On Sakai); *Exodus*: 3-4, 19-24; Deuteronomy 5-26; Genesis 18

Feb 22: Speech for the Dead

Pericles' Funeral Oration (On Sakai), Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (On Sakai), Plato's *Menexenus*

March 1: Prophetic Rhetoric

Isaiah 1-12, 55-66; Jeremiah 1-17; Gospel of Matthew 4-7

March 8: March Break!

March 15: The Demagogue and the Statesman:

Selections from Weber's "Politics as Vocation"(On Sakai); Thucydides 1.66-1.88, 1.139-1.145, 2.59-2.66, 3.36-3.49, 5.84-5.116, 6.8-6.29, 6.32-6.42 (On Sakai); Chronicles 21-22; Jeremiah: 20-26, 42-44.

March 22: Storytelling as Rhetoric

2 Samuel: 11-12; Matthew 13, 20-25; Mark 4; Luke 18; selection from *Symposium* (On Sakai)

March 29 : Rhetoric as Seduction?

Phaedrus, Genesis 3

April 5 Virtue on Trial (pt. 1):

Selection from Aristophanes' *Clouds* (On Sakai), Book of Job, Isocrates' *Antidosis* (On Sakai)

April 11: Virtue on Trial (pt. 2):

Apology of Socrates, *Crito*, Gospel of John 18:19-19:30

April 18: Conclusion

TBD