

MC 497-002: Senior Seminar – Four Trials
Spring 2020
TR 5:10-7:00pm
N369L Case Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:45am-12:45pm, 2:00-4:00pm

General Information

Description

This is a senior seminar in the Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy major, examining the trials of four major figures in Western culture: Socrates, Jesus, Galileo, and Adolf Eichmann. Each of these trials reflects four major conflicts in how we understand and structure our world: philosophy versus politics, politics versus religion, religion versus science, and modern scientific society versus the individual, respectively.

The sequence of this course follows the sequence of your education in the PTCD major, from ancient to modern societies, but also offers a thematic approach to this sequence in its focus on the four critical conflicts. We will depend on and reinforce the skills you have already learned during your undergraduate career: reading critically, evaluating evidence, and articulating clear, well-developed arguments.

This course, however, is a seminar – unlike your other courses, it is primarily discussion-based and will rely on student participation. Therefore we will also work to develop a new skill: facilitating civil discussions and debates about the questions each of these trials raises.

Learning Goals

- To read philosophical, religious, and historical texts closely and critically
- To civilly discuss and debate the fundamental questions of human life
- To clearly articulate arguments through speaking and writing
- To understand the foundational conflicts within Western thought and culture
- To uncover the assumptions about human life that obscure our philosophical ignorance

Expectations

Students are expected to attend class, facilitate class discussions, participate in class discussion and reflections, complete course readings, and submit all assignments on time throughout the duration of the course. The course is structured so that you have some choices about what assignments you will complete and when you will complete them, but with enough time for you to complete your work and me time to complete my evaluation of it.

As your instructor, I will reply to all emails within 24 hours during the work week (within 48 hours on the weekend), and provide detailed feedback on all assignments within one week of submission.

Course Materials

This class depends entirely on the assigned texts and your critical discussion of them. Therefore, you will need your assigned readings every day and be ready to draw evidence for your arguments from them. For this reason, you need to obtain the **exact** editions of the texts for this course so we have the same page numbers and, in some cases, translations. You will need the following books:

- *Four Texts on Socrates*, Trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, ISBN: 978-0801485749
- The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, ISBN: 978-0452006478
 - You may use *any* Revised Standard Version translation, including an online version if you prefer. I recommend www.biblegateway.com if you choose not to buy a copy of the Bible, or if your Bible is a different translation
- J. H. Hexter, *The Judeo-Christian Tradition*, ISBN: 978-0300045727
- Maurice Finnochiaro, *The Galileo Affair*, ISBN: 978-0520066625
- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, ISBN: 978-0143039884

I will post additional required readings as PDFs on D2L and will note those on the reading schedule. Additional recommended readings and resources are listed at the end of the syllabus. These may be helpful for your final paper.

Assignments

Plagiarism Quiz

As noted below, plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. However, many students, even at the college level, even seniors at the end of four years, do not always understand what constitutes plagiarism. To remedy this, and to ensure that you understand that plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment, you must complete an online quiz, found here:

<https://plagiarism.iu.edu/certificationTests/>

To complete the assignment, you must submit a copy of the completion certificate to the designated Dropbox (do **not** email me).

Participation and Reflections

We will be working through course texts in class and discussing their meanings and implications together. This portion of your grade includes your preparation for class (i.e. reading the assigned text for the day), participation in seminar discussion, and completion of reflection questions asked during class to gauge where you're at. Sometimes you will reflect on your own, sometimes you will discuss with a partner or small group, but **each student** will submit their own reflection responses at the end of class each day.

Facilitation

You will not only participate in discussions in this class, but also lead discussion for two classes during the semester. You will sign up for these two classes during the second week of class and you will be responsible for preparing reflection questions (for your peers to respond

to and turn in; see above) and discussion questions (for class discourse). You will evaluate yourself, and be evaluated both by your peers and by the instructor on your ability to keep the conversation going, the quality of your questions, and your preparation of the material. You should be the “expert” on the assigned readings that day, but your primary responsibility is to get a dialogue going in class.

Short Papers

After closely reading the texts and discussing them in class, we want to be able to evaluate both sides of each debate on our own and clearly articulate the question or problem, and the answer(s) or solution(s) to those problems. You will write two short papers during the semester that will respond to an essay prompt and should be 5-7 pages long. You **must** write a paper for the first trial (Socrates) but you **may choose** from the following three trials on which to write your second paper (Jesus, Galileo, Eichmann). If you facilitate two days of the same trial, you must write on a different trial, but if you facilitate discussion on two different trials, you may still write on one of those trials.

Final Paper

For the final paper, you may choose to respond to one of my suggested essay questions or you may propose your own. This paper will be about 15-20 pages long and will address a larger, more general philosophical question that involves at least one of the trials we looked at in class. If you choose to write in response to a question of your choosing, you must have your question approved **three weeks prior to the deadline**, as indicated on the course schedule.

Assessment

Final Grade Breakdown

Plagiarism Quiz	5%
Participation and Reflections	20%
Facilitation	30% (15% each)
Short Paper #1 (5-7 pages)	10%
Short Paper #2 (5-7 pages)	15%
Final Paper (15-20 pages)	20%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A/A+	92-100	4.0
B+/A-	86-91	3.5
B-/B	80-85	3.0
C+	75-79	2.5
C-/C	70-74	2.0
D+	65-69	1.5
D-/D	60-64	1.0
F	59 and under	0.0

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments	Due
Week 1 1/6 – 1/10	Introduction Intro to course Intro to Socrates	[no reading] Aristophanes, <i>The Clouds</i> p 115-36 Plagiarism quiz	T 1/7 Th 1/9 F 1/10
Week 2 1/13 – 1/17	Socrates Pre-Socratic Socrates Oracle speech	Aristophanes, <i>The Clouds</i> p 137-76 Plato, <i>The Apology of Socrates</i> , 17a-22e	T 1/14 Th 1/16
Week 3 1/20 – 1/24	Socrates Cross-examination of Meletus Achilles/gadfly speech	Plato, <i>Apology</i> , 23a-28b Plato, <i>Apology</i> , 28b-35e	T 1/21 Th 1/23
Week 4 1/27 – 1/31	Socrates Sentencing TRIAL	Plato, <i>Apology</i> , 35e-42a [no reading]	T 1/28 Th 1/30
Week 5 2/3 – 2/7	Jesus Intro to Jesus What is the Jewish law?	Hexter, <i>The Judeo-Christian Tradition</i> Bible, Genesis 12:1-4, 17:1-8, 22:18-19; Exodus 19:1-6, 20, 21-23; Leviticus 19; Deuteronomy 5, 14:28-16:20, 6:2-7, 15:1-2, 16:18-20, 18:15-18; Daniel 7, 12 Short paper #1 due (on Socrates)	T 2/4 Th 2/6 F 2/7
Week 6 2/10 – 2/14	Jesus What are the Jews expecting? What is Jesus up to?	Isaiah 1-2, 9:1-8, 10:1-4, 11:1-10, 16:1-6, 26-27, 53, Malachi 1-4 Matthew 3-7, 21-25; Mark 8:27-30, 11-13	T 2/11 Th 2/13
Week 7 2/17 – 2/21	Jesus What is Jesus up to? How does the trouble begin?	Luke 19-21; John 6-11 Matthew 26:36-27:49; Mark 14-15:39; Luke 22-23:49; John 18-19:37	T 2/18 Th 2/20
Week 8 2/24 – 2/28	Jesus TRIAL Intro to Galileo	[no reading] Finocchiaro, <i>The Galileo Affair</i> , Introduction (p 1-43)	T 2/25 Th 2/27
SPRING BREAK 3/2 – 3/6			
Week 9 3/9 – 3/13	Galileo Correspondence Letter to the Grand Duchess	Finocchiaro, <i>The Galileo Affair</i> , p 47-69 Finocchiaro, <i>The Galileo Affair</i> , p 87-118 Short paper #2 (for Jesus papers)	T 3/10 Th 3/12 F 3/13
Week 10 3/16 – 3/20	Galileo Earlier Inquisition Proceedings Later Inquisition Proceedings	Finocchiaro, <i>The Galileo Affair</i> , p 134-53 Finocchiaro, <i>The Galileo Affair</i> , p 256-77	T 3/17 Th 3/19

Week 11 3/23 – 3/27	Galileo Later Inquisition Proceedings TRIAL	Finocchiaro, <i>The Galileo Affair</i> , p 277-93 [no reading]	T 3/24 Th 3/26
Week 12 3/30 – 4/3	Eichmann Intro to Eichmann The Jewish Question – and the First Solution	Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , ch 1-2 Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , ch 3-4 Short Paper #2 (for Galileo papers)	T 3/31 Th 4/2 F 4/3
Week 13 4/6 – 4/10	Eichmann Second and Final Solutions, Wannsee Conference Eichmann's new role	Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , ch 5-7 Final paper topic proposals due Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , ch 8-9	T 4/7 Th 4/9
Week 14 4/13 – 4/17	Eichmann Evidence and trial No class	Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , ch 13-15 Recommended: <i>The Trial of Adolf Eichmann</i> [film on D2L]	T 4/14 Th 4/16
Week 15 4/20 – 4/24	Eichmann Arendt's final word TRIAL	Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> , Epilogue, Postscript Cesarani, <i>Eichmann</i> [on D2L] Short paper #2 (for Eichmann papers)	T 4/21 Th 4/23 F 4/24
FINALS WEEK 4/27 – 5/1 Final paper due Tuesday, April 28 by 10:00pm			

Additional Information and Resources

Recommended Additional Materials

I generally recommend <https://www.famous-trials.com> for even more resources about these and other famous trials. The selections below are my personal recommendations.

Socrates

Xenophon, *Memorabilia*

Xenophon, *The Shorter Socratic Writings*

Plato, *The Republic*

Plato, *Euthyphro*

Plato, *Crito*

Onassis Cultural Centre of Athens – [New Trial of Socrates, May 25, 2012](#) (Posted on D2L)

Jesus

[Jesus of Nazareth](#), dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 1977 (posted on D2L)

Galileo

Bertolt Brecht, *Galileo*

Dava Sobel, *Galileo's Daughter*

PBS NOVA, [Galileo's Battle for the Heavens](#) (posted on D2L)

Eichmann

Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future*

David Cesarani, *Becoming Eichmann* (selections posted on D2L)

[Triumph of the Will](#), dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1935 (posted on D2L)

[The Trial of Adolf Eichmann](#), dir. Michael Prazan, 1997 (posted on D2L)

Changes to the Syllabus

I retain the right to make adjustments to the course, syllabus, and assignments as needed throughout the semester. If I make any changes, I will update the syllabus or related documents, and announce these changes on D2L. It is your responsibility to read these announcements and contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is lying, cheating, and stealing, and it is in no way acceptable. Assignments that are plagiarized will receive a 0. All work is expected to be original, and not previously or simultaneously turned in for credit in another course (unless you get explicit permission from me beforehand). All students at Michigan State University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (failing the assignment or this class) and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). For more information, please see the following:

<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/index.html>

Disabilities Accommodation

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodations due to disabilities must arrange for such accommodation. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services **within the first week of class** so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.