

Political Science 100W  
Professor Brian J. Shaw

Justice and Piety  
Fall Semester 2009

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Texts:

Diane Hacker, The Bedford Handbook. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2006.  
Homer, *The Iliad*. Trans. Richard Lattimore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.  
Sophocles, Three Theban Plays. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin, 1982.  
Thucydides, On Justice, Power and Human Nature. Ed. and trans. Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.  
West, Thomas, and Grace Starry West. Four Texts on Socrates. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

All texts are available in paperback editions are the Student Store.

Goals of the Course:

This first-year seminar explores works by four ancient Greek authors, each of which vividly raises and offers profound answers to questions central to their authors' time and to our own. Among these:

What is justice? Is justice natural or conventional? What is the relation of justice and self-interest? Is justice universal? If justice exists, how does one come to know its demands? Is the just life one of obedience to principles or the cultivation of virtue(s)?

What is piety? How should one revere the divine? How does one gain knowledge of God (or the gods)? What is the relation of piety and political life? Is religion essential to a just society? Or is piety subversive of political life?

What is the best way of life? That of the statesman? The warrior? The poet? The tyrant? The pious person? The philosopher?

What is the relation between politics and philosophy? Is the life of reason supportive or subversive of political life?

What is the relation of philosophy and piety? Is philosophy compatible with piety or devotion?

The seminar is organized about the close reading of texts, extensive writing and revision, and frequent and energetic discussions. It seeks to improve students' ability to read closely, think critically, argue persuasively, write clearly, and speak articulately and confidently. Students will have the opportunity to write often and in various formats, and to become competent critics of others' writing. They will also learn in turn how to use others' constructive criticism to improve their own prose. Finally, seminar members will learn how to research primary and secondary materials (both print and electronic) in order to write a semester paper on a topic of their choice.

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Course Format:

We'll meet three times weekly in a small-group, seminar format to read and discuss relatively brief sections of texts exemplifying a variety of genres, including epic poetry, historical narrative (with set speeches), dramatic tragedy, and philosophic dialogue. This is not a lecture course. Instead, students will be asked, in pairs, and with assistance from the instructor, to lead several class sessions each. The questions we'll explore are many, profound and controversial, and our texts offer a variety of powerful and subtle answers to them. They both allow and invite a wide variety of interpretive strategies – and conclusions. Seminars should be lively, intense, and fun.

Save for the first and final drafts of the research paper, which are due at noon, all written assignments will be submitted at the beginning of class on the days they are due. Written work will be in the MLA editorial style, and composed in Word.

Grading:

The weight of each written assignment is the following:

Summary Papers and Critical Synopses:	Ungraded
Character Study:	10%
Comparison Paper:	10%
Analysis Paper:	15%
Argument Paper:	15%
Research Paper:	30%
Discussion:	20%

All written work must be handed in on time. Accordingly, no late summary papers or critical synopses will be accepted, and late first or second drafts of other written assignments will be penalized a full letter grade for each calendar day they are late. (Thus, for example, if both the first and second drafts of a paper assignment are handed in one day late, the final paper grade will reflect a two-grade penalty.) For the research paper, a penalty of one letter grade will be imposed for *each* missed deadline (for topic sentence, thesis paragraph and bibliography, and each draft). *It is especially important to hand in first drafts on time, and to make oneself available on time to critique one's partner's first draft.* Late first drafts will not receive – and benefit from – peer criticism, and not making oneself available in a timely fashion to provide criticism to peers denies them useful criticism in turn.

Likewise, since the seminar is structured overwhelmingly about the discussion of assigned texts, it is extremely important that students familiarize themselves with readings before each class meeting. It is also crucial that students conscientiously attend and contribute to seminar discussions. For this reason, students are allowed three unexcused cuts. Unexcused absences in excess of this number will result in a grade of "F" for the discussion component of the course.

Note: Students are encouraged to share their writing at any stage of the writing process; tutors from the Writing Center, classmates and roommates can all provide useful support and criticism. To aid in researching the final paper, students will have the opportunity to meet several writing workshops and for a scheduled library session. Students also have the opportunity to schedule individual research consultations with library staff; for this service there are online request forms available at the following URL:

<http://www3.davidson.edu/cms/x6933.xml>

Please be extremely careful, however, in all instances to acknowledge assistance in accordance with the Davidson HONOR CODE whose provisions govern all written work. If you have any questions about the Honor Code, please don't hesitate to ask.

Class Schedule:

Assignment Due:

M Aug. 24	Welcome and Introduction	
W 26	<i>Iliad</i> , Bk 1 <i>Bedford Handbook</i> , 468-476	Summary and Questions
F 28	<i>Iliad</i> , 2:1-454, 3	Summary and Questions
M 31	<i>Iliad</i> 4, 5	Critical Synopsis
W Sept. 2	<i>Iliad</i> 6 Lattimore's "Introduction" (11-54)	
F 4	<i>Iliad</i> 9	Critical Synopsis
M 7	Writing Workshop: Drafting and Revising <i>Bedford Handbook</i> xxv-xxxiv; 30-36; 38-42; 609-636	
W 9	<i>Iliad</i> 11, 14	
F 11	<i>Iliad</i> 16 <i>Bedford Handbook</i> 42-53	Character Study (1st Draft)
M 14	<i>Iliad</i> 18, 19 <i>Bedford Handbook</i> 53-65	
W 16	<i>Iliad</i> 20, 21	Character Study (2nd Draft)
F 18	<i>Iliad</i> 22, 23:1-286.	
M 21	<i>Iliad</i> 24 <i>Bedford Handbook</i> 85-86	
W 23	Writing Workshop: Researching the Semester Paper <i>Bedford Handbook</i> 530-44; 549-551; 555-571	
F 25	Writing Workshop: Planning the Research Paper/Plagiarism <i>Bedford Handbook</i> , 572-579; 592-608; 636-643.	Comparison Paper (1st Draft)

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M	28	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> Woodruff ix-xxxiii; Thucydides 1-13.	
W	30	Library Research Resources (at Little Library) <i>Bedford Handbook</i> 530- 44; 549-551; 555-571. (assignment is a repeat of that of Sept. 23)	Comparison Paper (2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft)
F	Oct. 2	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , 15-37	
M	5	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , 39-66 <i>Bedford Handbook</i> , 489-499; 505-516.	
W	7	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , 66-87	
F	9	NO CLASS	Argument Analysis Paper (1st Draft)
M	12	FALL BREAK	
W	14	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , 89-109	
F	16	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , 111-129	
M	19	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> , 129- 154	Argument Analysis Paper (2nd Draft)
W	21	<i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> 155-160	
F	23	<i>Oedipus the King</i> (1-800) Fagles' Introductions, 13-30, 131-153	
M	26	<i>Oedipus the King</i> (801-1677)	
W	28	<i>Oedipus the King</i> (all)	Interpretative Analysis Paper (1st Draft)
F	30	<i>Antigone</i> (1-878) Fagles' Introduction, 35-53	
M	Nov. 2	<i>Antigone</i> (879-1470)	Interpretative Analysis Paper (2nd Draft)
W	4	<i>Antigone</i> (all)	
F	6	<i>Euthyphro</i> (all) West's Introduction, 9-16	Research Paper Topic Sentence
M	9	<i>Euthyphro</i> (2a-9e)	
W	11	<i>Euthyphro</i> (10a-16a)	

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F	13	<i>Apology</i> (17a-24a) West's Introduction, 16-24	Thesis Paragraph and Annotated Bibliography
M	16	<i>Apology</i> (24b-34b)	
W	18	<i>Apology</i> (34b-42a)	
F	20	<i>Crito</i> (all ) West, 24-29	
M	23	NO CLASS	Research Paper (1 <sup>st</sup> Draft)
W	25	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
F	27	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
M	30	<i>Crito</i> (all)	
W	Dec. 2	<i>Crito</i> (all)	
F	4	Course Review and Evaluation	
M	7	NO CLASS	Research Paper (Final Draft)

### **Assignment for Summaries and Critical Synopses**

The first two writing assignments ask you to provide a brief (one page, minimum 11 font ) summary of that day's reading, followed by five or six questions which arise in the course of your reading.

The following two "critical synopses" likewise ask that you summarize that day's assigned reading, but this time integrating your questions into the summary itself (one and one half pages).

### **Assignment for the Character Study**

Provide a relatively brief (2-3 page) study of Achilleus's character from what you've learned in the first sixteen books of the *Iliad*. Review especially closely, although not exclusively, those books in which Achilleus appears and in which other characters speak about him. Attend as well to the ways in which Homer subtly differentiates Achilleus from other characters of his social rank, as well as the members of this rank from other ranks as well. From all these sources describe what kind of person Achilleus is and what ideal he embodies.

For this and all subsequent written assignments including the research paper, students will exchange their first drafts with a "critique partner" who will, using a guide provided by instructor, provide a detailed analysis and evaluation of it. Students will submit both the first draft and their partner's "critique sheet" along with the final draft.

### **Assignment for the Comparison Paper**

Write a somewhat longer (3 - 3½ page) paper comparing and contrasting Homer's portrayal of human beings generally, or of one human character in particular, with that of the gods generally, or one god specifically. In what ways, and to what extent, are human attributes and the human condition different than those of the gods? In the course of distinguishing the two groups, does Homer make clear which he finds more estimable? Is his esteem well placed?

Make sure, before you begin, to read pages 85-6 in the *Bedford Handbook* on comparison and contrast, and decide whether to organize your material in the block (divided) or the point-by-point (alternating) format. Likewise, keep in mind that comparison is a method, a strategy by means of which a writer develops a thesis. It is not an end in itself, but serves rather as a vehicle to achieve insights into texts and the ideas they articulate. By the end of a successful comparison essay, the reader will have discovered something new; at the end of a weak essay, the reader may wonder, "So what?"

### **Argument Analysis Paper**

In a 3½ - 4 page paper, analyze and evaluate an argument presented by a speaker (or speakers) in Thucydides' *History*. Before writing, be sure to read the *Bedford Handbook*, pages 489-99 and 505-16. In analyzing the argument, be sure to identify its premises and conclusion, as well as how the former are supposed to support the latter. In evaluating the argument, determine whether or not it convinces. Are the premises true? If they are, does the conclusion logically follow from them? If the argument is not convincing, can it be restated so that it might be?

To helpful hints: 1) In order to make your own argument as convincing as possible, be sure to state the argument you're writing about as accurately and as charitably as possible – don't attribute to it dubious premises, inferences, or conclusions which are not evident in the text. Arguments attacking "straw men" are uninteresting and unconvincing. And 2) write about an argument which raises an issue of genuine concern, so that in writing about it you have an opportunity to clarify and perhaps even modify your thoughts about it.

### **Interpretative Analysis Paper**

Although many philosophers and political scientists read Thucydides' *History* as a religiously agnostic and politically "realist" view of human nature and international politics, others argue that this reading naively imputes to Thucydides certain opinions expressed by some of the book's principal characters. On the contrary, these critics argue, Thucydides' views are rarely stated explicitly, but instead must be inferred from the narrative structure of the book as a whole – much as, say, a reader of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* must attend not simply any character's statements, but to the dramatic structure of the play as a whole, properly to grasp its author's meaning.

Keeping this in mind, in a 4 to 4 ½ page paper, and with explicit reference to *Oedipus the King* as well as Thucydides' *History*: 1) Offer – and defend – what you understand to be Thucydides' teaching on human nature and proper goals of political life, and upon the role of religious faith in discerning and/or helping to promote these goals. And 2) evaluate this teaching.

### Research Paper

Each student will have the opportunity independently to explore a topic of his or her choice in a research paper (8-10 pages). In addition to the common class readings, this paper will utilize six or more outside sources, of which at least four must be print items. As the class schedule indicates, students will produce this paper in stages. It is, needless to say, extremely important that each stage be completed by the appropriate deadline.

*Library Orientation is on Wednesday, Sept. 30.* We will meet at the Little library for a tutorial session with Ms. Susanna Boylston who will provide students with step-by-step instruction in finding and utilizing library research materials (both print and electronic).

*Topic sentence deadline is Friday, November 6.* This (typed) sentence will be submitted to the instructor, But before this date students should arrange a brief and informal discussion about it with their critique partner outside of class. In class students will be asked to announce their topic in class, and to explain how you came upon it, why you find it interesting, and what kinds of sources you expect to use to explore it.

*Thesis Paragraph and Annotated Bibliography deadline is Friday, November 13.* This is a fulsome, one-paragraph statement not merely of your topic, but of the particular thesis or argument you will offer about it. You need not have read all of each of the books and articles in your bibliography, but you ought to have examined each one well enough to provide a one or two sentence description of its subject matter, argument, and findings.

This assignment should be submitted both to the student's critique partner and to the instructor.

*First Draft of Research Paper is due at noon on Monday, November 23.* This should be submitted to both the student's critique partner and the instructor. The former will provide a written critique by Monday, December 4. *The instructor will not.*

*Final Draft of Research Paper is due at noon on Monday, December 7.* The final draft, together with all earlier materials pertaining to the paper, should be submitted to the instructor.

