

PHI 501: The Philosophy of Aristotle: *Politics*, Book I

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The seminar will provide an introduction to Aristotle's political theory and a fairly close reading of Book I of his *Politics*. We will discuss the relationship between Aristotle's political theory and his two main ethical treatises, the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. We will also address and evaluate the criticism expressed in Aristotle's references to Plato's *Republic* and *Statesman*. Main topics that will be taken up in the course of the semester are Aristotle's conception of the different levels of community; property; wealth; slavery; and how Aristotle conceives of the political relations between Greeks and non-Greeks. If time permits, we will study the economic theory implied by book I and compare and contrast it with Marx' economic theory. The seminar will include a number of lectures on key topics and close readings of select passages. Knowledge of ancient Greek is not required but will be helpful. There will be opportunities for in-seminar presentations by students enrolled in the seminar, and students can obtain units in conjunction with the seminar either by doing a take-home exam or by writing an independent paper on a topic covered in the seminar.

Grading

Students from departments other than Philosophy who wish to take the seminar for credit may obtain a grade by writing a paper or doing a written exam.

Syllabus

Class 1 (1/27) introduction, chapter 1

Class 2 (2/4) chapters 2-3: communities

Class 3 (2/11) chapters 4-5: natural slaves

Class 4 (2/18) chapters 6-7: more on natural slaves

Class 5 (2/25) Aristotle's theory of natural slaves in historical context

Class 6 (3/4) chapters 8-9: economic theory

Class 7 (3/18) chapters 10-11: more on economic theory

Class 8 (3/25) Aristotle's economic theory and Marx

Class 9 (4/1) chapters 12 & 13: Aristotle's theory of household management

Class 10 (4/8) Aristotle's unity critique of Plato's *Republic*

Class 11 (4/15) Aristotle's best constitution in *Politics* Book 7

Class 12 (4/22) More on Aristotle's best constitution