



Political Science (POLI) 355

Political Philosophy: Plato to Machiavelli (Revision 3)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the **course listing** [↗](#) for the current revision **✕**

Delivery mode: Individualized study online [↗](#) or Grouped study [↗](#)

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites: None

Precluded: None

Challenge: POLI 355 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences [↗](#)

Overview

POLI 355: Political Philosophy: Plato to Machiavelli provides an overview of classical political thinking about the best life for humankind and the best ways to live together as a community in which members share similar aspirations. The course is divided into two parts; seven units form Part 1 and six units make up Part 2. Part 1 addresses the main similarities and differences in the political ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and forms two-thirds of the course content. These thinkers, arguably, have been the most intellectually significant as well as the most influential philosophical thinkers then or since. Part 2 discusses a handful of philosophers who embroidered in interesting ways on some of the earlier ideas about politics.

Outline

Political Science 355: Political Philosophy: Plato to Machiavelli comprises thirteen units in two parts, as outlined below.

Part 1: Perspectives on Political Philosophy

- Unit 1: Perennial Questions and Political Philosophy
- Unit 2: Plato on Philosophical Inquiry and the Good
- Unit 3: Plato on Education
- Unit 4: Plato on Decay and Corruption
- Unit 5: Aristotle on Human Association and Happiness
- Unit 6: Aristotle's Typology of Constitutions
- Unit 7: Aristotle on Education, the Ideal State and Revolution

Part 2: Medieval to Modern Political Philosophy

- Unit 8: St. Augustine
- Unit 9: Hildegard of Bingen
- Unit 10: St. Thomas Aquinas
- Unit 11: Machiavelli on the Sources of Political Power
- Unit 12: Machiavelli on Successful Political Leadership

- Unit 13: Conclusion: Changing Answers to Perennial Questions

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for *POLI 355*, you must achieve a mark of at least 60 per cent on the final examination and obtain a course composite grade of **D (50 percent)** [📄](#) or better. The weighting of the composite grade is as follows:

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 3	25%
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation centre. It is your responsibility to ensure your chosen invigilation centre can accommodate online exams. For a list of invigilators who can accommodate online exams, visit the **Exam Invigilation Network** [↗](#).


To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's **online Calendar** [↗](#).

Materials

Aquinas, Thomas. *St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics*. Trans. and Ed. Paul E. Sigmund. New York: Norton, 1988. [📖](#) (Print)

Aristotle. *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*. Ed. Stephen Everson. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996.  (Print)

Arnhart, Larry. *Political Questions: Political Philosophy from Plato to Pinker*, 4th ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2016.  (Print)

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Trans. Tim Parks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.  (Print)

Plato. *Republic*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford, 1993.  (Print)

Other materials

The course materials also include a study guide, student manual, and a reading file.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit**  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.





Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for the *POLI 355* challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  on the online examination.



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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View **previous revision** 
