

## POSC 259: JUSTICE AMONG NATIONS—

### THUCYDIDES

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x4111

Winter 2020  
Office hours: T & W 3:30-5:30,  
and by appt.

Thucydides is to my taste the true model of an historian. He reports the facts without judging them, but he omits none of the circumstances proper to make us judge them ourselves. He puts all he recounts before the reader's eyes. Far from putting himself between the events and his readers, he hides himself. The reader no longer believes he reads; he believes he sees.

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*

Although the historian may, in form abstain from value judgments of his own, they are there between the lines and act as such upon the reader. The effect, then . . . is often more profound and moving than if the evaluation were to appear directly in the guise of moralizing, and therefore it is even to be recommended as an artifice. The historian's implicit value judgment arouses the reader's own evaluating activity more strongly than one which is explicit.

—Friedrich Meinecke, "Values and Causalities in History"

There is no way to appropriate Thucydides' thought except by thinking it, by reconsidering, with his guidance, the substantive political issues the articulation of which defines his project. In reading his work his contemporaries enjoyed advantages of many kinds. The greatest of these was not, to my mind, that they knew Greek better than we do or even that his particular world was their own while it is so remote from us, but that unlike us they lived and breathed politics while remaining innocent of "political science." So used are we to discussing political life in terms that are not its own that nothing is harder for us than to re-learn to think about it politically, that is, in terms arising directly from political experience.

—Clifford Orwin, *The Humanity of Thucydides*

### Purpose and Scope

Thucydides is regarded by scholars of international relations as their great forebear. Similarly, historians claim him as a founder of *their* discipline. And humanists have long admired him as an insightful commentator on politics and passion. Thucydides was all of these things. Above all, though, he was a philosopher in the most refined sense of that word. He illuminated much about the human condition, human possibilities, and the question of human nature. In this course we will undertake a close reading of Thucydides' gripping history of *The Peloponnesian War* in an effort to deepen our own perspectives on politics (both domestic and international), society, human aspiration, and many other themes of great consequence.

### Course Requirements

By far the most important requirement is that you complete all assigned reading **closely** and **before class**. Thucydides tells a compelling story with colorful characters and sometimes searing drama. But he also writes with extreme subtlety and thereby reserves wonderful insights for those who read with great care.

Course grades will be based on written work (75%) and class participation (25%).

You have three options regarding the written work required for the course:

- Option 1: A 20-22 page seminar paper due at the end of the final exam period, i.e., Monday, March 16.
- Option 2: Two 10 page papers, one due on Wednesday, February 12, the other on Monday, March 16.
- Option 3: Three 6-8 page papers. The first paper must be submitted by Friday, February 7; the second by Friday, March 6; the third by Monday, March 16.

Please let me know which option you've chosen by Monday, January 13.

Papers should be submitted via email <lcooper@carleton.edu> as Word attachments.

### **Academic Honesty**

Strict standards of academic integrity will be upheld in this class. Your submission of written work means that your work is your own, that it is in accord with Carleton's regulations on academic integrity, and that you have neither given nor received unauthorized aid. Be sure you are familiar with Carleton's principles and policies on Academic Honesty: if you haven't done so already, review the website found at <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/honesty/>. I take academic honesty very seriously: students who are found to have violated these standards should expect severe sanctions.

### **Secondary Reading**

Secondary reading is not required, but it can be very helpful. The following scholarly writings will be available on Closed Reserve at the Library:

- W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides*. A running but not too long commentary on the eight books of *The Peloponnesian War*.
- Lowell Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence in Thucydides*.
- Steven Forde, *The Ambition to Rule. Alcibiades and Athens in Thucydides' History*. Pertinent to the latter books of the History, in which Alcibiades plays an important and fascinating part.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Varieties of Realism: Thucydides and Machiavelli," *Journal of Politics* 54 (1992): 372-93.
- Laurie M. Johnson, *Thucydides, Hobbes, and the Interpretation of Realism*.
- Clifford Orwin, *The Humanity of Thucydides*. Treats Thucydides as a penetrating and philosophic thinker.

- Jacqueline de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*.
- Tim Rood, *Thucydides. Narrative and Explanation*. Uncovers the subtle artistry of Thucydides' narrative.
- Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (third chapter). Emphasizes Thucydides' philosophic depth and the significance of his history to political philosophy.

For those interested in a relatively brief overview of Thucydides, either of the following two readings are highly recommended:

- Thomas L. Pangle and Peter J. Ahrensdorf, *Justice Among Nations* (chapter 1).
- David Bolotin, "Thucydides," in Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., *History of Political Philosophy* (NOTE: this book is on closed reserve for POSC 160)

### **Class Schedule**

All reading assignments are from Thucydides' work, *The Peloponnesian War*. The numbers refer to book and chapter, respectively: e.g., 4.23 means book 4, chapter 23.

I highly recommend that you purchase *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, which is available at the College Bookstore. Besides Thucydides' text, this volume includes much supplementary material, including maps, appendices, and a glossary.

Finally, the schedule that appears below is only *approximate*. We are likely depart from it as needed. Adjustments will be announced in class, typically at the end of the class period.

January 7: 1.1-1.11

January 9: 1.12-1.55

January 14: 1.56-1.125

January 16: 1.126-2.46

January 21: 2.47-2.65

January 23: review previous reading

January 28: 2.66-3.36

January 30: 3.37-3.69

February 4: 3.70-4.22

February 6: 4.23-4.101

February 11: 4.101-5.24

February 13: 5.25-5.116

February 18: 6.1-6.61

February 20: Review previous reading

February 25: 6.62-7-18

February 27: 7.19-7.87

March 3: 8.1-8.79

March 5: 8.80-8.109

March 10: "Classical Realism: Thucydides," in Pangle and Ahrens Dorf, *Justice Among Nations*