

HERTOG 2018 SUMMER COURSES STATESMANSHIP

PLUTARCH

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What makes political leaders great? For more than two millennia men and women in the West have turned to Plutarch's (46–125) *Parallel Lives* to answer this question. A “bible for heroes,” as Emerson put it, Plutarch's *Lives* aimed to shape readers' souls by uncovering the virtues and vices of the greatest Greeks and Romans.

But the *Lives* were far from works of hagiography. They were a reflection on the fundamental problems of politics: the nature of republican government, the temptations of empire, the rise and fall of regimes. It was not only for inspiration, but for instruction in such matters that American statesmen like Hamilton, Lincoln, and Truman turned to Plutarch.

This course will approach the *Lives* in their spirit. We will read three pairs of *Lives* – *Solon/Publicola*, *Pericles/Fabius*, and *Phocion/Cato* – in order to consider how the birth, peak, and fall of republican regimes reveal the nature of statesmanship.

Books:

- Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, Vols. 1 and 2 (trans. John Dryden, Modern Library Classics ed.)

Resources

To learn more about the ideas and figures discussed in this course, we encourage you to explore a project supported by the Hertog Foundation: **The Great Thinkers** (<http://thegreatthinkers.org/>) and **Contemporary Thinkers** (<http://contemporarythinkers.org/>) websites. These sites are aimed at introducing important thinkers in Western thought, with a particular emphasis on politics and philosophy.

Monday, June 25, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Solon and Publicola

Readings:

- *Life of Solon*
- *Life of Publicola*
- *Comparison of Solon and Publicola*

Discussion Questions:

1. How do republican lawgivers reconcile their own excellence with the equality of the regimes they establish?
2. Solon says that the laws he gave Athens were the “best they would receive.” What would the simply “best” laws be? Why wouldn’t the Athenians receive them?
3. What do *Lives* or biographies of Solon and Publicola reveal about the challenge of lawgiving that philosophical treatises and histories would not reveal?
4. Who is the superior lawgiver, Solon or Publicola? Why?
5. Why did Madison, Hamilton, and Jay select Publicola or “Publius” for their pseudonym in the *Federalist Papers*? How would the *Federalist Papers* have changed if they were written by Solon?

Tuesday, June 26, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Pericles

Readings:

- *Life of Pericles*

Discussion Questions:

1. In the introduction to the *Pericles* and *Fabius*, Plutarch says that observing virtuous deeds necessarily leads men to want to imitate them. What does Plutarch mean by this? Why is this an appropriate introduction for this pair of *Lives* in particular?
2. Thucydides says that under Pericles Athens was “a democracy in name, but a monarchy in fact.” Does Plutarch agree?
3. Plutarch stresses Pericles’ association with the philosopher Anaxagoras. How does this association influence Pericles’ political career? Why does Pericles pursue politics rather than philosophy?
4. To what extent can Pericles be blamed for Athens’ loss of the Peloponnesian War and subsequent decline?

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Pericles and Fabius

Readings:

- *Life of Fabius*
- *Comparison of Pericles and Fabius*

Discussion Questions:

1. In *Pericles* and *Fabius*, Plutarch shows two famous cities overcoming profound crises and reaching a kind of peak in their political development. What challenges do existential threats and unprecedented success pose to republican statesmen? How well do Pericles and Fabius respond to these challenges?

2. Fabius shares power with other Roman statesmen at key points in his career. Is he as excellent a colleague as a solitary general? How does the Roman regime take advantage of shared and unified commands?
3. At times in the *Life of Fabius* Hannibal seems to outshine Fabius himself. How are we meant to understand Fabius's relation to the Carthaginian general? What do we learn, through Hannibal, about the Carthaginian regime?
4. What does the *Pericles/Fabius* comparison reveal about the difference between Athens and Rome?
5. Who is the superior statesman, Pericles or Fabius? Why?

Thursday, June 28, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Phocion

Readings:

- *Life of Phocion*

Discussion Questions:

1. In the introduction to the *Phocion* and *Cato*, Plutarch says that these *Lives* will allow us to understand the relationship between fortune and virtue. How does Plutarch understand that relationship?
2. How does the decline of Athens influence Phocion's ability to act as a statesman? How do the challenges facing Phocion compare to those faced by Solon and Pericles?
3. Why does Phocion, as opposed to Demosthenes, favor conciliation rather than opposition to Macedon? Under what conditions is retreat or surrender the best course of action for a state?
4. Plutarch concludes Phocion's *Life* by linking his execution by the Athenians to the death of Socrates. What are the salient similarities and differences in these two episodes?

Friday, June 29, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Cato the Younger

Readings:

- *Life of Cato the Younger*

Discussion Questions:

1. In light of the decline of Athens and Rome portrayed in this pair of *Lives*, how might we say that republics fall? To what degree can statesmen resist or reverse this decline?
2. The Romans admire Cato for his rigid, austere virtue. Are they right to do so?
3. Can Cato's Rome sustain a republican regime? Why or why not?
4. Cato and Phocion respond quite differently to the decline of their regimes. Which response is preferable and why?

LINCOLN AS STATESMAN AND LITERARY ARTIST

Diana Schaub, professor, Loyola University Maryland

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) is often credited with having saved or re-founded the American Union by giving it a “new birth of freedom.” He is also often recognized as the creator of a new form of public speech. In this course, we will seek to understand Lincoln’s statecraft in conjunction with his literary craft. We will follow Lincoln’s political career as seen through his speeches, letters, and proclamations. Throughout the course, we will be inquiring into the nature of political debate and argument, the role of passion and reason in public speech, and the legacy of the Founding (with particular reference to the issue of slavery).

Books:

- *Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1832–1858* (Library of America)
- *Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859–1865* (Library of America)

Monday, July 2, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon Young Lincoln

Readings:

- To the People of Sangamo County, March 9, 1832 (Vol. 1, pp. 1–5)
- Address to the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, January 27, 1838 (Vol. 1, pp. 28–36)
- Address to the Washington Temperance Society of Springfield, Illinois, February 22, 1842 (Vol. 1, pp. 81–90)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your impression of the 23-year-old Lincoln? What is the nature of his “peculiar ambition”? Why is education “the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in”? What is his attitude toward change in laws? Is he a conservative or a progressive?
2. According to Lincoln, who has the harder task—the revolutionary generation or the current generation? What are the direct and indirect consequences of mob rule, and how are they related to “the perpetuation of our political institutions”? Does Lincoln’s solution—a political religion of reverence for the laws—allow for the possibility of civil disobedience, or is disobedience always uncivil? What is the link between mob law and the threat posed by those who belong to “the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle”? Is Lincoln such an individual? What does Lincoln mean by “passion” and “reason”? What is “reverence”?
3. What sort of reformers does Lincoln praise and what sort does he criticize? If you were to apply what Lincoln says about the temperance movement to the abolition movement, what lessons would you draw? What does this speech reveal about Lincoln’s understanding of human nature?

Tuesday, July 3, 2018

9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Lincoln contra Douglas

Readings:

- Fragment on Slavery, 1854 (Vol. 1, p. 303)
- Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854 (Vol. 1, pp. 307–48)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is Lincoln's view of slavery? Is he a bigot? In thinking about these questions, pay close attention to two passages in which Lincoln speaks of the role played by universal feelings in political life.
2. What does this speech reveal about the relation between public opinion and statesmanship?

10:30 a.m. to Noon Lincoln contra Douglas

Readings:

- Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act (continued)
- To Joshua F. Speed, August 24, 1855 (Vol. 1, pp. 360–63)
- Speech on the Dred Scott Decision at Springfield, Illinois, June 26, 1857 (Vol. 1, pp. 390–403)
- "House Divided" Speech at Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858 (Vol. 1, pp. 426–34)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the "lullaby" arguments offered in behalf of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and how does Lincoln dispense with them? What about "the one great argument" (Stephen Douglas's doctrine of popular sovereignty)? What are the elements of Lincoln's critique of Douglas?
2. Given what Lincoln said about reverence for the Constitution and the law, is he contradicting his own principles in criticizing the Dred Scott decision? What is his view of judicial precedent? What is Lincoln's interpretation of the Declaration of Independence? Why is there so much talk of racial amalgamation in this speech?
3. Why can't the nation remain "permanently half slave and half free"? Wouldn't the restoration of the Missouri Compromise (which Lincoln desires) leave the nation a house divided? According to Lincoln, what will be the end result of adopting a policy of quarantine (preventing slavery from spreading into the territories)? Why? What result will follow from the alternative policy of allowing slavery to spread?

Wednesday, July 4, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon Lincoln contra Douglas

Readings:

- To Henry L. Pierce and Others, April 6, 1859 (Vol. 2, pp. 18–19)
- Fragment on the Constitution and the Union, January 1861 (handout)
- Address at Cooper Institute, New York City, February 27, 1860 (Vol. 2, pp. 111–30)

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Lincoln establish that the Framers agreed with the Republican rather than the Democratic view of the powers of the federal government respecting slavery in the territories?
2. What is Lincoln's message to the Southerners? Are the Republicans a sectional party? Are they conservative, as Lincoln claims?
3. What is Lincoln's message to the Republicans?

Thursday, July 5, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon Lincoln as President

Readings:

- Farewell Address at Springfield, Illinois, February 11, 1861 (Vol. 2, p. 199)
- First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861 (Vol. 2, pp. 215–24)
- Message to Congress in Special Session, July 4, 1861 (Vol. 2, pp. 246–61)
- To Orville H. Browning, September 22, 1861 (Vol. 2, pp. 268–70)
- To Erastus Corning and Others, June 12, 1863 (Vol. 2, pp. 454–63)
- Proclamation Revoking General Hunter's Emancipation Order, May 19, 1862 (Vol. 2, pp. 318–19)
- Appeal to Border-State Representatives for Compensated Emancipation, Washington, D.C., July 12, 1862 (Vol. 2, pp. 340–42)
- To Horace Greeley, August 22, 1862 (Vol. 2, pp. 357–58)
- Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, September 22, 1862 (Vol. 2, pp. 368–70)
- Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862 (Vol. 2, pp. 393–415)
- Final Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863 (Vol. 2, pp. 424–25)
- To Albert G. Hodges, April 4, 1864 (Vol. 2, pp. 585–86)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is secession unconstitutional? Why is the suspension of habeas corpus constitutional?

2. Before his election, Lincoln often stated that he had no intention, and no constitutional authority, to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed. How, then, did he come to issue the Emancipation Proclamation and how did he justify it?

Friday, July 6, 2018

9:00 a.m. to Noon Lincoln as President

Readings:

- Address at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863 (Vol. 2, p. 536)
- Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, December 8, 1863 (Vol. 2, pp. 555–58)
- To Michael Hahn, March 13, 1864 (Vol. 2, p. 579)
- To Allen N. Ford, August 11, 1846 (Vol. 1, pp. 140–41)
- Handbill Replying to Charges of Infidelity, July 31, 1846 (Vol. 1, pp. 139–40)
- Proclamation of a National Fast Day, August 12, 1861 (Vol. 2, pp. 264–65)
- Order for Sabbath Observance, November 15, 1862 (Vol. 2, pp. 382–83)
- Meditation on the Divine Will, c. early September 1862 (Vol. 2, p. 359)
- Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865 (Vol. 2, pp. 686–87)
- To Thurlow Weed, March 15, 1865 (Vol. 2, p. 689)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is meant by the “new birth of freedom”? Does it refer to the emancipated slaves? If so, what is Lincoln’s vision of their place within the polity? How does the new birth of freedom relate to the argument of the Lyceum Address about the requirements for the perpetuation of our republic? (You might think too about the ballots and bullets passage of the Special Message to Congress.)
2. What interpretation of the Civil War does Lincoln present and why? What is Lincoln’s theology? What is the role of charity in political life?