

POLS 2023/3143

Introduction to Political Theory

Zap # 1653

Meets: MW 4:00-5:15 PM

Room: PH 314

Fall 2009

Credit Hours: 3

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Examination #1 Study Guide: *Ancient and Medieval Political Theory*

A study guide is just that; a guide to study. This study guide is designed to help students focus their study efforts on the assigned material for the first examination. The examination covers the first five chapters of Sheldon Wolin's *Politics and Vision*. The examination is worth 100 points, which is worth slightly more than 16% of students' overall grade.

Chapter Outlines

I. Chapter One: Political Philosophy and Philosophy

- a. Political Philosophy as a Form of Inquiry
- b. Form and Substance
- c. Political Thought and Political Institutions
- d. Political Philosophy and the Political
- e. The Vocabulary of Political Philosophy
- f. Vision and Political Imagination
- g. Political Concepts and Political Phenomenon
- h. A Tradition of Discourse
- i. Tradition and Innovation

II. Chapter Two: Plato

Political Philosophy versus Politics

- a. The Invention of Political Philosophy
 - b. Philosophy and Society
 - c. Politics and Architectonics
 - d. The Search for a Selfless Instrument
 - e. The Question of Power
 - f. Political Knowledge and Political Participation
 - g. The Limits of Unity
 - h. The Ambiguities of Plato
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III. Chapter Three: The Age of Empire

Space and Community

- a. The Crisis in the Political
- b. The New Dimensions of Space
- c. Citizenship and Disengagement
- d. Politics and the Roman Republic
- e. The Politics of Interest
- f. From Political Association to Power Organization
- g. The Decline of Political Philosophy

IV. Chapter Four: The Early Christian Era

Time and Community

- a. The Political Element in Early Christianity: The Challenge to the Political Order
- b. The Church as a Polity: The Challenge to the Political Order
- c. Politics and Power in a Church-Society
- d. The Embarrassments of a Politicized Religion and the Task of Augustine
- e. The Identity of the Church-Society Reasserted: Time and Destiny
- f. Political Society and Church-Society
- g. The Language of Religion and the Language of Politics: Footnote on Mediaeval Christian Thought

V. Chapter Five: Luther

The Theological and the Political

- a. Political Theology
- b. The Political Element in Luther's Thought
- c. The Bias Against Institutions
- d. The Status of the Political Order
- e. The Status of the Political Order
- f. The Political Order without Counterweight
- g. The Fruits of Simplicity

Fill-in-the-Blank (20 Points)

This section will test students' grasp of the assigned material by requiring that students accurately complete statements and word/concept associations. Generally, the questions will be comprised of direct statements or paraphrases of statements with crucial information withheld. Students will need to be aware of the connection between specific political theorists, their published works, and the ideas associated with them in order to master this section. The concept identification section may also serve as a concept/author universe.

Each correct response will be worth two (2) points.

Chapter 1

1. _____ argued in the opening pages of the *Politics* that the role of the statesman (*politicos*) ought not to be confused with that of the slave-owner or head of a household; the first was properly political, the latter were not.
2. The concept of an order that was at once political and common was stated most eloquently in _____'s dialogue *Protagoras*.
3. Wolin associates the following quotation – “Security for man is impossible unless it be conjoined with power” – with _____.
4. _____ suggested the term “explication” to cover certain expressions used both in everyday speech and in scientific discussion to describe the process of applying everyday terms in ways that make the terms serviceable for theoretical work.
5. In *Works and Days*, _____ warned against the prince who rendered “crooked” *diké* (justice), and reminded his audience that they were different from the animals that were ignorant of the rules of *dike*.
6. The English philosopher _____ defended the utility of legal restraints, observing “that ill deserves the name of confinement which hedges us in only from bogs and precipices.”
7. _____ accused political theorists of being satirists, because they assume that “theory is supposed to be at variance with practice... They conceive of men, not as they are, but as they themselves would like them to be.”
8. Wolin notes that “Whatever the truth of _____'s dictum is that ‘creativity is the principle of *novelty*,’ in the history of political theory, genius has not always taken the form of unprecedented originality.”
9. _____'s *Two Treatises of Civil Government* is commonly used by every textbook writer as an example of political literature contrived to rationalize a particular event of his own day, the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Yet a careful reader cannot fail to see that the author also tried to refute _____, whose writings had been largely concerned with delegitimizing another revolution that had taken place half a century earlier, the English Civil War of 1652 which resulted in Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate.

Chapter 2

10. The two words, *eidon* and *idea*, which Plato used to represent the eternal objects of knowledge, both contained the root-meaning of _____.
11. According to Plato, the shape of societies in his day meant that to pursue a life of philosophy was to invite _____.
12. Socrates' and Plato's criticism of the Sophists centered on their contention that the Sophists taught not knowledge but mere _____ (*doxa*).
13. Wolin notes that in Plato's dialogue _____, the great political leaders of Athens, such as Themistocles, Cimon, and Pericles, were severely criticized on the grounds

that they had failed in the supreme test of statesmanship, the improvement of the citizenry.

14. In Plato's _____ he made it a necessary condition for political success that all the members of his imagined community over the age of ten years old ought to be banished; the remainder would be shaped and moulded to the desired form by the institutions of society, especially the educational system.
15. The Platonic ideal of the Great Legislator has a number of modern strands. For example, _____ advanced the theory of selfless revolutionary elites to advance the idea of a catalytic agent of the *logos*.

Chapter 3

16. In the course of a long speech contained in the *Annals*, _____ has Tiberius explaining the contrast between the moral austerity of the old Rome and the profligacy of contemporary society by saying that in the old days self-restraint was practiced "because we were all members of one city. Not even afterwards had we the same temptations, while our dominion was confined to Italy."
17. As is well known, Aristotle's association with the empire-builder _____ left little impression upon the Peripatetic philosopher.
18. The _____ School, which had flourished in the last half of the fourth century B.C., asserted that the "conventional" values represented in the life of the community by the laws, customs, institutions, and class structure could no longer be shrugged off as harmless irrelevancies or annoyances. They must be classed instead as positive impediments to the attainment of virtue and ought therefore to be rejected.
19. The advice of _____, "we must free ourselves from the prison of affairs and politics," was not the premise but the conclusion to the belief that the individual not only had a life of his own independent of the political association, but that this was the most significant and valuable part of his life.
20. According to Wolin, the "undeniable contribution of _____ to Western notions of equality, freedom, and human dignity makes it difficult for a critic to appear other than carping and ungenerous."
21. As Wolin notes, the Roman ruling elites of the republican era generally adhered to the _____ philosophy, whose stern morality of probity, fairness, and austerity seemed ready-made for a political system that desperately needed a code of conduct for public magistrates and administrators.
22. Wolin quotes a classic statement by the Roman emperor _____, who was accounted as one of the great Stoic philosophers:

If our intellectual part is common, the reason also, in respect of which we are rational beings, is common; if this is so, common also is the reason which commands us what to do, and what not to do; if this is so, there is a common law also, if this is so, we are fellow citizens; if this is so, we are members of some political community; if this is so, the world is in a manner a state. For of what

other common political community will any one say that the whole human race are members?... from this common political community comes also our very intellectual faculty and reasoning faculty and our capacity for law; or whence do they come?

23. One of the greatest chroniclers of the Roman system was _____ (*cir.* 200-120 B.C.), who, although a Greek by education, had acquired an intimate knowledge of Greek and Roman politics.
24. Wolin observes, “_____’s lament, ‘some belong to a democratic, others to an aristocratic party but few to a national party,’” was merely a rhetorical escape; interest is not to be conjured away by calling it ‘national’ or locating it in some mysterious realm above politics.”

Chapter 4

25. _____ was a Christian movement of the last half of the second century that was characterized by a strong belief in the immanence of the Apocalypse and its outlook was colored by enthusiasm and asceticism. The movement was eventually condemned by the Church.
26. The _____ schism of the fourth century was African in origin, and was distinguished by rigorism, a “perfectionist” theory of the Church, and by the teaching that sacraments administered by an impure minister were invalid. At times members of the movement resorted to violence, and strong overtones of African nationalism were also evident.
27. The early Christian Church acted as guardian of a uniform truth which was conceived as being coextensive with the Church. This was the essence of Cyprian’s formula, and it has remained the distinguishing claim of the Church over the ages: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, which means _____.
28. With the conversion of the Roman emperor _____ (272-337 A.D.) to Christianity in 312 A.D., Christianity entered into a novel and difficult stage in which a disreputable and harried sect was changed dramatically into a privileged position, that of official state religion.
29. Wolin describes _____ (354-430 A.D.) as the first and perhaps the greatest of the Christian synthesizers, whose significance lies principally in the fact that he succeeded.
30. Within Augustine’s theory of political order, the theory of _____ worked to knit the political into a cosmic whole, a gradually ascending hierarchy of ends, each of which was served by an appropriate order of power and authority.
31. Within the Augustinian account of the Church-society, the concept of the _____, the mystical society stretching over past, present, and future and defying identification with any visible institutions, presents an idealized version of the Church as a coercionless body.

32. _____'s emphasis upon the social side of the Church pretty well summarized the Christian outlook of the first five centuries. The Church, he wrote, "is better than a society... it is a fraternity."
33. By insisting upon the vital role of the political order in seeking to define the distinctive laws by which it was ruled, the unique common good which it served, and the kind of prudence proper its life, _____'s reformulation of Christian theology "had once more taught men to think politically."
34. The end of the alliance between religious and political thought was foreshadowed in the fourteenth-century figure of _____, who refused to treat the establishing of laws by any agency other than the human will.

Chapter 5

35. Martin Luther's great _____ of 1520 were directed against an ecclesiastical institution that, to the sixteenth-century mind, had come to epitomize organized power.
36. Luther's most consequential break with the Church was his doctrine of the _____, which would form the basis for the Lutheran idea of the Church.
37. Wolin notes that Luther's extremist utterance made during the _____ War was not the result of his sudden discovery of the absolute power of the secular princes, but rather was an outgrowth of the deepening anti-political radicalism of Luther's religious convictions.
38. Against the _____ of sophisticated theologians, Luther defended a _____ informed by the uncomplicated "simple faith" of the people, and averred both the right and the ability of the congregation to judge religious teachings.
39. Luther's conception of _____ was the state enjoyed by the believer who had severed his external dependencies and had oriented his soul towards a complete submission to God.

Concept Identification (40 Points)

This section requires students to accurately define and explain the significance of a universe of concepts. Students should note that this is a two-part exercise, and that effective definition is only part of the requirement; students must also explain how the concepts contribute to the understanding of comparative politics.

Several of the concept identification items are in fact people. Students attempting to write a concept identification on a person should be able to identify the person's historical context (ancient Greek, Roman, early Christian, etc.), and the principal ideas for which the person is known as an explanation of significance.

Each effective response will be worth five points.

Alexander of Macedon	Marsilius of Padua
Anti-papal polemics	Martyrdom
Aquinas, St. Thomas	Machiavelli, Niccolò
“Aristocratic Epistemology”	Montanism
Aristotle	Montanist Schism
Augustine, St.	No Salvation Outside the Church
Aurelius, Marcus	Opinion
Carnap, Rudolph	<i>Ordo</i>
“Christian Liberty”	<i>Paideia</i>
<i>Civitas Dei</i>	“Philosopher-King”
<i>Corpus Mysticum</i>	Plato’s <i>Crito</i>
Constantine	Plato’s <i>Law</i>
“Counter-Kingdom”	Plato’s <i>Phaedo</i>
Cynic School	Plato’s <i>Protagoras</i>
“Democratic Epistemology”	Plato’s <i>Republic</i>
Donatism	<i>Polis</i>
Donatist Schism	Polybius
Epicurus	“Priesthood of all Believers”
Forms	Spinoza, Baruch
Great Legislator	St. Augustine
<i>Fortuna</i>	Stoicism
Hesiod	Tacitus
Hobbes, Thomas	“Three Walls” metaphor, the
Lenin, Vladimir	Two Cities
Locke, John	Vision
Luther, Martin	Whitehead’s Dictum
<i>Logos</i>	

Short-Answers (40 Points)

This section will be comprised of brief factual questions that students should be able to correctly and completely answer with no more than one or two sentences. Most often, short answers prompt students to agree or disagree with the statement, and to offer a brief rationale for the statement’s correctness or falsity. Each correct response will be worth five (5) points.

Chapter 1: Political Philosophy and Philosophy

1. One of the vital linkages between political philosophy and philosophy is the discovery this concept of **the public**? Why is this concept so important?
2. What does Wolin mean when he uses the term **vision**?

Chapter 2: Plato

3. What was the ultimate task of a true ruler, according to Plato? What are the challenges that any ruler faces in attempting to govern justly?
4. What is the difference between a “democratic” leader and a “Platonic” leader, according to Plato?
5. Where does Wolin believe that Plato might be mistaken in his assumptions about the need for unity within a *polis*?
6. According to Wolin, what does Plato’s invocation of the “myth of the Age of Kronos” suggest about Plato’s political project?
7. Briefly, how did Plato interpret the flux and turmoil of Greek society of his day? Why did he feel the way that he felt?
8. Why was Plato so hostile to opinion?

Chapter 3: The Age of Empire

9. How were the Romans distinct from the Greeks in their understanding of and approach to politics?
10. Why, according to Wolin, were the Greek unable to develop a sense of political space that could accommodate any entities larger than the city-state?
11. Does Wolin consider stoicism to be a political language? Why or why not?

Chapter 4: The Early Christian Era

12. How did the fact that the drama of the Crucifixion took place with a political backdrop – the kind of the Christians had been executed by a political order – affect the early Christian’s attitude toward politics?
13. Explain the role of *ordo* within Augustine’s political theory.
14. In Wolin’s view, which Augustinian concept was one of the most original and significant contributions of Christian thought?
15. How would an Augustinian view the quest for an ideal polity in the secular world?
16. What is the conventional wisdom regarding political theory during medieval period (described as Wolin as the “Christian centuries”)? In what ways does Wolin think that the conventional wisdom is mistaken?
17. Was Aquinas a revolutionary figure, or merely a transitional figure in the evolution toward Luther, the “real” revolutionary?

Chapter 5: Luther

18. In Wolin’s view, what is it about the medieval mind that is both admirable and annoying?
19. How is Luther’s conception of order distinct from Augustine’s?
20. Where, according to Wolin, is the fundamental weakness in Luther’s thinking?
21. What “confusions” began to appear in Luther’s later writings as he attempted to relate his doctrine of government to the problems of obedience and freedom of conscience? How

did contemporary events like the Peasant's War help to highlight some of these incongruities? Why does Wolin contend that under Luther's prescriptions, "a rebel might be slain by anyone, a tyrant by no one"?

Discussion Questions—Take-Home Essays (25 Points)

Class discussion will be oriented around questions related to the text, and the questions below will be used both to organize class discussions, and as the basis for the take-home essay assignment. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the relevant questions for assigned chapters, and should consider essay-writing strategies for answering the corpus of questions, which will be used to create the take-home examination that will be posted on the instructor's website.

Chapter 1: Political Philosophy and Philosophy

1. Part of what makes political theory a sustained activity with an enduring tradition is Wolin's point on pp. 4-5 that certain kinds of problems have a recurrent quality. How does he substantiate the assertion that ancient Athenians, medieval Italians, modern English, and contemporary Americans all shared similar concerns?
2. How important are **institutions** for delineating what constitutes "the political" in different times and places? How important were such institutions for "defining political space" in Athens of the day? Compare that today to the rising controversy over the role the courts are playing in deciding controversial cases like abortion and same-sex marriage.
3. How does Sheldon Wolin define politics?
4. What does it suggest about political theory that "most of the great statements of political philosophy have been put forward in times of crisis; that is, when political phenomena are less effectively integrated by institutional forms." Machiavelli and Hobbes stand as classical examples. What rising tensions in European politics gave rise to *The Prince* and *Leviathan*?
5. At some level, all political theorists are concerned with the problem of **order**. Why is order such a perennial topic in political theory?
6. How important for Wolin is the concept of **political space**? What role does this notion of space play in this book?
7. What role does imagination play in Wolin's view of political theory?
8. On p. 21, Wolin returns to the importance of tradition. What is so powerful about this idea of an extended tradition of discourse for Wolin? What role does **innovation** play in contributing to the tradition of political discourse?

Chapter 2: Plato

9. Wolin argues that the Greeks are responsible for the invention of political philosophy in the sixth century B.C. How did human beings conduct themselves prior to political philosophy? What changed as a result of this innovation?
10. Wolin describes Plato as an "architectonic" theorist. What does he mean by this description? What are the implications for political philosophy?

11. Wolin notes on p. 33 that “from the beginnings of political philosophy, a duality was established between the form-giving role of political thought and the form-receiving function of political ‘matter.’” Why is this duality important for understanding what it is that political philosophers do?
12. What are the Forms, and how do they figure in Plato’s political theory?
13. How did Plato understand politics, according to Wolin? What are the consequences of Plato’s assumptions about politics? What was it about Athenian politics of the fifth century B.C. that would cause him to be so negatively oriented toward politics? Does Wolin believe that Plato’s conception of politics is fundamentally flawed, or merely misconceived?
14. What would be necessary in order to produce a truly just community, in Platonic terms? How much would conditions need to be moulded in order to create a genuinely just community governed by a truly just ruler? Are such conditions realizable?
15. Wolin notes two important considerations in Plato’s view of power: 1) he was convinced that no political order could long endure unless its rulers sought to govern in the interests of the whole; 2) his deep and abiding suspicion of absolute power. How did Plato reconcile those two convictions with his advocacy of a **“philosopher-king”**? How was this idea of a selfless ruling elite dedicated to philosophy supposed to work?
16. How important is unity for Plato’s conception of community? How was Plato’s conception of community distinct from his pupil, Aristotle’s view of community?
17. According to Wolin, what did Plato think was the relevant source of political knowledge? How did Plato’s views on political knowledge differ from Aristotle’s? What is the origin of Plato’s erroneous epistemological views, according to Wolin?
18. Was Plato an advocate for despotism? What evidence does Wolin advance to support or reject the premise that Plato stands as a precursor to modern advocates of totalitarianism?

Chapter 3: The Age of Empire

19. Wolin’s central questions for early ancient political theorists were: “how far could the boundaries of political space be drawn, how much dilution by numbers could the notion of the citizen-participant withstand, how minor need be the ‘public’ aspect of decisions before the political association ceased to be political?” How, in Wolin’s view, did the Romans respond to the strains of moving from a conventional city-state to global empire?
20. What did Stoicism contribute to Western thought? What problems existed in Western thought that, in Wolin’s view, challenged the value of stoicism as an account of political vision?
21. How does Wolin characterize political activity during the Roman republican period? Was politics in republican Rome democratic in any meaningful sense?

Chapter 4: The Early Christian Era

22. Describe the forces that led to the Roman Empire’s embrace of Christianity.

23. How political was the Christian vocabulary and conceptual forms of the first five centuries, according to Wolin?
24. What is Augustine's view of power? How can we fit Augustine's views of secular power into the historical context of the early Church? What were the political consequences of Augustine's vision of power and community for the early Church, and ultimately for Western civilization?
25. What was the significance of the Roman emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312 A.D.? How did Christianity's altered status affect Augustine's attempt to reconcile the spiritual and secular realities of the Church?
26. Ancient politics was characterized by Wolin as the "sport of supermen who matched their skills against the incalculable whims of fortune." What role is there for heroics in the Christian view of history?
27. What does the concept of the *civitas dei* contribute to the Augustinian view of the church-society? What does this concept suggest about politics within Augustinian political theory?
28. What does the evolution of the concept *corpus mysticum* within Christian practice suggest about the evolution of Christianity as a political institution? How were Christian notions of community evolving in this period? How was the *corpus mysticum* utilized in order to justify both community and political authority and power?
29. Based on Wolin's discussion of St. Thomas Aquinas, evaluate Aquinas' theory of the Church.

Chapter 5: Luther

30. What were the primary motivating factors driving Martin Luther's reformism of Christianity? What does Wolin think makes Luther a significant figure in the history of political thought?
31. Like his predecessors, Luther was first and foremost a theologian. Does that exclude him from analyzing the political implications of his thought? Did Luther view himself as politically untutored? Were the problems that emerge in his thought a byproduct of ignorance, or of some other lacuna or flaw, according to Wolin?
32. Describe the political forces at play that led to Luther's denunciation of the Church. Were these criticisms rooted in theological disputes, or were they at heart political in nature?
33. How does Wolin justify his claim that Luther relied extensively on "conciliarist arguments" in advancing his critique of the Church?
34. How did Luther's view mature from his antipapal criticisms of 1520 through to his later writings?
35. Analyze the democratic implications of Luther's thought. Was Luther a proto-democrat? What does Luther reject about ancient ideas of political theory?