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*

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*

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”

### Purpose and Scope

Thucydides is regarded by scholars of international relations as their great forebear. Similarly, historians claim him as the founder of their discipline. And humanists have long admired him as an insightful commentator on politics and passion. Thucydides was all of these things—but also much more. Above all, he was a deeply philosophic thinker who illuminated much about the human condition, human possibilities, and the question of human nature. In this course we will perform 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**. *The Peloponnesian War* tells a compelling story with colorful characters and sometimes searing drama. But it is also written with extreme subtlety—*philosophic* subtlety. It yields wonderful insights to those who read with great care.

Students enrolled in POSC 349 will be asked to present a short paper (5 to 7 pages) on a selected portion of the text (chosen by the instructor in accordance with your preferences, if possible).
This paper, which will count for 30% of your grade, will serve as the basis for some part of the day’s discussion. A twenty-page seminar paper will count for 60% of your grade. The seminar paper will be due on Monday, March 14. Seminar paper topics must be approved by me by Monday, February 29 (preferably earlier). The remaining 10% of your grade will be based on class participation, including your class presentation: since this is a seminar, your active and sustained participation is expected.

Students enrolled in POSC 259 have four options for the paper assignments:

- **Option 1:** A 20-22 page seminar paper (90%) due on Monday, March 14.

- **Option 2:** A 5-7 page interpretive paper (30%) to be presented in class and a 15 page seminar paper (60%) due on Monday, March 14. The shorter paper would serve as the basis for some part of the day’s discussion.

- **Option 3:** Two 10 page papers (45% each), one due on Monday, February 8 (mid-term break), the other on Monday, March 14.

- **Option 4:** Three 6-8 page papers (30% each). The first paper must be submitted by Friday, February 5; the second by Wednesday, March 9 (the last day of classes); the third by Monday, March 14.

Please let me know your preferred option by Monday, January 11.

All papers should be submitted electronically <lcooper@carleton.edu>, either as Word documents or as PDFs.

**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**

You are not required to read anything but Thucydides’ history itself, and you should always read Thucydides before looking at any interpretive work. For those interested, though, the following materials will be available at the Library on closed reserve.

- 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.


• 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.

Finally, for those interested in a brief but helpful overview of Thucydides, either of the following two readings would be helpful:

• Thomas L. Pangle and Peter J. Ahrensdorf, *Justice Among Nations* (chapter 1).


**Class Schedule**

All reading assignments are from *The Peloponnesian War* as presented in *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler. Be sure to purchase this edition: it includes much useful material, including maps, appendices, and a glossary.

Note that the following schedule is *approximate*. We are likely depart from it if and when class discussion so requires. Numbers refer to book and chapter, respectively: e.g., 4.23 means book 4, chapter 23.

January 5: 1.1-1.11

January 7: 1.12-1.55

January 12: 1.56-1.125
January 14: 1.126-2.46

January 19: 2.47-2.63

January 21: review previous reading

**Required evening event, January 21: Professor Brent Cusher of Christopher Newport University (and Carleton alum, ’00) on “The Mutual Dependence of Leadership and Liberal Education”: 7:30 pm in the Athenaeum**

January 26: 2.64-3.36

January 28: 3.37-3.69

February 2: 3.70-4.22

February 4: 4.23-4.101

February 9: 4.101-5.24

February 11: 5.25-5.116

February 16: 6.1-6.61

February 18: Review previous reading

February 23: 6.62-7-18

February 25: 7.19-7.87

March 1: 8.1-8.79

March 3: 8.80-8.109

March 8: Conclusion