A few introductory (and cautionary) words

. . . from a philosopher, a scholar, and an historian:

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

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—and 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

The first requirement is that you read all assigned passages closely and before class. Close reading will be necessary to write good papers. Course grades will be determined by class participation (10% of your grade) and papers (totaling 90% of your grade).
Included in class participation is your responsibility to help lead class discussion on one day; the details of this responsibility will be explained by the instructor.

There are four options for the paper assignments:

- **Option 1:** A 20-22 page seminar paper (90%) due on Monday, June 4.

- **Option 2:** A 5-7 page interpretive paper (30%) to be presented in class and a 15 page seminar paper (60%) due on Monday, June 4. The interpretive paper would be presented in lieu of discussion questions.

- **Option 3:** Two 10 page papers (45% each), one due on Monday, April 30 (mid-term break), the other due on Monday, June 4.

- **Option 4:** Three 6-8 page papers (30% each). You may submit papers as early as you’d like but no later than the following deadlines: the first paper must be submitted by Friday, April 27, the second by the end of classes (May 30), the third by June 4.

Please let me know your choice by Monday, April 2.

All papers should be submitted electronically <lcooper@carleton.edu>, either as Word attachments or as PDF files. Papers submitted on June 4 should also be submitted as hard copies.

**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 may depart from it if and when class discussion so requires. Numbers refer to book and chapter, respectively: i.e., 4.23 means book four, chapter 23.

March 27: 1.1-1.11

March 29: 1.12-1.55

April 3: 1.56-1.123
April 5: 1.124-2.38
April 10: 2.39-2.59
April 12: No class
April 17: 2.60-3.36
April 19: 3.37-3.69
April 24: 3.70-4.22
April 26: 4.23-4.101
May 1: 4.101-5.24
May 3: 5.25-5.116
May 8: 6.1-6.61
May 10: 6.62-7.18
May 15: Review previous reading
May 17: 7.19-7.87
May 22: 8.1-8.79
May 24: 8.80-8.109
May 29: Conclusion