

Hauptseminar: Wicked Rulers and Just Governance

Term:	Summer 2017	Instructor:	Dr P. S. Langeslag
Time:	Thu 10–12	Office:	SEP 2.306
Room:	SEP 0.244	Phone:	0551/3919706
Credits:	6 (incl. lecture for some modules)	Office hours:	Wed 2–3 (term) / by appointment
Prerequisites:	one prior course on medieval English	E-mail:	planges@gwdg.de

Course Description

“Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.”
(Baron John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, 1887)

“The road to power is paved with hypocrisy, and casualties. Never regret.” (Frank Underwood, 2014)

In this course, students will engage with theories of governance alongside the literary reception of selected rulers of the premodern era. Our focus will be split between political philosophy from Plato to Machiavelli and biblical/medieval literature describing and assessing the reigns of such historical and legendary rulers as the Pharaoh of Exodus, Nebuchadnezzar II, Caligula, Nero, and Alfred. Coursework involves a modest amount of translation from Old English as well as an unmarked presentation in the lead-up to the final assessment (exam or term paper); the main emphasis of the homework will be on the reading and interpretation of texts made available in Modern English translations. Please pick up Tim Parks's translation of Machiavelli's *Prince* (Penguin, EUR 7.99) and read at least the introduction ahead of term.

Aims

Students will improve their knowledge of

- Premodern and early modern theories of governance
- Old Testament narrative and its medieval reception
- Premodern history and biography
- Old English language

Assessment

Students in the Basismodul have a choice of assessment: a final exam or a 5,000-word term paper. Students in the Aufbau-modul or Wissenschaftsmodul will write a 7,500-word term paper. Other forms of assessment may apply for students in other programmes; contact your instructor if you are not sure. The exam runs 90 minutes and includes open questions based on the lecture course (33% of assessment) as well as an essayistic examination of seminar material involving political philosophy and literature, with a subordinate role for language. All students are expected to give an in-class presentation or submit equivalent written work as an entry requirement into the assessment stage (see the Presentations handout for week one).

Paper Submission

Term papers are to be submitted via turnitin.com. All paper writers are required to create a Turnitin account and enroll for class ID 14684359 (password k%#f29lb) prior to starting their draft. Since Turnitin uses a plagiarism checker, signing up for the class on turnitin.com means agreeing to the use of a plagiarism checker.

**BECAUSE A PLAGIARISM REPORT IS FILED AUTOMATICALLY UPON SUBMISSION,
BE EXTREMELY DILIGENT TO CITE EACH OF YOUR SOURCES CORRECTLY.**

Lateness Policy

Essays are due by the end of Friday, 25 August 2017. They may be submitted up to seven days late without penalty. After the end of Friday, 1 September 2017 and on every third day thereafter, 0.3 points will automatically be subtracted for papers submitted past that point. The system is thus fully autonomous and an extension is already built in. Further extensions should not be requested except in demonstrable cases of medical impediment that render a student unable to write during the second half of August.

All students must sign up for their choice of examination in good time, including those writing term papers. Regulations do not allow instructors to submit grades for students who have not signed up in time.

Diversity Statement

This course is run with the understanding that students bring a variety of backgrounds into the classroom in such domains as socioeconomics, appearance, culture, religion, political views, disability, gender, age, family situation, and sexual identity. With different backgrounds come different needs. If you feel your needs or those of a fellow student require special attention or are being compromised, please feel free to make this known to me by whatever channel seems most appropriate. (For more serious concerns, the Department, Faculty, and University each have their own points of contact as well.) I will treat all requests seriously and with confidentiality, and will seek to make accommodations within my abilities and reason. At the same time, you too owe it to your fellow students to treat them with respect regardless of their background and identity. University should be awesome — for everyone.

Required Texts and Resources

Selections from the bibliography overleaf, including all mandatory readings except *The Prince*, will be made available on StudIP; no course reserves have been set up for this course. Students are asked to obtain a copy of Parks, *The Prince* (see bibliography below) at their earliest convenience.

Schedule

week	date	topic	reading	translation
1	13 Apr	The Problem with Power	Parks, <i>The Prince</i> , Introduction	
2	20 Apr	Power as Prime Motive	Parks, <i>The Prince</i>	
3	27 Apr	The Three Estates	Lee, <i>Republic</i> , “parts” 2, 4; Godden, “Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon Kingship”	Skeat, Ælfric’s <i>Oratores</i>
4	4 May	The Philosopher-King	Lee, <i>Republic</i> , excerpts from “part” 7; Sweet, <i>Pastoral Care</i> , Preface	
5	11 May	Tyranny and Madness I	Rolfe, <i>Suetonius</i> , “Caligula” chs. 22–60; Barrett, <i>Caligula</i> , Introduction	
6	18 May	Tyranny and Madness II	Rolfe, <i>Suetonius</i> , “Nero” chs. 33–38, 49–57; Irvine and Godden, <i>OE Boethius</i> , metre 9; Anlezark, <i>Daniel</i>	
7	25 May	ASCENSION DAY	NO CLASS	
8	1 June	Generosity and Leadership PAPER TOPICS DUE	Rives, <i>Tacitus: Germania</i> , §§ 7–14; Carruthers, “Kingship and Heroism”; Horowitz, “Beowulf”	Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, <i>Beowulf</i> , ll. 2631–60
9	8 June	READING WEEK	NO CLASS	
10	15 June	Safer to be Feared than Loved	Parks, <i>The Prince</i> , ch. 17; Coogan, <i>Bible</i> , 1 Samuel 8, 12–13, 15–16; Irvine and Godden, <i>OE Boethius</i> , metre 1; Anderson, “The Old Testament Homily”	
11	22 June	The Fox and the Lion	Parks, <i>The Prince</i> , ch. 18; Coogan, <i>Bible</i> , Exodus 7–14; Zacher, <i>Rewriting the Old Testament</i> , excerpts	
12	29 June	Just War Theory	Langan, “The Elements of St. Augustine’s Just War Theory”	Skeat, Ælfric’s <i>Maccabees</i> ll. 684–714
13	6 July	King Alfred	Irvine and Godden, <i>OE Boethius</i> , prose 9; Keynes and Lapidge, “Life of Alfred,” chs. 76–94	
14		Exam Revision		
15	20 July	EXAM (SEP 0.244, 10:00)		
	25 Aug	PAPERS DUE		

References and Further Reading

- Alston, Richard. *Aspects of Roman History, AD 14–117*. London: Routledge, 1998.
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- Beekman Taylor, Paul. “The Language of Sacral Kingship in *Beowulf*.” *Studia Neophilologica* 66 (1994): 129–145.
- Blackburn, Simon. *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Originally published as *Being Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Brawley, Robert L., ed. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Brennan, Malcolm M. “Hrothgar’s Government.” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 84, no. 1 (1985): 1–15.
- Carruthers, Leo. “Kingship and Heroism in *Beowulf*.” In *Heroes and Heroines in Medieval English Literature*, edited by Leo Carruthers, 19–29. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994.
- Chaney, William A. *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970.

- Coogan, Michael D., ed. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocrypha*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
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- Fulk, R. D., Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, eds. *Klaeber's "Beowulf" and "The Fight at Finnsburg"*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- Gagarin, Michael, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*. 7 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933–2016.
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- Klauck, Hans-Josef, Dale C. Allison, and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2009–.
- Langan, John. "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 12, no. 1 (1984): 19–38.
- Lapidge, Michael, John Blair, Simon Keynes, and Donald Scragg, eds. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*. 2nd ed. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.
- Lee, Desmond, trans. *Plato: The Republic*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 1987.
- Lintott, Andrew. *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1999.
- Liuzza, Roy, trans. *Beowulf*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2000.
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- Wilkinson, Sam. "Gaius and the Senate." In *Caligula*, 73–78. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Zacher, Samantha. *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse: Becoming the Chosen People*. New Directions in Religion and Literature. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.