

### Leo Strauss in his own Write

The motivating force for this course comes from what Socrates is reported by Xenophon to have said to Antiphon the Sophist about happiness: "The treasures that the wise men of old have left us in their writings I open and explore with my friends. If we come on any good thing, we extract it, and we set much store on being useful to one another." (*Memorabilia* 1.6.14.)

So, let us look at some of the writings of Leo Strauss (1899-1973) to see what he had to say about political philosophy and the doctrines that have posed challenges to its pursuit in the course of time. To be as faithful as possible to the idea of exploring these writings so as to be useful to one another, the course will function as a seminar with each participant being responsible for leading the discussion of at least one session. The best way to do that will be to present a very short critical analysis of the reading for that session or of a problem that seems to capture the main thrust of the reading, then to pose one or two questions for discussion.

### Reading Schedule

1. February 3            *On Tyranny*, Xenophon *Hiero* and Leo Strauss, "On Tyranny, pp. 1-21 and 22-65 plus notes.
2. February 10        *On Tyranny*, Leo Strauss "On Tyranny," pp. 66-105 plus notes.
3. February 24        *On Tyranny*, Alexandre Kojève "Tyranny and Wisdom," pp. 135-176.
4. March 3             *On Tyranny*, Leo Strauss "Restatement on Xenophon's *Hiero*, pp. 177-212.
5. March 10            "The Origin of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates: Six Public Lectures," in *Interpretation* 23/2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 127-164.
6. March 31            "The Origin of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates: Six Public Lectures," in *Interpretation* 23/2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 165-207.
7. April 7              "What is Political Philosophy?" in *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, pp. 9-55.
8. April 14             "Political Philosophy and History" and "On Classical Political Philosophy," in *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, pp. 56-77 and 78-94.
9. April 21             "Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 87-136.
10. April 28            "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 377-405.
11. May 5                "Exoteric Teaching" in *Interpretation* 14/1 (January, 1986), pp. 51-59 and "How to Study Medieval Philosophy" in *Interpretation* 23/3 (Spring, 1996), pp. 319-338.
12. May 12             "Existentialism" and "The Problem of Socrates," in *Interpretation* 22/3 (Spring, 1995), pp. 301-320 and 321-338.

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13. May 19

“Perspectives on the Good Society” and “Introductory Essay for Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*,” in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 431-445 and 267-282.

The particular readings may be found in the following books:

Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). 0-226-77713-8

Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny, Including the Strauss-Kojève Correspondence*, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (New York: The Free Press, 1991). ISBN 0-02-912735-1.

Leo Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997). ISBN 0-7914-2774-9.

*Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* (articles available in xerox).

**Recommended additional readings:**

“On Natural Law” in *Leo Strauss: Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, with an introduction, Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 137-146. ISBN 0-226-77700-6.

“Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy,” in *Leo Strauss: Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, pp. 29-37 also *Interpretation* 2/1 (1971).

“The Three Waves of Modernity,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays by Leo Strauss*, ed. with an introduction, Hilail Gildin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), pp. 81-98. ISBN 0-8143-1901-7.

“What is Liberal Education?” and “Liberal Education and Responsibility,” in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, pp. 311-345.

“Social Science and Humanism” and “Relativism” in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss, Essays and Lectures by Leo Strauss*, selected and introduced by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 1-26. ISBN 0-226-77715-4.

## Adjusted Reading Schedule

1. February 3 *On Tyranny*, Xenophon *Hiero* and Leo Strauss, "On Tyranny, pp. 1-21 and 22-65 plus notes.
2. February 10 *On Tyranny*, Leo Strauss "On Tyranny," pp. 66-105 plus notes.
3. March 3 *On Tyranny*, Alexandre Kojève "Tyranny and Wisdom," pp. 135-176.
4. March 10 *On Tyranny*, Leo Strauss "Restatement on Xenophon's *Hiero*, pp. 177-212.
5. March 31 "The Origin of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates: Six Public Lectures," in *Interpretation* 23/2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 127-164.
6. April 7 "The Origin of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates: Six Public Lectures," in *Interpretation* 23/2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 165-207.
7. April 14 "What is Political Philosophy?" in *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, pp. 9-55.
8. April 21 "Political Philosophy and History" and "On Classical Political Philosophy," in *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, pp. 56-77 and 78-94.
9. April 28 "Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 87-136.
10. May 5 "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 377-405.
11. May 12 "Exoteric Teaching" in *Interpretation* 14/1 (January, 1986), pp. 51-59; "How to Study Medieval Philosophy" in *Interpretation* 23/3 (Spring, 1996), pp. 319-338; and "Existentialism" in *Interpretation* 22/3 (Spring, 1995), pp. 301-320.
12. May 19 "The Problem of Socrates," in *Interpretation* 22/3 (Spring, 1995), pp. 321-338, plus "Perspectives on the Good Society" and "Introductory Essay for Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 431-445 and 267-282.