

Sex, Lies, and the Founding of the City

PHIL 3190 – Fall 2010

Dr. Gordon Hull

MW 11:00

Description: These days, we tend to take it for granted that all humans are fundamentally equal, that politicians should tell the truth, and that our political philosophy is based on reason. In this course, we will look at texts which take a considerably different view of these topics. Specifically, we will look at select medieval and renaissance treatments at the intersection of views of human nature, gender, the role of truth in politics, and the status of legitimating narratives in political philosophy.

Tentative outline: The course begins with reading from John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, to establish the contemporary framework. Then we will read significant sections from Plato's *Republic* (especially on the banishment of the poets, the value of noble lies, the view of an ideal city, and the myth of Er); Averroës's (Ibn Rushd) medieval "Decisive Treatise" (which discusses the role of philosophy and faith, and how to write philosophy that doesn't destroy faith) and selections from his commentary on Plato; Machiavelli's *Prince*; and selections from Hobbes on the status and role of philosophy. Supplemental readings may include sections from authors such as Livy and Lucretius.

Satisfies the history/genealogy elective requirement for the philosophy major.

