

Basic Definitions/"Household"

Standards: Idaho Content Standards, Grade 9-12, US History II, Civics and Government

- Standard 4; Goal 4.4 - build an understanding of the evolution of democracy
- Standard 4; Goal 4.5 - build an understanding of comparative government

Idaho Content Standards, Social Studies Concepts And Vocabulary Grades 6 - 9; World History And Civilization; Civics and Government

VOCABULARY TERMS

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| • city state (πόλις) | • democracy (δημος + κράτος) |
| • tyranny (τύραννος) | • monarchy |
| • republic | • oligarchy (ὀλιγαρχία) |

BIBLICAL Standards, God's Sovereignty

Topic: A general description of Greek political thought as seen through Aristotle's fourth century work, *Politics*. Furthermore, a comparison to American democratic philosophy in light of God's Word.

Statement of Purpose: Students will participate in class discussion/lecture using a Socratic Q/A method. The class is in a series of analyses of Aristotle's *Politics*.

Learning Objectives:

- In accordance with 6-9.WHC.4.4.2, the students will be able to analyze various political philosophies which shaped western civilization.
- In accordance with 6-12.USH1.4.4.1, the students will be able to describe roles of gender of individual/political rights, in contrast to ancient Greece's gender bias.

Schedule: (Material and Time)

- **Length of time:** 45-50 minutes
- **Introduction/Opening Question:** Begin with a "quiz" asking questions pertaining

Aristotle's "Politics" and Democracy

to the students' "inalienable rights" they probably take for granted (due to the Summer break, focus the questions on topics related to their vacation). Emphasize the three main categories of rights (life, liberty and property/the pursuit of happiness).

• Presentation/Discussion:

Challenge the "quiz" answers with how simple/easy we take these "rights" for granted.

Q - What gives you the "right" to demand what you have? Where did these "rights" originate? (both ultimately and humanistically)

[quote from the Declaration of Independence - "We hold these truths to be self-evident..."]

Pass out the handout with excerpts from Aristotle's Politics.

GENERAL INTRO INFO

Introduce the students to Aristotle and the Greek political situation in the 12th-6th Cbc (note that Aristotle wrote nearly 300 years after the establishment of the political arrangements he describes). Describe the Lyceum where Aristotle's discussions/speeches were probably written by pupils and compiled in the extant MSS - including *Politics*.

Q - Note the first excerpt on the handout - How are all communities aim for the good (include evil communities in the question - Kipselus of Corinth [650bc], Periander, even Stalin and Hitler)

Q - What was a πόλις? Why is "city-state" used to translate the πόλις?

Compare πόλις to Post Falls. Do we have anything like a πόλις in our culture today? [suggest that the church is actually a basic model that matches the πόλις]

Evaluate how Greek political thought influences our political ideas in the U.S.

What made Greece unique that motivated various political approaches?

Aubrey de Selincourt (1962) - "islands on dry land" - what does this mean?

CHART (indicate the various Constitutions in Aristotle's work) - define *democracy*.

Q - Repeat the question - how Greece influenced political ideas in the U.S.

ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS - 8 BOOKS DEALING WITH SPECIFIC CONCEPTS OF GOVERNMENT - BEGIN WITH THE "HOUSEHOLD" (specifically FATHERS/HUSBANDS)

Note the second excerpt in the handout.

Q - How are states made up of households? While SLAVERY is for another lesson, introduce the idea briefly at this point - how could a "democracy" have slaves? (interject, if no one else does, that the largest "democracy" in world history had slaves for nearly half of its history - USA) Aristotle suggests that slavery is just later in ch. 3.

Aristotle's "Politics" and Democracy

"...those human beings who are naturally suited to be ruled but are unwilling...is by nature just" (Chapter 3, Book II, 25)

Would ancient Greeks even ask the question? Why not? Why even have slavery?

Note Aristotle calls slaves "human beings" (ἄνθρωπος) - how is this different from slavery in the Antebellum USA? Were the "reasons" or justification for slavery the same for Aristotle's Greece and the Southern States?

Note the third excerpt in the handout.

Q - According to Aristotle, what is the "husband/father" position equal to in the *πολις*?

How is the male viewed in ancient Greece in relation to women and children; and how is Christ's perspective of the husband to the wife, father to the child contrasted? [NOTE Ephesians 5:22f; 6:4; Colossians 3:19, 21] How does the "lord" concept of the husband in Aristotle's Greece relate to Peter's notion concerning Abraham and Sarah (1 Peter 3:6,7)? How can a husband be "lord" and still treat his wife as a "weaker vessel"?

Q - The final question - what does it mean to be free in Christ (Ephesians 5:1f; Romans 7:25-8:1)? How do we, as Christian minded people, live in a "democracy" of secularists who often forget God in their decisions? What can we do to help the situation? Can we do anything?

This final question is to be left somewhat aporetic and open ended - assuming the class is apart of a series of lessons from *Politics* (and other philosophies, i.e. Plato's *Republic*), this question should be the final one in each session, building up until all the sections of Aristotle's work is explored (and compared with Christ's teachings).

IF TIME PERMITS - discuss briefly some of Aristotle's perspective on women and the contrast to the teachings of the Lord when it comes to women.

PART XIII

Clearly, then, moral virtue belongs to all of them; but the temperance of a man and of a woman, or the courage and justice of a man and of a woman, are not, as Socrates maintained, the same; the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. And this holds of all other virtues, as will be more clearly seen if we look at them in detail, for those who say generally that virtue consists in a good disposition of the soul, or in doing rightly, or the like, only deceive themselves. Far better than such definitions is their mode of speaking, who, like Gorgias, enumerate the virtues. All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes; as the poet says of women,

"Silence is a woman's glory,"

but this is not equally the glory of man.

Schedule: (continued)

• CONCLUSION

End the class with the question again - what inalienable rights do the students have that have been granted to them by their Creator that either came directly from the ancient Greek notions of politics (or what we learned to avoid)? More importantly, what does it mean to be a “democracy” in relation to our Eternal Monarch - how do we live under the “freedom of Christ” in His πόλις?

Encourage them to enjoy their summer - enjoy the freedoms our Greek-based heritage provides and remember where those ideas came from.

• **ASSESSMENT** - Classroom participation, for this setting, in the Q/A portion.

• REFERENCES

- Politics. Aristotle. (Benjamin Jowett's translation)
- Memory and the Mediterranean. Fernand Braudel. New York: First Vintage. 2001.
- <http://iep.utm.edu/aris-pol/>
- <http://www.humanities.mq.edu.au/Ockham/y6704.html>