Plato, according to Peter Euben, invented philosophy as an act of mourning. In this class we will examine the role that death plays in political theory, and the role that political theory plays in dealing with death. Using the Greeks as a theoretical framework, we will consider the politics of death and mourning in a time of terrorism, war, and natural disaster. Amongst other important questions, we will examine the many possible responses to death and their political implications; the critical resources that death provides for thinking about political problems; and the appropriate form of remembrance and mourning for a democratic society.

TWO SHORT RESPONSE PAPERS: (10% each) These papers (4-5 pages) are to be reactions to the readings. They should not be simple summaries, but rather a critical evaluation or extended critical response to the claims made there. Such pieces should frame the topics for discussion in that week’s class. The aim is to be discursive, possibly provocative, and engaged with the text, or a particular issue raised by it. **Short Response Papers are to be submitted to me by e-mail by Midnight on the Monday before Class.**

PARTICIPATION: (10%) This is a seminar. Let’s be engaged, and respectful of others. Seminars only work if we talk. The discussion shouldn’t go through me. Let’s try to avoid the raising of hands to make points and just talk. Pay attention to others, see if they want to speak, cede the floor if you think it’s appropriate, don’t if you don’t. Ask questions, disagree, but do so respectfully.

PAPER PRESENTATION: (10%). In the last class of the semester (May 4), you will be expected to give a ten minute presentation on the subject matter of your final paper. This presentation should explain the problem or issue that you are addressing, identify the literature you are using to address it, and discuss your thesis or hypothesis.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: (60%) This paper (approximately 20-25 pages) is to be a more developed version of the short response paper. This does not mean that you have to write about the same thinker or problem as you did in a response paper (although you are not precluded from doing so either). Such a paper could be a detailed reading of a specific text or problem; an attempt to trace the development of an idea or approach across a number of texts; or it could be a theoretical approach to a contemporary problem informed by one or more of the class-readings. You should be thinking about your final paper as the class progresses. **You must meet with me to discuss your final topic.**

READINGS: All the books should be in the bookstore. There will be a reader available at the library copy center. I will provide the additional readings marked with an *.

ADDITIONAL CONTACT HOURS: The Government Department requires a number of ‘additional contact hours’ for its 400 level seminars. These will be met with the showing of a movies and scheduled discussions about your research papers.
ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS: Students are required to keep copies of all their assignments for this class until the final grades have been awarded.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students are reminded of the Honor Code regulations concerning academic honesty and plagiarism. Students found to have plagiarized or otherwise engaged in acts of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council and receive a grade of F for the class.

Week 1, January 27: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chp. 2*
John Seery, *American Goes to College*, Chp. 1*

**PART I: DEATH, TRAGEDY, AND CRITICAL THOUGHT**

Week 2, February 2: Simon Goldhill, “The Question of Tragedy”
Simon Goldhill, “The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology”
Sophocles, *Antigone* *

Thucydides, ‘Pericles’ Funeral Oration.’ ‘The Plague of Athens’
Plato, *Menexenus* *

Week 4, February 16: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* *
Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”
Nicole Loraux, “The Páthos of a Mother,” “Black Wrath,” “Measures Against Feminine Excess”

FILM: “Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred Leuchter, Jr.” (1999)
Screening to be arranged.

**PART II: DEATH IN AMERICA**

Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering. Death and the American Civil War.*

Week 7, March 10: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK.

Week 8, March 17: Karla C. Holloway, *Passed On. African American Mourning Stories*
Max Cavitch, “Mourning of the Disprized: African Americans and Elegy from Wheatley to Lincoln”
Frederick Douglass, “Speech at the Unveiling of the Freedman’s Monument”
David Blight, “‘For Something beyond the Battlefield’: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War”

Week 9, March 24: Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*.

Week 10, March 31: Edward Linenthal, *Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory.*
    Nicole Loraux, “Of Amnesty and its Opposite”

    Steven Johnston, “Patriotism and Death.”
    Edward Gorer, “The Pornography of Death”
    MUSIC VIDEO: Darryl Worley, “Have You Forgotten?”

Week 12, April 21: Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming.*

Week 13, April 14: Simon Stow, “Pericles at Gettysburg and Ground Zero: Tragedy, Patriotism, and Public Mourning”*
    Simon Stow, “Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans? George W. Bush, the Jazz Funeral, and the Politics of Memory”*

Week 14, April 28: In class presentations.

**Final Papers Due: 5pm Wednesday, May 6.**

The instructor reserves the right to alter the course syllabus.