

### 17.03. Introduction to Political Thought

#### Lecture Outline: Aristotle's *Politics* Bk 5 (ch 1-5, 8), Bk 6 (ch 1-5), Bk 7 (entire)

##### I. Revolutions (Book 5)

- A. "State of mind" of revolutionaries: not just interests but feeling of injustice
- B. Causes
  - 1. desire for gain and honor
  - 2. insolence/arrogance
  - 3. preeminence/superiority
  - 4. fear
  - 5. contempt
  - 6. disproportionate increase in any part of state
  - 7. difference of races
  - 8. neglect of small things
- C. Means
- D. Why democracy more stable than oligarchy

##### II. Preserving regimes

- A. Regimes should be concerned with
  - 1. Stability
  - 2. Justice
  - 3. Virtue
- B. Some reforms
  - 1. Foster spirit of obedience to law
  - 2. Treat others in a spirit of equality
  - 3. Unite people against a common enemy
  - 4. Prevent tyrants from emerging by avoiding excessive honors
  - 5. Keep money out of politics

##### III. Democracy (Book 6)

- A. Based on liberty and equality
- B. Institutions of democracy
- C. Difficulty of knowing what is just and equal in theory

##### IV. Best regime (Book 7)

- A. First inquire into the best life
  - 1. Types of goods necessary for the best life
  - 2. Contemplative/philosophical life v. active/political life
- B. Objections to political life as morally compromising
  - 1. Justice requires the use of force
  - 2. Danger of imperialism
- C. Conditions of the best regime ("nothing impossible")
- D. Training men to become good and excellent (nature, habit, reason)