Thesis Prospectus Thucydides and Machiavelli on Necessity

Research Plan

My preparations for writing my thesis will begin with my reading the secondary literature that I have listed in my annotated bibliography, which I will begin doing over the summer. I will read over that literature closely, paying particular attention to the following works: *Thucydides & the Pursuit of Freedom* by Mary P. Nichols, *The Humanity of Thucydides* by Clifford Orwin, and *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict*, which was edited by David Johnston, Nadia Urbinati, and Camila Vergara. These works specifically deal with the problem of necessity in the thought of Thucydides and Machiavelli, which will help me in my endeavor to both understand their views on this theme individually and, by extension, in comparison with each other. I will also carefully read the three articles that I have included in my annotated bibliography that specifically consider both the thought of Thucydides and the thought of Machiavelli: Steven Forde's "Varieties of Realism: Thucydides and Machiavelli," David James' "The Concept of Practical Necessity from Thucydides to Marx," and Michael Palmer's "Machiavellian virtù and Thucydidean aret : Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides." While studying this secondary literature, I will take notes to help me write my thesis. My goal is to have read all of the relevant secondary literature by the beginning of the fall semester.

Following my reading of the important secondary literature that grapples with the views that Thucydides and Machiavelli hold on necessity, I will read and, in some cases, reread Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and relevant passages from the *Discourses on Livy*. I will think about how the material from the secondary literature relates to the primary literature and how I can incorporate the material into my thesis. I desire to have examined all of the relevant primary literature by the end of September.

After having read the primary and the secondary literature, I will outline my thesis, although I will most likely have begun this process while reading the primary literature. I propose to write four chapters for my thesis. The first will be an introduction to the concept of necessity in the thought of Thucydides and Machiavelli and why it is important. The second chapter will be a more thorough analysis of Thucydides' views regarding necessity. The third chapter will do the same except, instead of considering Thucydides' ideas on necessity, I will examine Machiavelli's. The fourth chapter will be a comparison between the positions that Thucydides and Machiavelli hold on necessity. This comparison will shed light on the foundations for the similarities and differences

Moreover, I am motivated to further my studies in Thucydides and Machiavelli, especially with respect to the theme of necessity in their work. This is because their views of necessity question the extent to which moral

Secondary Sources on Machiavelli:

Howes, Dustin Ells. "Creating Necessity: Well-Used Violence in the Thought of Machiavelli." *symplok* 20, nos. 1-2 (2012): 183-207.

In this article, Howes provides an interpretation of Machiavelli's understanding of necessity. Howes says that, "Since one person's freedom of action is another person's necessity, his [Machiavelli's] analysis undermines the idea that violence is necessary after all. Machiavelli shows us that 'necessity' in politics, military and otherwise, is u (.)18.4t2-9.7u(d)-30.1 (a)-25.6 (l)-9.7 (l)-40.1y ( )-30.7 (m)5.4y ad430.8 ( )-30.8by u (.)18 unos20.7 (.)-7.4 (")

In this source, Quentin Skinner, one of the most influential members of the Cambridge School, grapples with key Machiavellian ideas such as virtue, fortune, liberty, and necessity. I will use this text as a means to inform myself on Skinner's interpretation of necessity and its counterpart, liberty, in Machiavelli's thought.

Strauss, Leo. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Strauss' *Thoughts on Machiavelli* offers a famous, albeit extremely perplexing, interpretation of Machiavelli's intention and teaching in *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy*. Strauss says, at the beginning of his work, that he is, "inclined to the old-fashioned and simple opinion according to which Machiavelli was a teacher of evil" and that Machiavelli, "is more concerned with the salvation of his fatherland than with the salvation of his soul." I will use this work to educate myself on one of the most influential interpretations of Machiavelli, which will have implications for his views on necessity.

Zuckert, Catherine. *Machiavelli's Politics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

This source is a study of all of Machiavelli's works. It will be useful for me as a reference work that provides a systematic treatment of Machiavelli's thought. Hence, when I need to understand how an idea in Machiavelli relates to the rest of his thought, this book will be beneficial for me to consult.

Secondary Sources on Thucydides and Machiavelli:
Ahrensdorf, Peter and Thomas Pangle. *Justice Among Nations: On the Moral Basis of Power and Peace*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999.

This book contains chapters entitled "Classical Realism: Thucydides" and "Modern Realism: Machiavelli and His Successors." Since my thesis deals with Thucydides and Machiavelli on the concept of necessity, a key component in realist thought, this book will be useful for my project.

Cropsey, Joseph and Leo Strauss, ed. *History of Political Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

This source is a collection of articles written by scholars on numerous figures in the tradition of political philosophy. It contains an article on Thucydides by David Bolotin and an article on Machiavelli by Leo Strauss. I will use these two articles to inform myself on important interpretations of Thucydides and Machiavelli, which will assist me in coming to my own views on the positions that they hold on necessity.

Machiavelli. Therefore, it will be useful for my understanding of how the concept of necessity found in Thucydides compares to the understanding of necessity found in Machiavelli.

Palmer, Michael. "Machiavellian virtù and Thucydidean aret : Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides." *The Review of Politics* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1989): 365-385.

This article juxtaposes the ideas regarding "virtue" in the thought of Thucydides and Machiavelli. However, Palmer argues that Thucydides' concept of virtue differs from that of Machiavelli. This source will be useful for