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PSC 150E.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSC 150E
Fall 1999
MWF 12:10-1

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Introduction to Political Theory

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 150E) familiarizes students with the basic concepts and issues which preoccupy the political theorist, including the origins of government and society, the nature of justice, and the meaning of the "public" and the "private." We will begin by considering the tension between politics and philosophy and continue with an examination of the major ideologies—liberalism, conservatism, Marxism, feminism etc.— that have shaped our modern political dialogues. We will conclude the course with the "end of ideology" debate.

At the outset, let us consider some basic questions about the relationship between political philosophy and ideology. First, is there a political theory that is not an ideology, or a theorist that is not an ideologue? If ideology is not the same as political philosophy, nor as good (as Plato suggests), then how does one avoid being labeled an ideologue? Lastly, what does it mean to you when someone says that "today it is no longer possible to construct a genuine political philosophy"?

Course Objectives: upon successfully completing the course work, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the political and ethical values associated with Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, Bentham, J.S. Mill, Burke, and Marx.
2. Identify major themes and ideas associated with the ideologies of utopianism, classical and reform liberalism, utilitarianism, conservatism, Marxism, feminism as well as contemporary variations such as neo-Marxism and post-modern feminism.
3. Provide an interpretative, critical essay on a feminist utopian novel, *Herland*, examining to what extent the author borrows, satirizes, and/or negates the ideas of western political thinkers, including Plato and Aristotle. (See attached Paper Guidelines)

Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*
Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle*
Agonito, *History of Ideas on Women*
Gilman, *Herland*
Fac Packet, Masc. readings

*In addition, short articles will be placed on reserved in the library.

Grading:

The work of the course consists of reading all assignments, attending lectures —students who ask questions usually have good lecture notes, completing the **two-part midterm** (30% of course grade), the final (35% of course grade.) In addition, each student must complete on time a critical analysis of Gilman's *Herland* (35% of course grade.)** Please see attached for instructions on the Gilman essay.

** Cautionary Note: Late papers will not be accepted & no exceptions will be granted.

Course Schedule:

- 8/30 Introduction to the Course
Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Book I
- 9/1 Philosophy vs. Politics
Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Book II
- 9/3 Plato & Ideology as the Enemy of Philosophy
Read: *The Republic*, Books III & IV
- 9/6 *Labor Day- No Class*
- 9/8 Plato's Organic Theory of the State
Read: *The Republic*, Book V
- 9/10- Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wives,
9/13 Children & Property
Read: *The Republic*, Book VI
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* ; Charles Fourier, *Social Organization*
- 9/13 Possibility of the Ideal State: the Cave Allegory
Read: *The Republic*, Book VII
- 9/15- Decline of the Ideal State
9/17 Read: *The Republic*, Books VIII & IX
- 9/17 Plato & Aristotle
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II (Chaps. 1-8)
- * 9/20 Aristotle: Politics As Science
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I

* Last day to drop course by Dial-Bear.

- 9/22 Review & Discussion of Plato
- * * * *
September 24th Midterm Part I: *Plato's Republic* * * * *
- 9/27 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
 9/29 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III (Chaps 6-18)
- 9/29- Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
 10/1 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV (Chaps 1-13)
- 10/4 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (Chaps 5-12)
- 10/6 Review & Discuss Aristotle
- * * *
October 8th Midterm Part II: Aristotle's Politics * * * *
- 10/11 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke on Maternity, Paternity &
 Social Contract Theory
Read: Packet selection from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Locke's *Toleration and Government* ; Agonito, pp. 97-113
- 10/13 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution:
Read: Packet selections from Locke's *Two Treatises*
- 10/15 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: Packet selections from Locke's *Two Treatises*
- 10/15- Classical Liberalism: Smith, Sumner & "the Automatic Social
 10/20 Mechanism"
Read: Packet selections from Smith & Sumner
- ++Start reading Gilman's *Herland*— if you have not already done so.**
- 10/22- John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism
 10/25 Read: Packet selections from J.S. Mill's *Democratic Participation; Liberty & the Individual*
- 10/27 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: Packet selection from T.H. Green's *Liberalism & Positive Freedom*
- 10/27- Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
 11/1 Read: Packet selections on Burke, Wordsworth, Oakeshott

- 11/3-11/5 Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
Read: Packet selection on Engles' *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*; Agonito, pp. 273-288
- 11/8 Marxism & the "Automatic Historical & Scientific Mechanism"
Read: Packet selection from Marx & Engles' *The Communist Manifesto*
- 11/10-11/15 Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
Read: Packet selections from Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On Reserve); Packet selection from Lenin's *Imperialism* etc., and Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*
- 11/15 "Conservative" Feminism
Read: Agonito, pp. 19-22; 43-54; 57-96; 191-206; 265-269.
- 11/ 17-11/19 Feminism: Liberal, Socialist, Radical Feminism
Read: Agonito, pp. 147-158; 225-263; 343-360; 337-385; 397-402
- 11/22 Herland essay Due/Feminism: A Hybrid Political Theory?-- Discussion
- * * * * **Thanksgiving Break Nov. 24th - 28th * * ***
- 11/29 Lenin, Stalin & Totalitarianism
- 12/1 Fascism
Read: Packet selections from Mussolini, Hitler
- 12/3 Marxist Humanism
Agonito, pp. 389-393
- 12/6-12/8 End of Ideology Debate
Read: Packet selection from Fukuyama's *End of History*
- 12/10 Review/Questions for Final--*Thursday, December 16th, 8 a.m. -10 a.m.*

Guidelines for Essay:
"Herland: Our land?"
(35% of course grade)

I. Content

A. Description & Thesis (10% of essay value)

We do not want more than a cursory attempt at describing the content of Gilman's *Herland*. Assume that the reader is familiar with the plot of the book. (No more than one paragraph.)

B. Analysis (50% of essay value)

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the ideas that Gilman draws upon in terms of the ideologies covered in the class. Can you identify radical, conservative, and/or liberal ideas in her model community? (i.e. what extend does Gilman borrow from Plato's notion of justice?)

What are her underlying assumptions about human nature, "male" & "female" natures? Is there a class, caste, or elites in this society? What is the role of their political leaders (what legitimizes their authority). Does this utopia dispense with state coercive power? Explain. What is the character of their economic system and the nature of social relationships in Gilman's utopia? What is the value system of the "Herlander" society? Consider, for instance, the political socialization process of the women: what they are taught, if anything, regarding gender roles, history, community etc.

Lastly, what are the sources of Jeff, Van, and/or Terry's discontent in Herland? Why does Gilman introduce these male figures? Are they merely foils to show female superiority?

C. Conclusion: (40% essay value)

Is Gilman a genuine feminist? Why, why not? Finally, does Gilman's brand of *feminism* offer us a unique contribution to political philosophy or is it merely a hybrid political theory? Explain

D. Planning

Parts B & C should comprise the major parts of your paper. In other words, do not spend 2 1/2 pages on analysis and 1/2 page on your

conclusion. We are looking for your ability to come to logical conclusions.

II. Style

A. Format

Paper should be typed, double-spaced in 10 or 12 pt. font, and must be between 5-6 pages. Please provide 1 inch margins. Be sure to edit and proof final copy. Points will be deducted for grammatical and spelling errors.

B. Additional Reading

You may wish to do some additional reading to substantiate your positions for parts IB and IC. However, this is not necessary. You will probably do just as well by attending class lectures regularly, taking good notes, and reading the *assigned* material.

C. Quotations

All quotations or paraphrasing in your work from any material must be enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited as to their origin. (See any writing manual for a consistent format.)

D. Bibliography

You should include a complete bibliography of all outside books used for this paper.