

1-2013

PSCI 250E.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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**University of Montana
Department of Political Science**

**PSC 250E
Spring 2013
MWF 9:10-10**

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Introduction to Political Theory

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 250) familiarizes students with the basic concepts and issues that preoccupy the political theorist, including the origins of government and society, the nature of justice, and the meaning of political legitimacy. We will begin by considering the tension between politics and moral philosophy and continue with an examination of the major political thinkers from Plato to Marx, who have influenced the way we think about human nature, justice, the good life, government, freedom, citizenship, etc. We will conclude with the "end of political theory" 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 or as good (as Plato suggests), then how does one avoid being labeled an ideologue? Lastly, what does it mean to you when someone says: "today it is no longer possible to construct a genuine political philosophy"?

Texts:

R. Grey (editor) *Political Theory & the Human Predicament: An Introduction to Major Political Thinkers*, San Diego: Cognella Publishing, 2013 (ISBN 978-1-62131-524-7)

C.P. Gilman, Herland

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 classical and modern thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Burke and Marx.
2. Identify major themes and ideas associated with the ideologies of utopianism, classical and reform liberalism, utilitarianism, conservatism, feminism, Marxism, as well as contemporary variations such as neo-Marxism.
3. Provide an interpretative, critical essay on a utopian novel, examining how the ethical ideas of Plato are embraced, perverted and/or negated. (See attached Paper Guidelines)

Grading:

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

* Late papers will receive a grade reduction for every day it's late.

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult <http://www.umt.edu/disability>

Tentative Course Schedule:

- 1/28 Introduction to the Course
Read: Chapter I, Plato, *The Apology* (pp1-19)
- 1/30- Who is the just individual?
2/1 Read: Chapter II: Plato, *The Republic*, Books I- II (pp 21-39)
- 2/4- Plato's Organic Theory of the State
2/6 Read: Chapter 2: Plato, *The Republic*, Books II-IV (pp 40-51)
- 2/8- Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wives
2/11 Children, and Property
Read: Chapter 2: Plato, *The Republic*, Book III, V, VII (pp 51-73)
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*
- 2/13- Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories (pp 73-82)
2/15 Read: Chapter II, Plato, *The Republic*, Book VI, VII

***** **February 18th Monday, President's Day Holiday. . .no class** *****

- 2/20 Decline of the Ideal State
Read: Chapter 2, Plato, *The Republic*, Books VIII (pp 82-90)
- 2/22 Plato v. Aristotle
Read: Chapter 2: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II (pp 101-108)
- 2/25 Review & Discussion of Plato

***** **Wednesday, February 27th *****Midterm Part I: Plato's *Republic*** *****

- 3/1 Aristotle: Politics As Science
Read: Chapter 2: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I (pp 91-94)
- 3/4 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
Read: Chapter 2: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I (pp 94-101); Book III (pp 108-113)
- 3/6 Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
Read: Chapter 2: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV (pp 113-121); Book IV (pp 121-123); Book III (pp 123-126); Book IV (pp 126-133)
- 3/8- Aristotle on Revolution
3/11 Read: Chapter 2: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (pp 133-142)

++Reading Gilman, *Herland*

- 3/13 Review & Discuss Aristotle

***** **March 15th Friday, Midterm Part II: Aristotle's *Politics*** *****

- 3/18- Machiavelli: Political Realist or Idealist?
3/20 Read: Chapter 4: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (pp 145-159)
- 3/22 Essay Discussion of Herland

3/25 Hobbes, Locke: the State of Nature & Social Contract Theory
Read: Chapter 5: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (pp 161-184); Chapter 6: Locke, *Two Treatises on Government* (pp185-191; 196-206)

3/27 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
Read: Chapter 6: Locke, *Two Treatises*, (pp 206-217)

3/29 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: Chapter 6: Locke, *Two Treatises*, (pp 191-196)

********Herland Paper Due Friday March 29th********

***** **March 30th - April 7th Spring Break*******

4/8 Classical Liberalism: Hume, Smith & "the Automatic Social
 Mechanism" of the Free Market
Read: Chapter 7: Hume & Smith, (pp 219-247)

4/10 Rousseau & the General Will
Read: Chapter 8: Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (pp 249-256)

4/12- Utilitarianism: Bentham, James Mill & John Stuart Mill
4/15 Read: Chapter 11: Bentham, *Principles of Morals* (pp 293-312); Chapter 12: J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (pp 313-341)

4/17- Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
4/19 Read: Chapter 9: Burke, *Reflections*, (pp 257-277)

4/22 Conservative Anti-Feminist Thought
Read: Chapter 3: Aristotle, *History of Animals*, Book IX, (pp 142-144)

4/24 Feminist Political Theory: Mary Wollstonecraft & J.S. Mill
Read: Chapter 10: Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication* (pp 279-291); J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, (pp 342-358)

4/26- Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
4/29 Read: Chapter 13: Marx, *Economic & Philosophical Manuscript* (pp 359-365); *The Communist Manifesto* (pp 365-378)

5/1 Marx & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution
Read: Chapter 13: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (pp 379-393)

5/3- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
5/6 Recommend: Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*; Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, selections from Lenin's *Imperialism*;

5/8 End of Political Philosophy?
Recommend: Bell, *The End of Ideology* & Fukuyama, *End of History*

5/10 Review for Comprehensive Final
Read: Lecture notes & review selected readings.

***** **Final is Friday May 17th at 10:10 am-12pm*******

Guidelines for Essay

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

I. Purpose

A. Objective: Provide an **analytical essay** comparing and contrasting the ideas/themes found in *Herland* with the political theories we have covered in the course. An interpretive essay is not a book review or an editorial. A critical essay supports its analysis with direct references to the novel, showing the extent Gilman borrows, satirizes, and/or negates the ideas of other western political thinkers.

II. 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 (70% 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, for instance, identify radical, conservative, and/or liberal ideas in her model community? (i.e. what extend does Gilman borrow from Plato's notion of justice?)

Or you *might* examine 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.

What are the sources of Jeff, Van, and/or Terry's discontent in *Herland*? Why does Gilman introduce these male figures? Do these characters correspond to any thinkers examined in this course? Why, why not?

C. Conclusion: (20% essay value)

Finally, does Gilman's brand of *feminism* offer us a unique contribution to political philosophy or is it merely a hybrid political theory? Explain

B. 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 a writing manual for consistent format. **Plagiarism**: *Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own* is a violation of the university code of conduct and will result in a grade of F on the paper, please see: <http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/documents/StudentConductCode>

C. Bibliography

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

D. Editing:

Be sure to edit and proof your final copy! Points will be deducted for grammatical and spelling errors.

Please attach grading sheet (next page)

Please Attach To Your Paper
PSC250E: Introduction to Political Theory
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Description & Thesis – 10% (3.5 points)

- Clear and coherent thesis statement
- Relevant to materials presented in lectures and throughout course materials

Analysis – 55% (20 points)

- Strong supporting evidence of the thesis
- Relevant information is clearly presented
- Fully developed arguments
- Credit is given to outside sources, where appropriate

Conclusion — 30% (7.5 points)

- Conclusion: a clear restatement of the answer to the central question

Format, Mechanics & Bibliography 5% (4 pts)

- Format: 5-6 typed, double-spaced pages, 10-12 point font
- Grammar: Neatness, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and organization
- Bibliography: Follows Chicago/Turabian citation style guidelines

TOTAL (35 points)

Additional Comments:
