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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 2008

MWF 11:10-12pm

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Wed 12-1. LA 353

Introduction to Political Theory

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 150) 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 political philosophies— liberalism, conservatism, Marxism, feminism etc.— that have shaped our modern political discourse. We will conclude with the "end of ideology" debate. In other words, what does it mean to you when someone says that "today it is no longer possible to construct a genuine political philosophy"?

Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*

Aristotle, *Politics*

Huxley, *Brave New World*

Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

FAC PAC #A: Western Political Theory; FAC PAC #B Political Ideas on Women

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 dystopian novel, examining how the ethical ideas of western political thinkers, including Plato, are satirized and/or negated. (See attached Paper Guidelines)

Grading:

The work of the course consists of reading all assignments, attending lectures, completing the scheduled ***two-part midterm*** (30% of course grade), and the ***final*** (35% of course grade.) In addition, each student must complete on time a ***critical essay*** of Huxley's *Brave New World* (35% of course grade.) Attendance will not be taken, but students who regularly attend class and ask questions usually have good lecture notes. Please see attached for instructions on the Huxley paper.

- Making up midterms, the final and later paper policy: Students must have a doctor's note, funeral notice, or letter from a coach to make up the midterms and final. Late Huxley papers will receive a grade reduction for every day it's late.
- Please see me and UM catalog p. 21 for criteria on Incomplete Grades.

Course Schedule:

8/25 Introduction to the Course
Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Book I & II

8/27- Plato's Indictment
8/29 Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Books III & IV

* * * * * Labor Day September 1st No Class * * * * *

9/3 Plato's Organic Theory of the State
Read: *The Republic*, Book V

9/5 Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wives, Children, and Property
Read: *The Republic*, Book VI
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* ; Charles Fourier, *Social Organization*

9/8- Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories
9/10 Read: *The Republic*, Book VII

9/12 Decline of the Ideal State
Read: *The Republic*, Books VIII & IX

9/15 Plato v. Aristotle
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II

9/17 Aristotle: Politics As Science

9/19 Review & Discussion of Plato

******* Monday, September 22nd Midterm Part I: Plato's *Republic* *******

- 9/24 Aristotle: Politics As Science Cont.
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I
- 9/26 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III
- 9/29-10/1 Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV
- 10/3-10/6 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V
- 10/8 Classical Liberalism: Introduction
- 10/10 Review & Discuss Aristotle

******* Monday, October 13th Midterm Part II: Aristotle's *Politics* *******

- 10/15 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke on Maternity, Paternity, & Social Contract Theory
Read: FAC PAC vol. A section from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*; FAC PAC vol. B, selections from Hobbes' "Maternity & the Origins of Political Power" & Locke's "Maternity, Paternity, and the Origins of Political Power."
- 10/17 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*
- 10/20-10/22 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke

++Start reading Huxley *Brave New World*.

- 10/24 Classical Liberalism: Smith & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Smith
- 10/27-10/29 Utilitarianism & John Stuart Mill
Read: FAC PAC vol. A, selections from J.S. Mill's *Democratic Participation; Liberty & the Individual*

- 10/31 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from T.H. Green
- 11/3 Liberal Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from Wollstonecraft, J.S. Mill, De Beauvoir, Friedan
- 11/5-11/7 Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
Read: FAC PAC vol. A., selections from Burke, Wordsworth, Oakeshott
- 11/10 Conservative Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from Aristotle, Pluarch, Augustine, Aquinas
- 11/12-11/14 Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Engels' *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*
- 11/17 If we are on schedule, then TAs will lead class discussion on the Huxley essay.**

******* Wednesday November 19th Huxley Essay Due *******

- 11/19 Radicalism: Marxism & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selection from Marx's & Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*
- 11/21-11/24 Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*;
 *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg; *George V. Plekhanov

******* November 26-30 Thanksgiving Break *******

- 12/1 Neo-Marxism: Lenin,
Read: FAC PAC vol., A selections from Lenin's *Imperialism*;
- 12/1-12/3 End of Ideology Debate
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Fukuyama's *End of History*
- 12/5 Review/Questions for Final

******* Final Friday, 8am-10am December 12th *******

Guidelines for Essay

"Brave New World: Politics & Society in the Year 2008?" (35% of course grade: see attached sheet)

Format: Essay should comprise **5-6** typed, double-spaced pages; please use 12-10 pt. font.

I. Purpose

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

II. Content

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

Do not provide more than a cursory description of the content of Huxley's *Brave New World*. Assume that the reader is familiar with the plot of the book. (No more than one paragraph.) Provide clear thesis, indicated with themes, thinkers, works will be used for analysis.

B. Analysis (55% of essay value)

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the *ideas* that Huxley draws upon in terms of ideologies covered in class. Can you identify radical, conservative, and/or liberal ideas in his model community? (To what degree does Huxley mock Plato's notion of justice?)

Also consider: What are the underlying assumptions about human nature? What is the role of the state? And what role does political ideology (Fordism?) play in Huxley's novel? What is the value system of the society? (Look at, for instance, the education system of the different classes: what are they taught, if anything, regarding the party doctrine, slogans, and history?)* What are the sources of discontent among the inhabitants? (* These questions are only a suggested list to help you get started, but do not feel confined to only them.)

C. Conclusion: (30% of essay value)

Does Huxley convince the reader that this dystopia is possible or inevitable? Do you see things in our present society that might lead to Huxley's *Brave New World*? And if not, why not?

D. Planning

Provide space for the summary at the end. In other words, do not spend 4 1/2 pages on analysis and 1/2 page on your conclusion. I am looking for your ability to come to logical conclusions and provide analysis.

II. Style (5% of essay value)

A. Additional Reading

You may want to do some additional reading to substantiate your positions for parts IB and IC. However, this is not necessary. You will probably be better served by reviewing lecture and discussion notes, not to mention reading Skinner's work carefully.

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.)

C. Bibliography

You should include a complete bibliography for all outside books used for this paper (including webpages). Please avoid citing Wikipedia or giving the reader dictionary definitions.

D. Editing:

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

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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:
