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PSC 150E.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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University of Montana
Department of Political Science
PSC 150E -- Introduction to Political Theory
Fall Semester 2005

MWF 1:10 - 2pm
Gallagher Business Building 106

Professor Melanie Brock
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Teaching Assistant: Julianna Crowley **Contact:** julianna.crowley@umontana.edu
TA Office Hours in Corbin Hall -- T/TH: 12:30 - 2pm

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 150) 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 *public* and *private*.

We begin by considering the tension between politics and philosophy and continue with an examination of the major political philosophies - liberalism, conservatism, Marxism, feminism and 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: "today it is no longer possible to construct a genuine political philosophy?"

Required Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*

Aristotle, *Politics*

C.P. Gilman, *Herland*

FAC PAC A: Western Political Theory

FAC PAC B: Political Ideas on Women

Course Objectives: upon successfully completing the course work, students 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 utopian novel, examining how the ethical ideas of western political thinkers, including Plato, are satirized and/or negated. (See 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 exam** (35% of course grade). In addition, each student must complete on time a **critical essay** on C.P. Gilman's, *Herland* (35% of grade).

Attendance will not be taken, but students who regularly attend class, ask questions, and take notes will do better on the exams. I also suggest students visit with the TA as often as needed.

Plus/Minus Grading will be based on the Political Science Department's Scale:

100-93=**A**; 92-90=**A-**; 89-87=**B+**; 86-83=**B**; 82-80=**B-**; 79-77=**C+**; 76-73=**C**; 72-70=**C-**;
69-67=**D+**; 66-63=**D**; 62-60=**D-**; F=59 and lower

Exam Make-ups/Late Paper Policy: Students must have a doctor's note, funeral notice, or letter from a coach in order to reschedule a midterm or final. Late papers receive a grade letter reduction for every day the paper is late.

If a student elects to take the course as a "Pass or No Pass," he or she should be aware that a total of 65 points or lower will result in a no pass grade. Please see the UM academic catalog for criteria on Incomplete Grades and Academic Honesty.

Course Schedule and Assignments:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Aug. 29 | Course Introduction
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books I&II |
| Aug. 31 &
Sept. 2 | Plato's Indictment
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books III&IV |
| Sept. 5 | No class, enjoy Labor Day |
| Sept. 7 | Plato's Organic Theory of the State
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Book V |
| Sept. 9 | Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice -
A Community of Wives, Children & Property
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Book VI |
| Sept. 12 &
Sept. 14 | Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book VII |
| Sept. 16 | Decline of the Ideal State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books VIII & IX |

- Sept. 19 Plato v. Aristotle ***Last Day to Drop/Add Course***
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book II
- Sept. 21 Review and Discussion of Plato
 Sept. 23 *****Midterm Part I: Plato's *Republic******
 Bring a Blue Book to class for exam
- Sept. 26 Aristotle: Politics as Science
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I
- Sept. 28 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III
- Sept. 30 & Aristotle's Classifications of Constitutions
 Oct. 3 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV
- Oct. 5 & Aristotle on Revolution
 Oct. 7 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V
- Oct. 10 Classical Liberalism: An Introduction
- Oct. 12 Aristotle Review and Discussion
- Oct. 14 *****Midterm Part II: Aristotle's *Politics******
 Bring a Blue Book to class for exam
- Oct. 17 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke on Maternity, Paternity & Social Contract Theory
Read: FAC PAC A - Excerpt from Hobbes' *Leviathon: "Of the Natural Condition..."*
AND "Of the First and Second Natural Laws..."
FAC PAC B - Excerpt from Hobbes' *Philosophical Rudiments* AND
Excerpt from Locke's *Second Treatise: "Maternity, Paternity, & Origins of Political Power"*
- Oct. 19 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
Read: FAC PAC A - Excerpt from Locke's *Two Treatises on Government: "A Letter Concerning Toleration"*
- Oct. 21 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: FAC PAC A - Excerpt from Locke's *Second Treatise of Government: "Of the State of Nature," "Of Property," and "Of the Dissolution..."*
- Oct. 24 Classical Liberalism: Adam Smith & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: FAC PAC A - Adam Smith's "Division of Labor"

****Begin reading Gilman's *Herland* for paper*****

Oct. 26 & Utilitarianism & John Stuart Mill

Oct. 28 Read: FAC PAC A – Excerpts from J.S. Mill's *Utilitarianism, Liberty, & Representative Government*; AND *Considerations on Rep. Govt*

Oct. 31 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green

Read: FAC PAC A – Excerpt from T.H. Green's *Works*

Nov. 2 & Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the critique of Political Idealism

Nov. 4 Read: FAC PAC A – Burke, Wordsworth, Oakeshott selections

Nov. 7 Conservative Feminism

Read: FAC PAC B – Selections from Genesis, Aristotle, Plutarch, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche

Nov. 9 Liberal Feminism

Read: FAC PAC B – Selections from Wollstonecraft, J.S. Mill, Darwin, de Beauvoir, Montagu, Friedan

Nov. 11 No class, Veteran's Day

Nov. 14 & Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism

Nov. 16 Read: FAC PAC A – Excerpt from Engels' *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*

Nov. 18 Radicalism: Marxism & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution

Read: FAC PAC A – Marx & Engels' *Manifesto of Communist Party*

*****November 21: Gilman Paper DUE at START of Class*****

Nov. 21 Neo-Marxism: Orthodox School vs. Revisionists

Read: FAC PAC A – Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*

Nov. 23 & Nov. 25 – No Class, Have a great Thanksgiving break!

Nov. 28 & Neo-Marxism: Lenin, Trotsky & Stalin

Nov. 30 Read: FAC PAC A – Lenin's "*Marxism and Revisionism*" AND Trotsky's "*Permanent Revolution*"

Dec. 2 Feminism: Socialist & Radical

Read: FAC PAC B – Selections from Marcuse, United Nations *Declaration of Women's Rights*, Engels' "*The Origin of the Oppression of Women*"

Dec. 5 Review Session for the Final Exam

Dec. 7

Last Class -- The End of Ideology Debate

Read: FAC PAC A -- Fukuyama's *End of History* as printed in *The National Interest*

*******FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 13 from 1:10pm – 3:10pm*******

Guidelines for Essay --*Herland*: Our Land?

DUE DATE: NOVEMBER 21

I. Purpose of Assignment

The **objective** of this assignment is to provide an analytical essay **comparing and contrasting** the ideas/themes found in Gilman's *Herland* with the political theories we have covered in this course. An interpretative 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. Essay Content

a. Description & Thesis (10% of essay grade)

We do not want more than a cursory attempt at describing the content of the book. Assume that the reader is familiar with the plot of *Herland*. Therefore, you shouldn't need more than one paragraph for background.

Be sure to have a clear Thesis Statement that tells the reader exactly what you plan to analyze in your paper.

b. Analysis (60% of essay grade)

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 ideals in her model community?

Here are some analytical questions you may choose to explore. To what extent does Gilman borrow from Plato's notion of justice? What are Gilman's underlying assumptions about human nature, "male" and "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 utilize 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, and etc.? 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: (30% of essay grade)

Does Gilman convince the reader that this utopia is desirable? Why or 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. Tips for Planning your Paper

Parts B & C should comprise nearly equal parts of your paper. In other words, do not spend 4.5 pages on analysis and only half a page on your conclusion. We are looking for your ability to come to logical conclusions. You may find it useful to make an outline before writing your paper.

III. Paper Style and Format

- a. The paper should be typed, double spaced and in 12 point font. The length should be **5-6 pages**. Margins should be **one inch** wide. Be sure to **EDIT** and **PROOF** your final copy. Points will be deducted for papers with multiple grammatical and spelling errors. No cover sheets. Put the standard name, date, class, title heading at the top of your first page.
- b. **Additional Reading/Outside Sources:** You may wish to do some additional reading to substantiate your positions for parts B&C. However, this is not necessary. You will do just as well by attending class lectures regularly, taking thorough notes, and reading the *assigned* materials.
- c. **Quotations:** All quotations and paraphrasing used in paper **MUST** be enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited as to their origin. See any writing manual and use one quotation style **CONSISTENTLY**.
- d. **Bibliography:** You should include a complete bibliography listing any books referenced in the paper that were not assigned texts listed on the class syllabus.
- e. **Help:** I encourage you to take an outline to the TA for input. There also is a writing center on campus (LA 144) where you schedule an appointment for help. Don't wait until the last minute to ask for assistance.

Be sure to read the essay guidelines CAREFULLY.