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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 2003**
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Introduction to Political Theory

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 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: "today it is no longer possible to construct a genuine political philosophy"?

Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*

Aristotle, *Politics*

C.P. Gilman, *Herland*

Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto**

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

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

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** on Gilman's *Herland* (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 papers on *Herland* will receive a grade reduction for every day it's 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 pts or lower will result in a NP.
- Please see me and UM catalog p. 21 for criteria on Incomplete Grades.

Course Schedule:

9/3	Introduction to the Course <u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Book I & II
9/5- 9/8	Plato's Indictment <u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books III & IV
9/10	Plato's Organic Theory of the State <u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book V
9/12	Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wives, Children, and Property <u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book VI <u>Recommend:</u> Sir Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i> ; Charles Fourier, <i>Social Organization</i>
9/15- 9/17	Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories <u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book VII
9/19	Decline of the Ideal State <u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books VIII & IX
9/22#	Plato v. Aristotle <u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book II
9/24	Review & Discussion of Plato

Last Day to Add/Drop by DIAL BEAR or Cyberbear

******* September 26th Midterm Part I: Plato's Republic *******

- 9/29 Aristotle: Politics As Science
 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I
- 10/1 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III
- 10/3- Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
10/6 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV
- 10/8- Aristotle on Revolution
10/10 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V
- 10/13 Classical Liberalism: Introduction
- 10/15 Review & Discuss Aristotle

******* October 17th Midterm Part II: Aristotle's Politics *******

- 10/20 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke on Maternity, Paternity, &
 Social Contract Theory
 Read: FAC PAC vol. A section from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Locke's
 Toleration and Treatise 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."
- 10/22 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
 Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke's *Two Treatises on*
 Government
- 10/24 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
 Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke
- 10/27 Classical Liberalism: Smith & "the Automatic Social
 Mechanism"
 Read: FAC PAC, vol. A sections from Smith

++Start reading Gilman's *Herland*.

- 10/29- Utilitarianism & John Stuart Mill
10/31 Read: FAC PAC vol. A, selections from J.S. Mill's *Democratic*
 Participation; Liberty & the Individual

- 11/3 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from T.H. Green
- 11/5- Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
 11/9 Read: FAC PAC vol. A., selections from Burke, Wordsworth,
 Oakeshott
- 11/10 Conservative Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Genesis, Aristotle, Pluarch,
 Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche
- 11/12 Liberal Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from Wollstonecraft, J.S. Mill,
 Darwin, De Beauvoir, Montagu, Friedan
- 11/14- Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
 11/17 Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Engels' *Socialism: Utopian &*
 Scientific
- 11/25 Radicalism: Marxism & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selection from Marx's & Engels *The*
 Communist Manifesto

*******November 21st Gilman Paper Due*******

- 11/21- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
 11/24 Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Bernstein's *Evolutionary*
 Socialism; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On
 Reserve); *George V. Plekhanov (*On Reserve)

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

- 12/1- Neo-Marxism: Lenin & Trotsky & Stalin,
 12/5 Read: FAC PAC vol., A selections from Lenin's *Imperialism*;
- 12/8 Feminism: Socialist & Radical
Read: FAC PAC Vol. B. selections from Marcuse; United Nations
 Declaration of Women's Rights; Engels' "The Origin of he
 Oppression of Women"
- 12/10 End of Ideology Debate
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Fukuyama's *End of History*
- 12/12 Review/Questions for Final

Final: Monday, December 15th at 8am-10am

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 (60% 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: (30% essay value)

Does Gilman convince the reader that this utopia is desirable? 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 almost equal parts of your paper. In other words, do not spend 4 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.