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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 2001
MWF 12:10-1

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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.

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"?

Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*

Aristotle, *Politics*

Huxley, *Brave New World*

Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto**

FAC PAC #1: Western Political Theory; FAC PAC #2 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, participating in discussions 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 a *critical essay* of Huxley's *Brave New World* (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.

Course Schedule:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9/5 | Introduction to the Course
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Book I & II |
| 9/7-
9/10 | Plato's Indictment
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books III & IV |
| 9/12-
9/14 | Plato's Organic Theory of the State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book V |
| 9/17 | 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> |
| 9/19-
9/21 | Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book VII |
| #9/24 | Decline of the Ideal State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books VIII & IX |
| 9/26 | Plato v. Aristotle
<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book II |
| 9/28 | Review & Discussion of Plato |
| * * * * * October 1 st Midterm Part I: Plato's <i>Republic</i> * * * * * | |
| 10/3-
10/5 | Aristotle: Politics As Science
<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Books I |
| 10/8 | Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book III |

Last Day to Add/Drop by DIAL BEAR or Cyberbear

10/10- Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
10/12 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV

10/15 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V

10/17 Classical Liberalism: Introduction

10/19 Review & Discuss Aristotle

* * * * * October 22 Midterm Part II: Aristotle's *Politics* * * * * *

10/24 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."

10/26 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*

10/29 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke

10/31 Classical Liberalism: Smith, Sumner & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A sections from Smith & Sumner

++Start reading Huxley *Brave New World*.

11/2- Utilitarianism & John Stuart Mill
11/5 Read: FAC PAC vol. A, selections from J.S. Mill's *Democratic Participation; Liberty & the Individual*

11/7 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from T.H. Green

11/9 Liberal Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from Wollstonecraft, J.S. Mill, Darwin, De Beauvoir, Montagu, Friedan

11/12 No class: Veterans Day

- 11/14- Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
 11/16 Read: FAC PAC vol. A., selections from Burke, Wordsworth, Oakeshott
- 11/19 Conservative Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Genesis, Aristotle, Pluarch, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche

* * *Thanksgiving Break Nov. 21-25th * * * * *

- 11/26- Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
 11/28 Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Engels' *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*
- 11/30 * * * * **Huxley Paper Due* * * * * *
 Radicalism: Marxism & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selection from Marx's & Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*
- 12/3- Feminism: Socialist & Radical
 12/5 Read: FAC PAC Vol. B. selections from Marcuse; United Nations Declaration of Women's Rights; Engels' "The Origin of the Oppression of Women"
- 12/5- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
 12/7 Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On Reserve)
- 12/10 Neo-Marxism: Lenin, Stalin
Read: FAC PAC vol., A selections from Lenin's *Imperialism*; *George V. Plekhanov (*On Reserve)
- 12/12 End of Ideology Debate
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Fukuyama's *End of History*
- 12/14 Review/Questions for Final

* * * * * Final December 21st 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Guidelines for Essay

"Brave New World: Politics & Society in the Year 2001?"
(35% of course grade)

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 (50% 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 suggest list to help you get started, but do not feel confined to only them.)

C. Conclusion: (40% 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

Parts B and 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. I am looking for your ability to come to logical conclusions concerning the "real world" of society and politics.

II. Style

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 Huxley'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.

D. Editing:

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