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PSC 150E.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSC 150E
Spring 2008
MWF 10:10-11

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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.

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*

Orwell, *1984*

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 Orwell's *1984* (35% of course grade.)* Please see attached for instructions on the Orwell paper.

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

Course Schedule:

- 1/23 Introduction to the Course
Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Book I & II
- 1/25- Plato's Indictment
1/28 Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Books III & IV
- 1/30- Plato's Organic Theory of the State
2/1 Read: *The Republic*, Book V
- 2/4- Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wivesm
2/6 Children, and Property
Read: *The Republic*, Book VI
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* ; Charles Fourier, *Social Organization*
- 2/6- Possibility of the Ideal State: the Ship & Cave Allegories
2/8 Read: *The Republic*, Book VII
- 2/11 Decline of the Ideal State
Read: *The Republic*, Books VIII & IX
- 2/13 Plato v. Aristotle
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I & II
- 2/15 Review & Discussion of Plato
- ***** February 18th Monday, President's day Holiday. . .no class
- ***** February 20th Midterm Part I: Plato's *Republic* *****
- 2/22 Aristotle: Politics As Science
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I & II
- 2/25- Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
2/27 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III
- 2/29 Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV
- 3/3- Aristotle on Revolution
3/5 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V
- 3/7 Classical Liberalism: Introduction
- 3/10 Review & Discuss Aristotle

***** March 12th Wednesday, Midterm Part II: Aristotle's *Politics* *****

- 3/14 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke on Maternity, Paternity, & Social Contract Theory
Read: FAC PAC vol. See section from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Locke's *Toleration and Treatise on Government*; FAC PAC vol. B, selections from Hobbes & Locke.
- 3/17 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*
- 3/19 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A section from Locke
- 3/21 Classical Liberalism: Smith & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: FAC PAC, vol. A sections from Smith

***** March 24th-30th Spring Break

++Start reading Orwell's *1984*

- 3/31- Utilitarianism & John Stuart Mill
4/4 Read: FAC PAC vol. A, selections from J.S. Mill's *Democratic Participation; Liberty & the Individual*
- 4/7 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from T.H. Green
- 4/9- Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
4/11 Read: FAC PAC vol. A., selections from Burke, Wordsworth, Oakeshott
- 4/14 Conservative Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Genesis, Aristotle, Pluarch, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche
- 4/16 Liberal Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from Wollstonecraft, J.S. Mill, Darwin, De Beauvoir, Montagu, Friedan

*****Orwell Paper Due Friday, April 18th *****

- 4/18- Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
4/21 Read: FAC PAC vol. A. selections from Engels' *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*
- 4/23 Radicalism: Marxism & the "Earthquake Theory" of Revolution
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selection from Marx's & Engels *The Communist Manifesto*
- 4/25- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
4/28 Read: FAC PAC vol. A selections from Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On Reserve)
- 4/30 Neo-Marxism: Lenin, Stalin
Read: FAC PAC vol., A selections from Lenin's *Imperialism*; *George V. Plekhanov (*On Reserve)

***** Final is Friday, May 9th at 10 am *****

Guidelines for Essay

"Orwell's Big Brother: 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 *1984* 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 Orwell's *1984*. 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 (60% of essay value)

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the *ideas* that Orwell 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 Orwell mock conservative, or liberal or socialist notions 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 (Big Brother) play in Orwell'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 Winston Smith's discontent? (* These questions are only a suggest list to help you get started, but do not feel confined to only them.)

C. Conclusion: (30% of essay value)

Does Orwell convince the reader that this dystopia is possible or inevitable? Do you see things in our present society that might lead to Orwell's *1984*? And if not, why not? We are looking for your ability to come to logical conclusions concerning the "real world" of society and politics.

D. Planning

Part B should comprise the major portion of your paper. In other words, do not spend 2 1/2 pages on analysis and 3 1/2 pages on your conclusion. Conclusion should not consist of more than a paragraph or two.

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 assigned reading material, not to mention reading Orwell'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.