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Spring 2-1-2006

### PSC 550.01: Political Theory Seminar - Approaches to Political Theory

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**University of Montana  
Department of Political Science**

Political Science 550  
Office Hrs MWF 11-12; Tue. 1-2  
LA 352  
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Spring 2006  
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**Political Theory Seminar:  
Negative & Positive Freedom**

*"The world **freedom** is incompletely descriptive. To understand what freedom means, we must know what it is —freedom **from** or freedom **for**."  
Maurice Cranston.*

Course Description:

Classical and contemporary political philosophers often speak of *freedom*, (some even make a distinction between liberty and freedom.) But what exactly does freedom mean? There is considerable debate among theorists, and especially among the writers we will examine this semester over whether freedom or "liberty" should be treated as an **end** (good for its own sake) or a **means** (to other human ends or values.) This seminar we will examine both forms of freedom, considering how the embrace of negative or positive freedom can influence a thinker's position on what properly belongs to the public verses the private sphere, the relationship between society's good and the individual's interests, as well as what he/she believes are the sources of oppression and its remedy.

Course Objectives: after successfully completing the course work, the student should be able to:

1. Distinguish between negative and positive freedom, and recognize how this analytical framework influences contemporary political discourse.
2. Develop concise, analytic essays on the assigned readings in contemporary theory. Specifically with regards to an analytic perspective, the student will consider their own position with respect to different approaches to studying political theory (i.e. what consequences follow when one emphasizes text over context when studying political theory.)
3. Evaluate a political theory in terms of its analytic, empirical, and normative strengths and/or weaknesses.

### Course Grading:

PS 550 will be taught as a seminar. Short essays (6-7 per student) will be assigned and critiqued in class (55% of course grade.) Class participation (20% of course grade) will be evaluated according to each student's contribution to discussions on reading assignments. The final (25%) will be a take-home essay examination.

In addition, students will be expected to assess the merits and weaknesses of their colleague's essays. To give us time to prepare questions, copies of your essay must be distributed the **Friday** before you are scheduled to orally present it. Late essays will not be accepted. The **field** exam will be on **May 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:10pm-3:10pm.**

### Required Tests:

Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* ;

Hayek, selections from *The Constitution of Liberty* (on reserve)

Andrew Schmookler, *The Illusion of Choice*

T.H. Green, "Liberal Legislation & Freedom of Contract" (handout)

Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*

Leo Strauss, *Natural Right & History*

Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*

Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Berlin, *Essays on Liberty*

Selected readings on Arendt & post-modern feminism (on reserve)

January 24th      Introduction to the Course: Negative v. Positive Freedom

January 31st      ***Liberalism & The Two Concepts of Liberty***

Read: Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*; **Choose one of the recommended readings as well.**

Essays (\*due **1/27 by 1pm**): What form of liberty, positive or negative, does Hayek embrace and why? What are the problems, if any, do you find in Hayek's conception of liberty?

### Recommended Readings:

Sunstein, "The Road to Serfdom," *The New Republic*, 20 October 1997

Macfarlane, "On Two Concepts of Liberty, *Political Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 Fall 1966

Cranston, M. *Freedom*

Gray, J. "The Road From Serfdom," *National Review*, 27 April 1992

Hazlett, T. "The Road From Serfdom: An Interview with F.A. Hayek, *Reason*, July 1992  
Kumar, A. "F.A. Hayek: Economics and Politics," *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Jan. 1992  
Lundstrom, M. "Is Anti-Rationalism Rational? The Case of F.A. Hayek," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 1992  
Miller, D. "F.A. Hayek: Dogmatic Skeptic," *Dissent*, Summer 1994

February 7<sup>th</sup>

***Theories of Liberty & Public Policy/Law***

Read: Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (on reserve)  
*Colorado v. Connelly* (1986)

Essays (due **2/3 by 1pm**): What role(s) for the state would Hayek's theory of freedom support? Why?

Essays: How do the opinions in *Colorado v. Connelly* (1986) illustrate the tensions between negative and positive freedom? How would you have ruled in the case, and why?

February 14<sup>th</sup>

***Positive Freedom***

Read: T.H. Green, "Liberal Legislation," (handout); ***Choose one of the recommended readings as well.***

Essays (due 2/10 by 1pm): Is private property truly "private"? If so, why? If not, why not?

Essays (due 2/10 by 1pm): "What we mean by freedom makes sense only when viewed against a background of more and less significant purposes." What does Green mean, and is he correct?

Recommended Readings:

Anderson, O, "The Feminism of T.H. Green...",  
*History of Political Thought*, Winter 1991  
Bevir, M. "Welfarism, Socialism, and Religion...",  
*The Review of Politics*, Fall 1993  
Etzioni, A. *Rights & the Common Good*  
Harris, P., "Moral Progress & Politics: The Theory of T.H. Green," *Polity*, Spring 1989

Nichols, D. "Positive Liberty: 1880-1890," *Amer. Pol. Sci. Rev.* , March 1962  
Simhony, A. "Was T.H. Green a Utilitarian?,"  
*Utilitas*, May 1995  
"T.H. Green: The Common Good Society,"  
*History of Political Thought*, Summer 1993

February 21st

***Capitalism, Choice & Liberty***

Read: Andrew Schmookler, *The Illusion of Choice*

Essays (due 2/17 by 1pm): "No wonder we think we are getting what we want. We have been taught to want what we get." When speaking of *democratic government*, however, Schmookler insists that it's only legitimate when the consent of the governed is given "freely." Can these two statements be reconciled?

Essays (2/17 by 1): "Freedom requires order." Discuss Schmookler's statement.

February 28th

***Communitarians, Conservatives (Radical?) & Liberty***

Read: Wendell Barry, *Sex Economy, Freedom & Community*; ***May choose one of the recommended readings as well.***

Essays (due 2/24 by 1pm): "There are two kinds of freedom: the freedom of the community and the freedom of the individual. The freedom of the community is the more fundamental and the more complex." What Barry understands here, Carter takes for granted.

Essay (due 2/24 by 1pm): "The danger of the ideal of competition is that it neither proposes nor implies any limits. It proposes simply to lower costs at any cost, and to raise profits at any cost. It does not hesitate at the destruction of the life of a family or the life of a community. It pits neighbor against neighbor as readily as it pits buyer against seller. Every transaction is *meant* to involve a winner and a loser. And for this reason the human community is pitted without limit against nature. For in the unlimited competition of neighbor and

neighbor, buyer and seller, all available means must be used; none may be spared." – Berry Discuss  
Essay: (due 2/24 by 1pm): "However destructive may be the policies of the government and the methods and products of the corporations, the root of the problem is always to be found in private life."

Recommended Readings:

W. Barry, *What Are People For*  
Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers*  
Lewis Mumford, *The Human Condition*

March 7<sup>th</sup>

***Negative Freedom v. Classical Political Philosophy***

Read: Strauss, *Natural Right & History*; **Choose one of the recommended readings as well.**

Essays (due 3/3 by 1pm): It's argued that the Bush administration neo-conservatives are students of Leo Strauss. In what sense, can we say they understand and/or misunderstand Strauss's conception of democratic freedom?

Essays (due 3/3 by 1pm): Jeffery Hart lists one variety of conservative thought as "Natural law conservatism," which deduces principles of behavior from the fact of 'human' nature as distinct from other kinds of nature, and on that account resists moral change based on fashion, historical accident, or false analogies between human nature and other kinds. Conservatism of this kind, he thinks, "is found in Aristotle, Aquinas, Burke, and today in *Leo Strauss* (italics added.) In light of your reading, discuss this statement.

Recommended Readings:

Alen Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*  
John Diggins, *The Promise of Pragmatism*, 1994  
T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," *Selected Poems*  
C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letter*  
Niebuhr, *Children of Light/Children of Darkness*  
Oakeshott, *Religion, Politics, and the Moral Life*  
John Gunnell, *Political Theory, Tradition & Interpretation*

Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*  
 "Strauss, Philosophy, and Politics," (Symposium) *Political Theory*, August 1987  
 J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*  
 Herbert Storing (ed.) *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*  
 A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*  
 Ernest Fortin, "Gadamer on Strauss," *Interpretation*, Jan. 1984  
 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

March 14<sup>th</sup>

### ***Freedom & Critical Theory***

Read: Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*; **Choose one of the recommended readings as well.**

Essays (due 3/10<sup>th</sup> by 1pm): "What is good or bad for man is not a metaphysical question, but an empirical one that can be answered on the basis of an analysis of man's nature and the effect which certain conditions have on him." (266 -*Escape From Freedom*) What difficulties are involved in making an "empirical" view of human nature the basis of a political theory?

Essays (due 3/10<sup>th</sup> by 1pm): Fromm, in common with other writers on the left, has a concept of alienation. What is it? Is there any comparable concept in liberal (say Hayek's) thought? Has the concept of alienation become outdated, too blunt for an analytical tool?

### Recommended Readings:

Birnback, *Neo-Freudian Social Philosophy*, 1961  
 Bartlett & Schodall, "Fromm, Marx, and the Concept of Alienation," *Science and Society*, Summer 1963  
 Fromm, *Man For Himself*  
*Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*  
 Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*  
 Kariel, "The Normative Pattern of Erich Fromm's *Escape From Freedom*," *Journal of Politics*, vol. 19, 1957  
 Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*  
 Schaar, *Escape From Authority: The Perspectives of Erich Fromm*, 1961

Wells, *The Failure of Psychoanalysis: From Freud to Fromm*, 1963

March 21<sup>th</sup>

***Fromm's Humanist Vision of Freedom***

Read: Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*

Essays (due 3/17 by 1pm): Is there such a thing as a "just price" or a "fair wage?" Would you join Fromm (& Schmookler) in establishing a rational economic system? (p. 272 hardback ed.; p. 299 paperback ed. of *Escape From Freedom*)

Essays (due 3/17 by 1pm): Man is rational, says Fromm, not because he always thinks or acts rationally but because he has this need to rationalize whatever he does. (p. 67 hardback ed.; pp. 85-86 paperback ed.) What does Fromm mean? What does it mean (to you) to say that people behave or fail to behave in a rational way?

Recommended Reading:

Briggs, "From Slaves to Robots," *New Statesman and Nation*, 23 June 1956

Burston, *The Legacy of Erich Fromm*, 1991

Ellul, *The Political Illusion*

*The Technological Society*

H.P. "The Insane Society," *Dissent*, vol. 3, Winter 1956

Spitz, "The Appeal to the Right Man," in *Democracy and the Challenge of Power*, 1958

Sykes, "The Americanization of Erich Fromm," *The Hidden Remnant*, 1962

Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*

\*\*\*\*\***March 25th -April 2nd Spring Break**\*\*\*\*\*

April 4<sup>th</sup>

***Freedom, The Public and The Private***

Read: Arendt, *The Human Condition*; **Choose one of the recommended readings as well.**

Essays (due 4/3 by 1pm): Arendt is critical of Marxism, yet how does her indictment of modern society parallel



Fromm's? Is her diagnosis of modern alienation prone to the same analytic &/or empirical weaknesses?

Essays (due 4/3 by 1pm): Arendt argues that in the beginning of the modern period, work had displaced both contemplation and action in the hierarchy of men's activities; but by the nineteenth century labour had replaced work as the supreme activity. How did this triumph of *animal laborans* come about according to Arendt?

Recommended Reading:

Special Issue on Hannah Arendt, *Social Research*, 1977

Kateb, "Freedom & Worldliness in the Thought of Hannah Arendt," *Political Theory*, Spring 1977

Kateb, *Hannah Arendt*

Canovan, "The Contradictions of Hannah Arendt's Political Thought," *Political Theory*, February 1978

Levin, "On Animal Laborans and Homo Politicus in Arendt," *Political Theory*, November 1979

Arendt, *On Revolution*

*Between Past and Future*

*The Life of the Mind*

Pitkin, "Justice: On Relating Private and Public," *Political Theory*, August 1981

April 11<sup>th</sup>

Arendt cont.

Read: *The Human Condition*

Essays (due 4/7 by 1pm): How does Arendt's distinction between public and private relate to her distinction between work and labor. . .or does it?

Essays (due 4/7 by 1pm): How does Arendt's distinction between public and private related to her indictment of negative freedom. . .or does it?

Recommended Readings:

Young-Bruehl, "Reflections on Hannah Arendt's Life of the Mind," *Political Theory*, May 1982

Whitfield, *Into The Dark: Arendt and Totalitarianism*

Dallmayr, "Ontology of Freedom," *Political Theory*, May 1984

Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*

Raaflaub, "Democracy, Oligarchy and the Concept of the Free Citizen in Late Fifth Century Athens," *Political Theory*, November 1983

Canovan, "A Case of Distorted Communications," *Political Theory*, February 1983

April 18<sup>th</sup>

***Post-Modern Feminism & End of Political Philosophy?***

Read: Mary Dietz, "Hannah Arendt & Feminist Politics," in *Feminist Interpretations & Political Theory*, eds. Shanley & Pateman\*; Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought*, "Postmodern Feminism;" \*Feminists Theorize the Political, eds. Judith Butler & Joan Scott,\* on reserve; **Choose one of the recommended readings as well.**

Essays (due 4/14 by 1pm) How might a "post-modern" feminist critique Arendt? What, if anything, would they find useful in Arendt's analysis?

Essays (due 4/14 by 1pm): Can feminist political theory avoid assuming "a privileged epistemological perspective" or a generalized "female" freedom in society? Explain. If not, what are the consequences?

Recommended Readings:

Michele Barrett, *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis*

Ann Bookmann & Sandra Morgan, *Women & the Politics of Empowerment*

Nancy Chodrow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*

Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*

Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*

Susan Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*

Hanna Pitkin, "Food & Freedom in *The Founder*," *Political Theory*, 12, 1984

April 25<sup>th</sup>-

May 2nd

***Negative & Positive Liberty Conclusions***

Read: Berlin, "Introduction" and "Two Concepts of Liberty"  
Essays (due 4/21 by 1pm): "Berlin's defense of negative liberty leads him into the position of defending the status quo."  
Comment

Essays (due 4/21 by 1pm): "Absolute negative liberty, like absolute positive liberty, ends up destroying that which it prizes most— liberty."

Recommended Readings:

Crowder, G. "Negative and Positive Liberty, *Political Science*,  
Dec. 1988

Kristjansson, K. "What Is Wrong with Positive Liberty?," *Social  
Theory and Practice*, Fall 1992

Hayman, S. "Positive and Negative Liberty," *Chicago-Kent Law  
Review*, 1992

Final Due – **May 11<sup>th</sup> by 1:10 pm.**