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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 2001
MWF 4:10-5

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Introduction to Political Theory

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 150E) 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 ideologies—liberalism, conservatism, Marxism, feminism etc.— that have shaped our modern political dialogues. We will conclude the course 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"?

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 feminist utopian novel, *Herland*, examining to what extent the author borrows, satirizes, and/or negates the ideas of western political thinkers, including Plato and Aristotle. (See attached Paper Guidelines)

Texts:

Plato, *The Republic*
Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle*
Gilman, *Herland*
Fac Packet Vols I & II, Masc. readings

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

Grading:

The work of the course consists of reading all assignments, attending lectures —students who ask questions usually have good lecture notes, completing the **two-part midterm** (30% of course grade), the final (35% of course grade.) In addition, each student must complete on time a critical analysis of Gilman's *Herland* (35% of course grade.)** Please see attached for instructions on the Gilman essay.

** Cautionary Note: Late papers will not be deducted a letter grade for each day it's late.

Course Schedule:

- 1/29 Introduction to the Course
Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Book I & II
- 1/31 Plato & Ideology as the Enemy of Philosophy
Read: *The Republic*, Books III & IV
- 2/2 Plato's Organic Theory of the State
Read: *The Republic*, Book V
- 2/5- Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice: Community of Wives,
2/7 Children & Property
Read: *The Republic*, Book VI
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* ; Charles Fourier, *Social Organization*
- 2/9 Possibility of the Ideal State: the Cave Allegory
Read: *The Republic*, Book VII
- 2/12- Decline of the Ideal State; Plato v. Aristotle
2/14 Read: *The Republic*, Books VIII & IX
- 2/16 Review & Discussion of Plato
- 2/19 *No Class- President's Day*
- * * * * February 21st Midterm Part I: *Plato's Republic* * * * *
- 2/23- Aristotle: Politics As Science
2/26 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I & II
- 2/28 Aristotle's Biological Analysis: Family, Village, Polis
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III
- 2/28- Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
3/2 Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV

- 3/5 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V
- 3/7 Classical Liberalism: Introduction
- 3/9 Review & Discuss Aristotle
- * * * **March 12th Midterm Part II: Aristotle's Politics** * * * *
- 3/14 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke on Maternity, Paternity & Social Contract Theory
Read: FAC PAC vol. A selection from Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Locke's *Toleration and Government* ; FAC PAC vol B, selections from Hobbes "Maternity & the Origin of Political Power" & Locke's "Maternity, Paternity, and the Origin of Political Power"
- 3/16 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution:
Read: Packet vol. A selections from Locke's *Two Treatises*
- * * * **March 17th-25th Spring Break** * * * * * * * * * * * * *
- 3/26 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: Packet vol. A selections from Locke
- 3/28 Classical Liberalism: Smith & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: Packet vol. A selections from Smith & Sumner
- ++Start reading Gilman's *Herland*— if you have not already done so.**
- 3/30- Utilitarianism & John Stuart Mill
 4/2 Read: Packet selections from J.S. Mill's *Democratic Participation; Liberty & the Individual*
- 4/4 Reform or Progressive Liberalism
Read: T.H. Green selection from Packet A
- 4/6 Liberal Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from: Wollstonecraft; J.S. Mill; Darwin; De Beauvoir; Montagu; Friedan
- 4/9- Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
 4/11 Read: Packet selections on Burke, Wordsworth, Oakeshott

- 4/13 "Conservative" Feminism
Read: FAC PAC vol A selections from: *Genesis*; Aristotle; Plutarch;
 Paul; Augustine; Thomas Aquinas; Francis Bacon;
 Schopenhauer; Nietzsche
- 4/16- Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Conservatism & Liberalism
 4/18 Read: Packet selection on Engels' *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific*;
 FAC Pac. vol. II, selection from Engels' "The Origin of the
 Oppression of Women"
- 4/20 Marxism & the "Automatic Historical & Scientific Mechanism"
Read: Packet selection from Marx & Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*
- 4/ 23- Feminism: Liberal, Socialist, Radical Feminism
 4/25 Read: FAC PAC vol. B selections from: Marcuse; United
 Nations Declaration of Women's Rights
- 4/27 **Friday: Herland essay Due**
- 4/25- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
 4/30 Read: Packet A selections from Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*;
 *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (* Select
 Readings On Reserve)
- 5/2- Lenin, Stalin & Totalitarianism
 5/4 Read: Packet A selection from Lenin's
Imperialism etc., and Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*
- 5/7- End of Ideology Debate
 5/9 Read: Packet selection from Fukuyama's *End of History*
- 5/11 Review/Questions for Final **Thursday May 17th, 3:20 pm -
 5:20pm**

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 (50% 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: (40% 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.