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PSC 250E.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSC 250
Fall 1997

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Introduction to Political Theory

Course Objectives:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 250) 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"?

Texts:

Ball and Dagger (eds.), *Ideals and Ideologies*, 2nd ed.
Plato, *The Republic*
Aristotle, *Politics*
George Orwell, *1984*
Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto**

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

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 (10% of course grade**), completing the scheduled midterm (25% of course grade), the final (30% of course grade.) In addition, each student must complete on time a critical analysis of Orwell's *1984* (35% of course grade.)*** Please see attached for instructions on the Orwell paper.

** Cautionary Note: All students will begin with 10pts for attendance. After 3 free absences, grade points will be deducted for every absence thereafter. An excused absence requires a medical note or letter from your coach.

*** Cautionary Note: Late papers will not be accepted & no exceptions will be granted.

Course Schedule:

- 9/3 Introduction to the Course
Read: Ball & Dagger, Chapter 1
- 9/5 Philosophy vs. Politics
Read: Plato, *The Republic*, Books I & II
- 9/8 Plato & Ideology as the Enemy of Philosophy
Read: *The Republic*, Books III & IV
- 9/10 Plato's Organic Theory of the State
Read: *The Republic*, Book V
- 9/12 Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice
Read: *The Republic*, Book VI
Recommend: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* ; Charles Fourier, *Social Organization*
- 9/15 Possibility of the Ideal State: the Cave Allegory
Read: *The Republic*, Book VII
- 9/17 Decline of the Ideal State
Read: *The Republic*, Books VIII & IX
- 9/19-
9/22* Aristotle: Politics As Science
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I & II (Chaps 1-8)
- 9/24 Aristotle's Biological Analysis
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III (Chaps 6-18)
- 9/26 Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV (Chaps 1-13)
- 9/29 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (Chaps 5-12)
- 10/1 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke & The Social Contract
Read: Ball, Chap. 11
- 10/3 Classical Liberalism: the Mechanical Theory of the State
Read: Ball, Chap. 12
- 10/6 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution:
Read: Ball, Chaps. 13 & 14
- 10/8 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: Ball, Chap. 18

* Last Day to ADD/DROP by dial bear is September 22nd.

- 10/10 Classical Liberalism: Smith, Sumner & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: Ball, Chaps. 19 & 21
- ++Start reading Orwell's 1984 — if you have not already done so.**
- 10/13 Libertarianism & Anarchism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 22 & 23
- 10/15 Utilitarianism
- 10/17 Review & Questions for Midterm
- **** **Monday October 20th Midterm** * * * * *
- 10/22- John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism
10/24 Read: Ball, Chaps. 9 & 18
- 10/27 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: Ball, Chaps. 20 & 23
- 10/29- Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
11/3 Read: Ball, Chaps. 24, 26, 28, & 29
- 11/3- Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
11/5 Read: Ball, Chap. 33
- 11/7 Marxism & the "Automatic Historical & Scientific Mechanism"
Read: Marx & Engles, *The Communist Manifesto*
- 11/10- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
11/12 Read: Ball, Chaps. 34; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On Reserve)
- 11/14 Discussion/Questions on Orwell's 1984
- 11/17 Neo-Marxism: Trotsky & Lenin
Read: Ball, Chap. 35; *George V. Plekhanov (*On Reserve)
- 11/19 Stalin & Totalitarianism
- *11/21 Fascism/ *Orwell Paper Due*
Read: Ball, Chapters 42, 43
- 11/24 Marxist Humanism
Read: Ball, Chap. 10
- Nov. 26th - 23rd Thanksgiving Break**
- 12/1- Feminism: A Hybrid Ideology?
12/3 Read: Ball, Chaps. 46 & 47

- 12/5- Liberation Ideologies
12/8 Read: Ball, Chapter 44, 45 & 49
- 12/8- End of Ideology Debate
12/10 Read: Ball, Chapters 56, 57 & 58.
- 12/12 Review/Questions for Final--*Dec. 12th Final 1:10 p.m. to 3:10 pm*

Guidelines for Term Paper:
"Is there *1984* After 1984?"

I. Content

A. Description

We do not want more than a cursory attempt at describing the content of Orwell's *1984*. Assume that the reader is familiar with the plot of the book. (No more than one paragraph.)

B. Analysis

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the ideas that Orwell draws upon in terms of the ideologies covered in the class. What are the underlying assumptions about human nature? What is the role of the state in Oceania? And what role does political ideology play in Orwell's novel? What is the value system of the "Big Brother" society? (Look at, for instance, the political socialization process of the different classes— i.e. party members v. proles: what they are taught, if anything, regarding slogans, party doctrine, history, community etc.) What are the sources of Winston Smith's discontent?

C. Conclusion:

Does Orwell convince the reader that this dystopia is possible? inevitable? Do you see things in our present society which might lead to Orwell's *1984*? And if not, why not.

D. Planning

Parts B & C comprise equally important parts of your paper. In other words, do not spend 7 1/2 pages on analysis and 1/2 page on your conclusion. We are looking for your ability to come to logical conclusions concerning the "real world." So reserve, at least, 1 1/2 pages for a conclusion.

II. Style

A. Format

Paper should be typed, double-spaced in 10 or 12 pt. font, and must be 7-8 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

Quotations from other sources are not required. But 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 consistent format.)

D. Bibliography

You should include a complete bibliography of all outside books used for this paper.