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PSC 250.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSC 250
Spring 1998

Dr. Grey
Office: LA 353
Phone: 243-2105
Office Hrs: WF 2-4pm

Introduction to Political Theory

Course Description:

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 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:

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.

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 (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 essay** 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, 3 grade points will be deducted for every absence thereafter. An excused absence requires a medical note or letter from your coach.

*** Late papers will not be accepted.

Course Schedule:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1/26 | Introduction to the Course
<u>Read:</u> Ball & Dagger, Chapter 1 |
| 1/28 | Philosophy vs. Politics
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books I & II |
| 1/30 | Plato & Ideology as the Enemy of Philosophy
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books III & IV |
| 2/2 | Plato's Organic Theory of the State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book V |
| 2/4 | Utopianism: Plato's Ideal State & Perfect Justice
<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> |
| 2/6 | Possibility of the Ideal State: the Cave Allegory
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book VII |
| 2/9 | Decline of the Ideal State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books VIII & IX |
| 2/11-
2/13* | Aristotle: Politics As Science
<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Books I & II (Chaps 1-8) |
| 2/16 | Washington-Lincoln Holiday |
| 2/18 | Aristotle's Biological Analysis
<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Book III (Chaps 6-18) |

* Last Day to ADD/DROP by dial bear is February 13th 1998.

- 2/20 Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV (Chaps 1-13)
- 2/23 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (Chaps 5-12)
- 2/25 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke & The Social Contract
Read: Ball, Chap. 11
- 2/27 Review for Midterm

**** **Monday March 2nd Midterm** * * * * *

- 3/4 Classical Liberalism cont.
Read: Ball, Chap. 12
- 3/6 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution:
Read: Ball, Chaps. 13 & 14
- 3/9 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: Ball, Chap. 18
- 3/11 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.

- 3/13 Libertarianism & Anarchism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 22 & 23

Spring Break 3/16-3/20

- 3/23 Utilitarianism
- 3/25 John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 9 & 18
- 3/27 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: Ball, Chaps. 20 & 23
- 3/30-4/1 Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 24, 26, 28, & 29
- 4/3-4/6 Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
Read: Ball, Chap. 33

- 4/8 Marxism & the "Automatic Historical & Scientific Mechanism"
Read: Marx & Engles, *The Communist Manifesto*
- 4/10- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
 4/13 Read: Ball, Chaps. 34; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On Reserve)
- 4/15 Neo-Marxism: Trotsky & Lenin
Read: Ball, Chap. 35; *George V. Plekhanov (*On Reserve)
- 4/17 Discussion/Questions on Orwell's *1984*
- 4/20 Stalin & Totalitarianism
- 4/22 Fascism
Read: Ball, Chapters 42, 43
- *4/24 Marxist Humanism/ *Orwell Paper Due*
Read: Ball, Chap. 10
- 4/27- Feminism: A Hybrid Ideology?
 4/29 Read: Ball, Chaps. 46 & 47
- 5/1 Liberation Ideologies
Read: Ball, Chapter 44, 45 & 49
- 5/4- End of Ideology Debate
 5/6 Read: Ball, Chapters 56, 57 & 58.
- 5/8 Review/Questions for Final--*Tuesday May 12th 3:20-5:20 pm*

Guidelines for Term Paper:
"Is there *1984* After 1984?"
 (35% of course grade)

I. Content

A. Description (10% of paper grade)

We do not want more than a cursory attempt at describing the content 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 (60% of paper grade)

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: (30% of essay grade)

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

Part B should comprise the major part of your paper. In other words, do not spend 4 pages on analysis and 6 pages on your conclusion. We are looking for your ability point out some logical connections between the ideas we have studied and Orwell's perfect hell. So reserve, at most, 1 page for a conclusion.

II. Style

A. Format

Paper should be typed, double-spaced in 10 or 12 pt. font, and must be between 6-8 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.