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PSC 150E.01: Introduction to Political Theory

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University of Montana
Department of Political Science

PSC 150E
Fall 1998

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Introduction to Political Theory

Course Description:

Introduction to Political Theory (PSC 150) 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*
Huxley, *Brave New World*
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 Huxley's *Brave New World* (35% of course grade.)*** Please see attached for instructions on the Huxley 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 for illness, injury, family emergency, or participation in field trips, ASUM service, music/drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics. Instructor will also excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service.

*** Late papers will not be accepted.

Course Schedule:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 8/31 | Introduction to the Course
<u>Read:</u> Ball & Dagger, Chapter 1 |
| 9/2 | Philosophy vs. Politics
<u>Read:</u> Plato, <i>The Republic</i> , Books I & II |
| 9/4 | Plato & Ideology as the Enemy of Philosophy
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books III & IV |
| 9/7 | No Class: Labor Day |
| 9/9 | Plato's Organic Theory of the State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book V |
| 9/11 | 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> |
| 9/14 | Possibility of the Ideal State: the Cave Allegory
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Book VII |
| 9/16 ¹ | Decline of the Ideal State
<u>Read:</u> <i>The Republic</i> , Books VIII & IX |
| 9/18-
9/21 | Aristotle: Politics As Science
<u>Read:</u> Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Books I & II (Chaps 1-8) |

¹ Last Day to ADD/DROP by dial bear is September 21, 1998.

- 9/23 Aristotle's Biological Analysis
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III (Chaps 6-18)
- 9/25 Aristotle's Classification of Constitutions
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV (Chaps 1-13)
- 9/28 Aristotle on Revolution
Read: Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V (Chaps 5-12)
- 9/30 Classical Liberalism: Hobbes, Locke & The Social Contract
Read: Ball, Chap. 11
- 10/2 Review for Midterm
- **** Monday October 5th Midterm * * * * *
- 10/7 Classical Liberalism cont.
Read: Ball, Chap. 12
- 10/9 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Revolution:
Read: Ball, Chaps. 13 & 14
- 10/12 Classical Liberalism: Locke & Property Rights
Read: Ball, Chap. 18
- 10/14 Classical Liberalism: Smith, Sumner & "the Automatic Social Mechanism"
Read: Ball, Chaps. 19 & 21
- ++Start reading Huxley *Brave New World*.
- 10/16 Libertarianism & Anarchism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 22 & 23
- 10/19 Utilitarianism
- 10/21 John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 9 & 18
- 10/23 Reform Liberalism: John Dewey & T.H. Green
Read: Ball, Chaps. 20 & 23
- 10/26-10/28 Conservatism: Edmund Burke & the Critique of Political Idealism
Read: Ball, Chaps. 24, 26, 28, & 29
- 10/30-11/2 Radicalism: Marx's Critique of Liberalism & Conservatism
Read: Ball, Chap. 33

- 11/4 Marxism & the "Automatic Historical & Scientific Mechanism"
Read: Marx & Engles, *The Communist Manifesto*
- 11/6- Neo-Marxism: the Orthodox School vs. Revisionists
 11/9 Read: Ball, Chaps. 34; *Karl Kautsky, * Rosa Luxemburg (*Select Readings On Reserve)
- 11/11 Veterans Day Holiday
- 11/13 Neo-Marxism: Trotsky & Lenin
Read: Ball, Chap. 35; *George V. Plekhanov (*On Reserve)
- 11/16 Stalin & Totalitarianism
- 11/18 Fascism
Read: Ball, Chapters 42, 43
- 11/20 Discussion/Questions on Huxley's *Brave New World*
- *11/23 Marxist Humanism/ *Orwell Paper Due*
Read: Ball, Chap. 10
- 11/25-11/22 Thanksgiving Break
- 11/30- Feminism: A Hybrid Ideology?
 12/2 Read: Ball, Chaps. 46 & 47
- 12/4 Liberation Ideologies
Read: Ball, Chapter 44, 45 & 49
- 12/7- End of Ideology Debate
 12/9 Read: Ball, Chapters 56, 57 & 58.
- 12/11 Review/Questions- Final--Monday, December 14th 10:10-12 p.m.

Guidelines for Term Paper
(35% of course grade)

"Brave New World: Politics & Society in the Year 2000?"

Format: paper should comprise 7-8 typed, double-spaced pages; please use 12-10 pt. font; Grade points will be deducted for spelling and grammatical errors.

I Content

A. Description (10% of paper grade)

Do not provide more than a cursory description of the content of Huxley's *Brave New World*. Assume that the reader is familiar with the plot of the book. (One paragraph will be sufficient.)

B. Analysis (60% of paper grade)

This part of the paper should constitute the major portion of your work. Look for the *ideas* that Huxley draws upon in terms of ideologies covered in class. What are the underlying assumptions about human nature? What is the role of the state? And what role does political ideology (Fordism) play in Huxley's novel? What is the value system of "Fordism?" (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 discontent among the inhabitants?

C. Conclusion: (30% of paper grade)

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

D. Planning

Parts 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 to come to logical conclusions concerning the "real world" of society and politics. Reserve, at most, one or pages 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 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 discussion notes, not to mention just reading Huxley's work carefully.

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 consistent format.)

D. Bibliography

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