PS 50: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Office Hours: MW 4:15-5:30PM;  
Tues. 4:30-5:30 PM and by appointment

This course is a broad introduction to the field of Political Philosophy. People from every society have asked fundamental questions concerning the nature of the universe, the character and purpose of human life, and the determination of just political and social orders. Answers to these questions have varied profoundly over time and across the world. The course will compare responses by selected political thinkers from different societies. There are many rich traditions of political discourse. The comparisons will serve as an introduction to a number of these traditions as well as highlighting and providing a deeper understanding of concepts that we take for granted in our own tradition.

The course is designed as a discussion class. It is expected that assigned readings will be completed by class time and that students will participate actively in the conversations. Students are also expected to complete two papers (7-10 pages each) and a final examination. From time to time, short (1-2 pages) position papers will be assigned to help facilitate discussions. Grading will be based on an equal weighting of the above components: 25% participation, 25% for each of the papers and 25% for the final examination.

Assigned books are available at Huntley Book Store. Other assigned readings are available on Sakai

Lao Tzu, The Tao Te Ching  
Plato, The Apology and Crito  
Plato, The Republic  
Aristotle, The Politics  
Machiavelli, The Prince  
Hobbes, The Leviathan  
Locke, The Letter on Toleration  
The Bible: Old and New Testaments  
The Koran  
Parel and Keith, Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies: Under the Upas Tree  
T.N. Ramaswamy, Essentials of Indian Statecraft: Kautilya’s Arthasastra (ereserves)  
Confucius, The Analects  
Han Fei Tzu, Basic Writings  
Descartes, Discourse on Method
READING ASSIGNMENTS

September 2  Introduction

September 7  The Comparative Perspective
  Parel and Keith, Comparative Political Philosophy, chpt. 1-3
  Arendt, “Introduction” to Between Past and Future (Sakai)

NATURE AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

September 9  The Bible (Genesis 1-29, Exodus 1-21, 28-34, 1 Samuel 8-11,
             Isaiah 1-7, 21, 45, John 1-8, 13-14)

September 14  The Koran (selections)

September 16  Lao Tse, The Tao Te Ching

September 21  Descartes, The Discourse on Method

September 23- 28  The Questions of King Melinda (Sakai) p. 1-136, 190-95,
                   202-13

PHILOSOPHY AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

September 30  Plato, The Apology and the Crito

October 5  Plato, The Republic, Part 1, Part 2 chpt. 5-8; Part III, chpt 23-25

October 7  Aristotle, The Politics, Bk I, III chpt 1-4, Bk VII

October 12  Confucius, The Analects, Bk 1-8, 11-17

October 14  Hsun Tzu, Basic Writings (Sakai)

October 19  Fall Break (no class)

Friday, October 23  First Paper Due
REASON VERSUS REVELATION: RELIGION AND STATE

October 21-26
St. Thomas Aquinas Introduction to St. T. Aquinas (ereserves) p. 3-15, 435,609-22, 646-50
St. Augustine, Political Writings of St. Augustine (ereserves) p.1-21, 28, 118-133. 195. 203-228
Alfarabi, “The Letter Concerning the Intellect” in Walsh & James, Philosophy in the Middle Ages (ereserves)
Averroes, “The Decisive Treatise Determining the Nature of the Connection Between Religion and Philosophy” in Walsh & James (ereserves)
Umar, “Farabi and Greek Philosophy in Parel and Keith, Comparative Political Philosophy (optional)
Lao Tzu, Hua Hu Ching (ereserves) no. 15, 16, 43, 47-51, 78

Religion and the State

October 28
Hobbes, Leviathan, Intro., Chpt 1,5, 10-13; Part II, Chpt. 17-18, 21, 29-30.
Locke, Letter on Toleration

MORALITY VERSUS EXPEDIENCY

November 2
Machiavelli, The Prince

November 4
Kauitlalya’s, Arthasastra (ereserves, under T.N. Ramaswamy, Essentials of Indian Statecraft: Kauitlalya’s Arthasastra) Pages 45-147.
Confucius, The Analects, Bk 12-17 review

GOVERNMENT: AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY

November 9-11
Aristotle, The Politics Bk IV, chpt 1-12; V, VI
Marx, The Communist Manifesto
Chuang Tzu ( Sakai)
November 16-18  **The Law and Society**
Han Fei Tzu, *Basic Writings*
Keith, “Law and Society in Confucian Thought” in Parel and Keith (optional)

**THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY**

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chpt. 3 (Sakai)
Confucius, *The Analects* (selections)
Gbade Gilesin, “Eniyan: The Yoruba Concept of a Person” (Sakai)

November 30  **Equality and Hierarchy**
Plato, *The Republic* Part II, chpt. 10, 12-14
*The Bhagavad Gita* (Sakai) chpts. 1-4, 6, 13,18

December 4  **Second Paper Due**

**THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: GLOBALIZATION AND DIALOGUE**

December 2  Nationalism/Decolonialization/ Neocolonialism
Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Sakai)
Mao Tse Tung (Sakai)
Keith, “Mao Zedong and his Political Thought” in Parel and Keith
Ware, “What Good is Democracy? The Alternatives in China and the West”, in Parel and Keith

December 7  Moral Critique of the West
Gandhi (Sakai)
Parel, “M. Gandhi’s Critique of Modernity” in Parel and Keith
Tehranian, “Khomeini’s Doctrine of Legitimacy” in Parel and Keith

December 9  Dialogue

**Final Examination:**  Thursday, December 17, 2009, 2PM