

PP 462 CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Spring 2003

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Office Hours: M 4:20-5:30, Th 2:30-4:00, and by appointment

This course will introduce the student to major themes and theorists of the 20th century. The century is marked by four major events: the collapse of empire, the rise of totalitarianism, the explosion of the atom and the disintegration of Marxism. Each event challenged a presumption of order and confronted theorists, politicians and citizens with questions and problems that demanded some resolution for continuance of daily living. There are six separate but coeval generational experiences that result in different perspectives, interpretations and articulation of what are seen as central philosophical problems.

Each student is expected to "adopt" a theorist and immerse oneself in the times, experiences, perspectives and thoughts of that person in order to gain a deep appreciation of an articulated perspective on the events and issues of this century. The course is organized around questions about which each theorist will have opinions and arguments. Each student is required to read and be prepared to discuss the common assigned texts. In these discussions each student is expected to represent thoughtfully and critically his or her theorist's views on the issues raised by the common text. At times, this may take the form of a short position paper or critique. At all times, active participation in class discussion is expected. The final project, due May 9th at 5 P.M., is a major paper (minimum of 20-25 pages) analyzing the works of the theorist chosen and organized around the perceived central problem addressed.

There also will be a final examination.

Required books available at Huntley Book Store are as follows:

Kierkegaard, The Present Age

Derrida, Specters of Marx

Gadamer, Heidegger's Ways

Arendt, The Human Condition

Ortega Y Gasset, Man and Crisis

Marcuse, Counter Revolution and Revolt

Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents

Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action

Foucault, History of Sexuality

J. Lechte, 50 Key Contemporary Thinkers is available, if desired, as a reference.

In addition there are numerous articles on electronic reserve at Honnold Library. The articles are listed separately under the reading assignments.

Reading Assignments

Jan. 21 Introduction

Jan. 28 **Reason & Passion: Dualism & Conflict**

Kierkegaard, The Present Age

M. Weber, "Science as a Vocation" & "Politics as a Vocation" from Gerth & Mills,
From Max Weber, pp. 77-156

Durkheim, Selected Writings, ed. by A. Giddens, "The Science of Morality", pp. 89-108

Mannheim, Ideology & Utopia, pp. 1-13, 33-59, 98-108, 188-204, 248-263

Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, pp. 3-32

Genealogy of Morals, pp. 283-299

Joyful Wisdom #125, pp. 167-69

Sorel, Reflections on Violence, pp. 41-53, 92-98, 115-128

Feb. 4 **Dis-covery of the Unconscious: Irrational or Structured?**

Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents

Durkheim, "Anomie and the Moral Structures of Industry", pp. 173-192

Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious", in The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, pp. 42-53

Lacan, "The Freudian Unconscious and Ours", pp. 17-28 in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis

Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud" in Ecrits: A Selection

Feb. 11-18 **Reading Period**

Choose the political philosopher that you will be working with for the semester. Read at two-three books by this person so that you have a good grounding in his or her thought. Meet with me individually during this time to discuss your choice and readings.

Feb. 25 **The End of the Tradition: Everything is Possible**

Ortega Y Gasset, Man & Crisis

Leo Strauss, "What Is Political Philosophy?"

Hannah Arendt, "Vita Action and The Modern Age", chpt. 6 in The Human Condition and "Tradition and the Modern Age" in Between Past & Future, pp. 17-40

March 4-11 **Knowledge: What Is Thinking?**

Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking", from Taylor, (ed.)
Deconstruction in Context
Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Selected lectures
Gadamer, Heidegger's Ways
Marcuse, "Philosophy and Critical Theory" from Negations

Knowledge: Objectivity and Subjectivity

Heisenberg, Physics and Beyond: Encounters and Conversations
Ortega Y Gasset, The Historical Significance of "The Theory of Einstein" from The Modern Theme

Knowledge: What is Real?

Hayward & Varela, Gentle Bridges
C. Lispector, "The Egg"

SPRING BREAK

March 25 **Nature: Artifact, Technology and the Loss of Standards**

Marcuse, Counter Revolution and Revolt
J. Ellul, Technological Society, Forward, chp. 2,6
Griffin, Woman and Nature, pp. 5-46, 125-31, 159-61, 167-74, 223-27.

April 1 **The Self: Who Am I?
The Crisis of Identity, Agency and Responsibility**

Sartre, "Existentialism" from Existentialism and Human Emotions
Foucault, The History of Sexuality
Foucault, "Afterward: The Subject and Power" in M. Foucault: Beyond Structuralism & Hermeneutics, Drefus and Robinson eds.
Wittig, "I Am Not A Woman"
Derrida, "Différance" from Margin of Philosophy in Taylor (ed.), Deconstruction in Context

April 8 **The Self: Negotiation at the interstices of race, class, gender, ethnicity and sexual preference.**

Illich, "Vernacular Gender," Evolution Quarterly, Sp. 1982.
Collins, Black Feminist Thought, chps. 1&2.
I. Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism and Ethnicity" in Race Nation Class: Ambiguous Identities.
Hans Jonas, "Biological Foundations of Individuality". Philosophical Essays from Ancient Creed to Technological Man.

Dan Brock, "The Human Genome Project and Human Identity" from Weir,
Lawrence & Fales (eds.), Genes and Human Self-Knowledge.

April 15 **Community: The Webs of Connections. How defined?**

Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.
Rheingold, The Virtual Community, chp. 9, 10.

S. Weil, The Need for Roots.

Habermas, "The European Nation State: On Past and Future of Sovereignty &
Citizenship" in The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory

April 22 **The ordering of the Community and the establishment of Justice.**

J. Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical" from M. Fisk (ed.),
Justice.

C. Mouffe, "Rawls: Political Philosophy without Politics" in The Return of the
Political.

Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, chp. 6.

Habermas, "Political Liberalism: A Debate with John Rawls, Chp. 2,
"Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason" in The Inclusion of the
Other.

April 29-
May 6 **Power and Politics**

Arendt, The Human Condition

Derrida, Specters of Marx

May 9 Research papers due.

May 13 Final Examination