

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

Spring 2005
 Room 104 PAC
 Tues.-Thurs. 1:10–2:30

Office: 310 PAC, x. 2489
 Hours: Mon. 11-12, Tues. 3-4,
 Thurs. 3-3:30, & by appointment

This course examines a number of important theories of politics from the late nineteenth through the twentieth century. Major issues include the role of reason in grounding the basic values and principles of our moral and political lives, the moral and conceptual foundations of liberal and civil republican democracy, and critiques of liberalism from communitarian, critical theory, and postmodern perspectives. This is the third course in the Government department Political Theory sequence, Govt. 337, 338, & 339.

Books for purchase (All books are also on reserve at Olin library)

Arendt, Hannah. The Human Condition (University of Chicago Press)
 Foucault, Michel. Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (Knopf)
 Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and Its Discontents (Norton)
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 The Ego and the Id (Norton)
 Jouvanel, Bertrand de. The Pure Theory of Politics (Liberty Fund)
 Marcuse, Herbert. One-Dimensional Man (Beacon Press)
 Nietzsche, Friedrich. The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals (Vintage)
 Oakeshott, Michael. Rationalism in Politics and other essays (Liberty Fund)
 Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. The Concept of Representation (University of California)
 Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice, rev. ed. (Harvard)
 Sandel, Michael. Democracy’s Discontent (Harvard)
 Schmitt, Carl. The Concept of the Political (Chicago)

Course Structure and Expectations

This course is structured to allow a high level of class discussion and close analysis of texts. Some works are rather difficult and require very careful reading. Readings should be completed before class so we can have good discussions. (Readings in parentheses are optional; those marked passim may be skimmed.) Class participation is important and attendance is expected.

Written work will include two papers and a final exam. The first paper, an essay (3-5 pp.), on Arendt and one of the preceding theorists, is due February 24. The short paper (5 pp.), on Rawls, is due April 7. Paper topics to be announced in class. The final exam is on everybody.

Rachel Schreiber will serve as Teaching Apprentice and is available to help with the assignments, as am I.

Syllabus

Jan. 20 Introduction

Critique of Enlightenment

Jan. 25 Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals, Preface, First and Second Essay

Jan. 27 ” , Third Essay

Feb. 1 Schmitt, Concept of the Political, pp. 19-79

Feb. 3 Oakeshott, “Rationalism in Politics” and “Political Education”

Feb. 8 ” , “The Tower of Babel” and “Rational Conduct”

Going Deeper

Conservatism

Feb. 10 Oakeshott, “On being Conservative”; and “The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind” passim.

Psychoanalytic theory

Feb. 15 Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, pp. 10-112

Feb. 17 ” , The Ego and the Id, pp. 3-62, (63-71)

Three-Dimensional Life

Feb. 22 Arendt, The Human Condition, Ch. I, secs. 1-2, (sec. 3); Ch. II, secs. 4-7, (sec. 9); Ch. III, secs. 11 & 17

Feb. 24 ” Ch. IV, secs. 20-21; Ch. V, secs. 24-28, 33, (sec. 34); (Ch. VI, sec. 45)

ESSAY DUE

Critical theory

Mar. 1 Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, Intro. to First Ed., Chs. 1, (2), 3

Mar. 3 ” , Chs. 6, (7 passim.), & p. 220, Chs. 9, 10

Spring break

Political Liberalism

- Mar. 22 Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Ch. I; Ch. II up through sec. 17
- Mar. 24 " , Ch. III, & omit secs. 27-28
- Mar. 29 " , Ch. IV, secs. 33-35, 39-40; Ch. V up through sec. 44, & p. 266, (sec. 50)
- Mar. 31 " , Pt. III, secs. 66-67, 77-79, 82, 85-86

Representing the Political Subject

- Apr. 5 Pitkin, Concept of Representation, Intro., Chs. 1-3
- Apr. 7 " , Chs. 4-6

PAPER DUE

Power, Norms and Action

- Apr. 12 Foucault, "Disciplines & Sciences of the Individual," pp. 169-238, omit 239-256
- Apr. 14 " , "Bio-Power" and "Sex and Truth," pp. 257-329
- Apr. 19 Jouvenel, Pure Theory of Politics, Pts. IV & III
- Apr. 21 " , Pts. II, V, & VI

Civic Republicanism

- Apr. 26 Sandel, Democracy's Discontent, p. ix-t.x, Chs. 1, 2; & passim. either Ch. 3 or 4
- Apr. 28 " , Chs. 5, 6; pp. 200-203, 250; & passim. either Ch. 7 or 8
- May 3 Sandel, Ch. 9 & Concl.
OR, Pitkin, Chs. 7-9