GOVERNMENT 6: POLITICAL IDEAS

Department of Government
Dartmouth College
Fall 2009
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Office Hours: M 10-11, W 3-4, or by Appointment.

COURSE AIMS: 1) To gain a deeper understanding of politics by reading and discussing the classic works of political philosophy; 2) To learn how a philosophical approach to politics differs from a scientific or ideological approach to politics; 3) To learn how to evaluate complex arguments about politics; 4) to learn how to construct oral and written arguments about politics.

REQUIREMENTS: 1) To attend every lecture/discussion. 2) To read the assigned material in advance of the class meeting in which we discuss it. 3) To participate in the discussions. 4) To write a midterm and final exam (both take-home). 5) To write a series of in-class blogs. The final exam will count for about 40%, the midterm for about 30% of the grade, the blogs for about 15%, participation in class discussion will make another 15%.

PEDAGOGY: We all learn only by doing. The person who learns the most from lecturing is the lecturer: so I will keep lecturing to the minimum. Each student will be asked to discuss the assigned reading and to summarize our discussions. There will be opportunities for you to volunteer in the student-led debates.

REQUIRED BOOKS:


All books available for purchase at Wheelock Books and the Dartmouth Bookstore.
SCHEDULE


Part One: Politics of the City-State (Kallipolis).

25: Introduction to Plato’s Republic.

    Readings: Plato, Republic, Book I.
              Arnhart, Political Questions, chap. 1.

28: Evolution, Paideia and the Emergence of the Kallipolis.

    Readings: Plato, Republic, Books II-V.

29 (X-Hour, Noon) Debate: Is Plato a Feminist?

30: Close Reading of Ship of State Simile (Republic 488-489).

    Reading: Plato, Republic, Books VI-IX.

October 2: From the Rule of Philosophers to the Rule of Law.

    Reading: Plato, Republic, Book X.

5: Aristotle: Man as a Political Animal.

    Readings: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book I and Politics, Book I.
              Arnhart, chap. 2.

6 (X-Hour: Noon) Aristotle’s Critique of Plato.

    Reading: Aristotle, Politics, Book II, chaps. 1-5.

7: Aristotle on Citizens and Constitutions.

    Reading: Aristotle, Politics, Book III.
Part Two: The Politics of the Human Community (Cosmopolis).

October 9:  An Augustinian Critique of Plato.
            Reading: Arnhart, chap. 3.

12: The Two Cities in St. Augustine.
    Readings: Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX.

              Arnhart, chap. 4.

14: Aquinas on War, Obedience, and Property.

Debate: Was the War in Iraq a Just War?

Take-Home Midterm Exam Assigned: Due October 21st in Class.

Part Three: The Politics of the Nation-State.

16: Power, Glory, and Political Ambition.
    Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*.
              Arnhart, chap.5.

19: The Imperial Republic.
    Reading: Machiavelli, *Discourses* (selections). Midterm Exam Due in class.

20(X-Hour, Noon): Debate: Is Machiavelli a Teacher of Evil?

21: Political Authority as Social Contract.
              Arnhart, chap. 7.

23: Class Cancelled: Homecoming.
26: Law: Natural and Civil.

27: (X-Hour, Noon): From Natural Law to Natural Rights: Government by Consent
    Arnhart, chap.8.

28 Debate: Are people by nature equal?

30: Social Contract and Government as Trustee of the People.
    Reading: Locke, Second Treatise, chaps. 10-19.

November 2, 4 and 6: Class Cancelled: Professor Away.

               Arnhart, chap. 9.

10: (X-Hour, Noon) Civil Religion.
    Reading: Rousseau, On the Social Contract, Books III-IV.

11: Civil Society and the State in Marx.
    Reading: Marx, On the Jewish Question.

13: The Dialectics of History.
    Readings: Marx, Alienated Labor and Manifesto of the Communist Party.
               Arnhart, chap. 11.

16: Debate: Did Marx Favor Capitalism?

17: (X-Hour) From a Free Society to Freedom from Society.

18 Mill on Applications of Liberty.
    Reading: Mill, On Liberty, chaps. 3-5.
    Debate: Would Mill just say No to drugs?
20: Wrap-Up Discussion.

November 23 and 25: Class Cancelled: Thanksgiving.

30: Final Exam Posted on Blackboard; Due Monday, Dec. 7 at Noon in 211 Silsby.

DISABILITIES POLICY: Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me, ideally, before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

PRIZE: The Andrew Warden Edson Memorial Prize of $100 may be awarded to one or two students who, in the judgment of the instructor, perform superlatively well in the course. This prize derives from the gift of Mrs. Jean Slater Edson in memory of her husband, who was a Dartmouth graduate in the Class of 1925.