

to which our various theories of governance might actually promote our interests as *persons-with-dignity* while likewise accounting for and promoting healthy forms of human sociality.

We will begin with a brief overview of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and its teaching on the dignity of the *Human Person*. At a Catholic-Jesuit University it is not unreasonable to critically engage our own tradition and the resources it brings to the fore. For those of you who are not participants to that tradition, you may well find that the Catholic Tradition offers us a morally robust starting-point from which to evaluate the political theories we will examine. However, I will also offer a secular position -- that of Immanuel Kant (1729-1804) -- as an alternative starting-point from which to conceptualize the human person and her relation to the societies within which she might find herself as a means to doing much, though perhaps not all, of what could be done with the Catholic Tradition with which we will begin.

Once we have anchored our conception of the person and his relation to the communities within which he inhabits, we can then begin our work by asking: to what extent does any particular political theory adequately account for what we see in the world around us and how well does that same theory address our aspirations and needs *qua persons*?

Our study of political theory will begin with Classical Liberalism in large part because it has had the most influence in shaping our (American) political experience and the aspirations of that experience. We will do this by means of a historical detour, beginning with the late-American Philosopher, John Rawls (1921-2001), and moving backwards to the thought of two critically important thinkers: John Locke (1632-1704) and J.J. Rousseau (1711-1778). From there, we move to positions that to some extent arise out of a critique of the adequacy of Classical Liberalism, Communitarianism for instance, or to those such as Conservatism and (Right and Left) Libertarianism that offer something of an alternative conception of the relation and role of government to the people, to the communities over which they are set, and to the means by which we might to achieve the social and personal aspirations that motivate us. As we proceed, we will be reading Carl Schmit (1888-1985) as a foil and deeply thoughtful critic of democratic systems in order to highlight or bring-into focus the reasons why we actually support or ought to support democratic systems. The course will end with an investigation of more recent trends in Feminist political thought and its distinctive contributions to the ongoing debate in respect of equality and justice.

Course Objective: [As I am re-thinking both the readings and themes as well as the assignments, it is not as yet possible to state the course objectives except in the most broad terms.]

Course Requirements: [I am re-working this section to include at least two writing assignments]

Optional: Students may elect to lead class discussion on a particular reading (or some portion thereof) as time permits and at the instructor's discretion. Students should expect to lecture or lead discussion for no more than ten to fifteen minutes (again, as time permits). This will count heavily toward your class participation grade. Anyone taking this course for honor's credit will be required to lead two such discussions.

Optional: Students may elect to write a short essay or reflection paper on a particular reading that we have not as yet discussed in class. Any such paper will be no less than three typed, double-spaced, pages, and no more than six pages in length. Furthermore, I must approve any such project prior to its submission, and no more than two such papers will be accepted throughout the semester. Each essay will count toward your participation grade; the actual points awarded will be dependent upon the quality of the submission.

Optional: Any student with perfect attendance will receive 100 points (10%) for the course, over and above all other points awarded for the course. Students who need to miss class for (documented) school sponsored activities or for legitimate medical or family reasons will not be counted absent. No points are awarded for anything less than perfect attendance.

Grading: Participation—20%;, Take-home final—60%; Essays -- 20%; Attendance -- 10% extra-credit.

Academic dishonesty: It is the student's responsibility to know the university's policies in respect to academic dishonesty. However, if there is any question about how those policies may be applied in this class, please consult with me before you submit your work. Be advised that I hold students to the highest possible standards of honesty and integrity: any form of cheating will result in the most severe penalty permitted by the university.

Reading assignments: [There is no question that a significant portion of what you see below will have to be re-worked or jettisoned in favor of other materials and topics. Lessons 4, 5, 7, 9, & 10 may be retained with some alternation, while the other Lessons will be dropped in favor of new material that better reflects the Course Description above.]

Lesson (1): The Greek Experience: (Weeks 1-3)

- (a) Understanding our historical distance from the Greek experience: on what the *polis* is not and never was; on the meaning of *Politeia* and *politikê epistêmê*; and, on the pre- and non-political forms of association.
- (b) The justice of Plato's *Republic*, and some remarks on the *Laws*.
- (c) Aristotle: the public-private distinction and its relation to political forms of association; humans as *zoon politikon*; and, the second-best *polity*.
- (d) Commentary and analysis of the Greek experience.

Readings: Fletcher:

http://www.freelance-academy.org/plato-republic/On_title_of_Republic.pdf.

Plato's *Republic*: Bk I, II, III & IV [begin reading at 336a]:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>.

Aristotle's *Politics*: Bk I, II, III, IV:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>.

Arendt: pp. 7-78; 175-247.

Lesson (2): A very brief reflection on the political significance of the Enlightenment:
(Week 4)

- (a) The Enlightenment as an accomplishment: traditional authority as the object of self-critical reflection.
- (b) Enlightenment as a project, both individual and collective: individual courage and the public use of reason – ethical and political implications.
- (c) Enlightenment as a goal: reason as the *telos* of history.
- (e) Enlightenment as a despot: on the politics of controlling deviance – gender, sexuality, the Holocaust, drugs, and spontaneity.
- (f) The Enlightenment as object of self-critical reflection: religious resurgence, culture wars, anti-modernism and post-modernism.

Reading: Kant: *What is Enlightenment?*

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html>.

Michel Foucault: *What is Enlightenment?*

[<http://foucault.info/documents/whatIsEnlightenment/foucault.whatIsEnlightenment.en.html>]

Lesson (3): Utilitarianism: (Week 5)

- (a) What is utility?
- (b) Equal consideration of the utility of each? Or, maximal realization of utility for all?
- (c) On the progressive character of nineteenth century utilitarianism.
- (d) On the limited utility of utilitarianism.
- (e) On the politics of utility and its subsequent conservatism in developed democracies.

Reading: Kymlicka: pp.10-52

Lesson (4): Liberal Equality: (Week 6)

- (a) Rethinking liberalism through the lens of justice.
- (b) The ‘original position’ and the ‘difference principle’.
- (c) Can practical reasoning be decoupled from the calculation of probabilities and can probability assessment undermine the normative value of the veil of ignorance?
- (d) The politics of post-Rawlsian liberalism.

Reading: Kymlicka: pp. 53-101

Lesson (5): The Libertarian Challenge: (Week 7)

- (a) Libertarianism and free markets.
- (b) What conflict of values?
- (c) Liberty for what? Liberty for whom? Libertarianism as a redefinition of the public-private distinction.
- (d) The politics of Libertarianism.

Reading: Kymlicka: pp. 102-165

Lesson (6): Communism: (Week 8)

- (a) Marx’s theodicy of history: class conflict as the engine of historical progress.
- (b) Politics as economic management: on the politicization of the productive process and the socialization of politics.
- (c) Marx’s eschatology: the crisis tendencies of capitalism and the judgment of the

proletarian revolution (i.e., socialism).

- (d) Marx's beatific vision and its rejection: the free association of workers (communism) and the terrible power of unrestricted social rule.

Reading: **First Manuscript** of: *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*:

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm>.

Preamble and Section #1 of: *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>.

Lesson (7): Communitarianism: (Week 9)

- (a) Community matters! On the limits of procedural refinement and practical mechanisms in respect to democratic governance.
- (b) Building communities and respecting communal traditions.
- (c) The politics of communitarianism.

Read: Kymlicka: pp.

Lesson (8): Citizenship Theory: (Week 10)

- (a) The responsible citizen, and the re-emergence of civic virtue.
- (b) Civic virtue as the *sine qua non* of functional democratic procedures and practices.
- (c) The citizen, the community, and the common good.
- (d) The Other, and the difficulty of moving from *demos* to *demoi*.
- (e) The politics of Citizenship Theory.

Read: Kymlicka: pp.

Lesson (9): Authoritarian challenges to Contemporary Democracy: (Week 11)

- (a) The exception as a challenge to the rule of law.
- (b) The exception and the unlimited power of the sovereign.
- (c) The non-cognitive dimension of the (political) decision and its corresponding relation to authority.
- (d) Politics as secular theology – on the irrelevance of consent and friend-foe response of acceptance or rejection.

Read: Schmitt: *Political Theology*

Lesson (10): Internal challenges to Democratic practice: form over substance.

(Week 12)

- (a) The discussing classes and the impotence of the mass.
- (b) The withdrawal of mass participation and the rise of technocratic elites.
- (c) Public opinion in the age of mass communication.
- (d) On the failure of liberalism and the poverty of conservatism.

Read: Schmitt: *Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*.

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus or the reading assignments as necessary. Students will be notified in class of any such changes.