

METHODS IN POLITICAL THEORY

Political Science 7991/7990 — Fall 2013

January 13: INTRODUCTION – ON BEGINNINGS

January 20: RATIONAL & MYTHOPOEIC POLITICAL THEOLOGIES

An immutable facet of human existence seems to be the desire for metaphysical solace, or a sense of being beyond oneself, in short, of transcendence. We call it by many names, construct myths about it, tell stories of its power and presence, and construct symbols that evoke it. Equally inevitable, it appears, is that this desire includes a sense of the good, the ethical, which beckons us to a standard of conduct, both individual and social. As we construct our social institutions, we are motivated to shape them in a fashion that respects and resembles those ethical codes. Thus, our politics is shaped by a sense of transcendence, (a God, the Gods, the Good, or Justice are just some of the names we give it), and we are in this fashion the creators and possessors of a political theology.

Required Reading: *Aeschylus, *Oresteia*
Jeremiah, Ezekiel, & Isaiah
 A. Heschel, “What Manner of Man was the Prophet,” and “Justice,” in *The Prophets*, Harper Modern Classics, 1962. (E-reserve)
 M. Jardine, “The Political Implications of William Poteat’s Philosophy” (E-reserve)

January 27-February 3: CAREFUL READING OF OLD BOOKS***

Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting anyone whom I meet after my manner, and convincing him, saying: O my friend, why do you who are a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens, care so much about laying up the greatest amount of money and honor and reputation, and so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? Are you not ashamed of this?

Socrates (as reported by Plato)

Required Reading: Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, & Crito*
 David D. Corey, “Socratic Citizenship: Delphic Oracle and Divine Sign,” *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Spring, 2005), pp. 201-228 (E-reserve)

Steven B. Smith, Introduction to *Reading Leo Strauss*
<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/764028.html>

Leo Strauss, “On Classical Political Philosophy” from *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: Essays and Lectures by Leo Strauss*. Edited by Thomas L. Pangle.

Leo Strauss, “Persecution and the Art of Writing” from *Persecution and the Art of Writing*.

Leo Strauss, *Plato* in Strauss & Cropsey, *History of Political Philosophy* (E-reserve)

Plato, *The Republic*

February 10: Interpretation, Historical Context, and the Modern Perspective***

But, it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful to him who apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

Machiavelli

- Required Reading:**
- *Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Translated by H. Mansfield, Jr. Strauss, "Nicolo Machiavelli" in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy or History of Political Philosophy and/or History of Political Philosophy*. Edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
 - H. Mansfield, Jr., Strauss's Machiavelli, *Political Theory*, Volume 3, Issue 4 (November 1975), 372-384. JSTOR
 - J. G. A. Pocock, "Prophet and Inquisitor: Or, a Church Built upon Bayonets Cannot Stand: A Comment on Mansfield's "Strauss's Machiavelli," *Political Theory*, Volume 3, Issue 4 (November 1975), 385-401. JSTOR
 - H. Mansfield, Jr., "Reply to Pocock," *Political Theory*, Volume 3, Issue 4 (November 1975), 402-405. JSTOR
 - J. G. A. Pocock, "Virtues, Rights, and Manners: A Model for Historians of Political Thought," *Political Theory*, Volume 9, Issue 3 (August 1981), 353-368. JSTOR

February 17: Pure and Practical Reason -- The Quintessential Faces of Modernity

The rational awareness of an objective principle which constrains will is a *command of reason*; and the expression of this command is called an *imperative*.

I. Kant

I shall maintain . . . that the persons in the initial situation would choose two rather different: the first requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties, while the second holds that social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society.

John Rawls

- Required Reading:**
- *I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*
 - *J. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*

February 24 & March 9: HEGELIAN RESPONSE TO THE MODERN PROJECT***

The Moral man is not he who merely wills and does that which is right—not the merely innocent man—but he who has the consciousness of what he is doing.

G. W. F. Hegel

Required Reading: *G. W. F. Hegel, *Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Trans. Y. Yovel)
Excerpts, Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of History (E-reserve)
Steven B. Smith, "Hegel's Idea of a Critical Theory," *Political Theory*,
Volume 15, Issue 1 (February 1987), 99-126. JSTOR

*G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*. Translated by A. Knox.
C. L. Eubanks, "Subject & Substance: Hegel on Modernity," *Loyola Journal of Public Interest Law*, Fall 2004, pp. 101-125).

March 2: IDEAL TYPES – MODES OF EXPERIENCE -- CONVERSATIONS

This, I believe, is the appropriate image of human intercourse -- appropriate because it recognizes the qualities, the diversities, and the proper relationships of human utterances. As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves."

M. Oakeshott

Required Reading: M. Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," in *Rationalism, in Politics and Other Essays*
M. Oakeshott, "Political Philosophy," in *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*
M. Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*
E. Corey, *Michael Oakeshott on Religion, Aesthetics and Politics*,
University of Missouri Press, 2006

March 23 & 30: NIETZSCHE'S PERSPECTIVE ON METHOD***

What then are our experiences?" he asks. The answer: "Much more that which we put into them than that which they already contain! Or must we go so far as to say: in themselves they contain nothing? To experience is to invent?"

F. Nietzsche

Required Reading: F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, Especially "The Problem of Socrates" and "'Reason' in Philosophy" <http://www.handprint.com/SC/NIE/GotDamer.html>
 *F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
 L. Strauss, "Note on the Plan of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*. Originally published in *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*, 3, nos. 2 and 3, 1973.
 *F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Clark and Swenson. (Alternative)

F. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, Translated by F. Hollingdale

M. Heidegger, "Nietzsche's Fundamental Metaphysical Position," and "Who was Nietzsche's Zarathustra", from *Nietzsche*, Volume 4. Translated by J. Stambaugh, David Krell, and Frank Capuzzi. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.

April 4: A BRIEF HUSSERLIAN INTERLUDE ON THE RECOVERY OF NAIIVETÉ

"It will gradually become clearer, and finally be completely clear, that the proper return to the naïveté of life – but in a reflection which raises above this naïveté – is the only possible way to overcome the philosophical naïveté which lies in the [supposedly] 'scientific' character of traditional objectivistic philosophy."

E. Husserl

"But now we must note something of the highest importance that occurred even as early as Galileo: the surreptitious substitution of the mathematically substructured world of idealities for the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable – our everyday life-world."

E. Husserl

Required Reading: Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, Chapter 1, Harper, 2003
 *Pettrakis & Eubanks, *Eric Voegelin's Dialogue with the Postmoderns: Foundations without Foundationalism*. (Introduction, Epilogue), University of Missouri Press, 2004.
 P. Ricoeur, "On Interpretation" in *From Text to Action*. Trans. Kathleen Blakey and John B. Thompson. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991.
 E. Levinas, "The Contemporary Criticism of the Idea of Value and the Prospects for Humanism" and "God and Philosophy"
 Jan Patočka, "Negative Platonism: Reflections concerning the Rise, the Scope, and the Demise of Metaphysics and Whether Philosophy Can Survive It," in *Jan Patočka: Philosophy and Selected Writings*, ed. Erazim Kohak (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989)
 Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*
<http://lifecourses.ca/sites/default/files/Taylor%20on%20Modernity.pdf>

April 11: MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND THE FORGETTING OF BEING

This thinking is neither theoretical nor practical. It takes place before this differentiation. This thinking, insofar as it is, is the remembrance of Being and nothing else. . . . Such thinking has no result. It has no effect. It satisfies its nature simply by being. It lets Being be.

M. Heidegger

Required Reading: M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings* (Especially: *Being and Time: Introduction; What is Metaphysics; On the Essence of Truth; Letter on Humanism; Building Dwelling Thinking; What Calls for Thinking?; and The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*)
A. Conque & C. L. Eubanks, "Mitda-Sein, Authenticity, and Care: Heidegger's Other Politics, 2012 (E-Reserve)

April 18: THINKING – WILLING – JUDGING***

Poetically speaking, [history's] beginning lies . . . in the moment when Ulysses, at the court of the king of the Phaeacians, listened to the story of his own deeds and sufferings, to the story of his life, now a thing outside itself, an 'object' for all to see and to hear. What had been sheer occurrence now became 'history.'

H. Arendt

Required Reading: H. Arendt, "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy"
H. Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations"
Excerpts from *The Human Condition*: "Labor," "Work," and "Action"

April 25: AN EXPERIENTIAL MEDITATION ON TRANSCENDENCE***

God and man, world and society form a primordial community of being. The community . . . is a datum of experience in so far as it is known to man by virtue of his participation in the mystery of its being. It is not a datum of experience in so far as it is not given in the manner of an object of the external world but is knowable only for the perspective of participation in it.

E. Voegelin

Reading Assignments: Eric Voegelin, "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization of History" from *Collected Works*, Volume 12. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1990. (E-reserve)
Eric Voegelin, "Reason and the Classical Experience" from *Collected Works*, Volume 12. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990. (E-reserve)
*Eric Voegelin, *In Search of Order*, Volume Five, *Order and History*, U. of Missouri Press

Course Requirements:

In each seminar session, the focus of our attention will be a particular set of readings. **Emphasis will be placed, therefore, on a careful and thorough understanding, interpretation, and analysis of these readings.** Part of my evaluation of your performance in the seminar will depend upon my assessment of how effectively you accomplish this exegetical and interpretive task.

Each week, approximately one-half of the class will be responsible for preparing an interpretive essay on the readings for that week. These essays should be from 3-5 pages in length. They will provide the basis of our discussion for that class. Most of the time, these interpretive essays will focus on the assigned readings; on occasion you may be asked to focus on an analytical issue I raise about the readings. In preparing your interpretive essays, you may consult sources other than those assigned. Your essays will be submitted electronically to the class Moodle site, on Mondays at 3:00 p.m. You will be asked to present all or a portion of them in class on the following Wednesday.

Finally, in addition to the interpretive essays you will be asked to prepare a research proposal or prospectus in political theory. You will begin this process by submitting an abstract, much as you would for a conference, followed by a 6 to 10 page prospectus in which you identify the question(s) you wish to pursue, why you wish to do so, and how you propose to do so. I will give you more guidance on this assignment as the semester proceeds. However, your abstracts should be submitted by the March 30 meeting and your proposal by Monday, April 30. What follows is a guide to how the class requirements described above will be factored into my evaluation of your class performance:

Six Interpretive Essays.....	60%
Oral Presentations & Class Discussion.....	10%
Research Proposal.....	30%

Office Hours: MWF from 9 to 10:30 & 12:30 to 1:30 — or— By appointment at your convenience.

Office: 237 Stubbs Hall — Telephone: [O] 388-1944

poeubk@lsu.edu