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**Specialized Studies in Political Theory:
Contemporary Political Theory**

Government 219, Tues./Thurs., 5:30 p.m. - 6:45 p.m., AMD-262
Spring 2004

Description

This course is a seminar on twentieth-century political theory. We will examine six influential contemporary thinkers, focusing in each case on the implications of their thought for questions of democratic theory and politics. After successfully completing this course, students will have an improved understanding of the conceptual and practical dilemmas facing contemporary democracy, as well as the resources that can be found in contemporary political theory for addressing those dilemmas.

Texts

There will be a course reader containing essays by Jürgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, and other selected contemporary theorists. I have also ordered the following books:

- John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*
- Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*
- Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*

Requirements and Grading

The requirements of this seminar are to read, write, and discuss as much as possible. Students are of course expected to attend class on time, having read and thought about the day's assignment. Beyond that, the course has the following requirements.

Presentations: Every Thursday one student will be assigned to give an approximately 10-minute presentation on the reading for that day. Presentations should 1) offer a critical commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of the assigned reading, focusing on those issues the presenter deems most significant; and 2) present 3-5 questions for class discussion. Presentations should be accompanied by an outline, distributed to the class on the day of the presentation. Everyone should present on an approximately equal number of readings by the end of the semester.

Papers: Students will write a total of approximately 25 pages. There are two options: You may write either five 5-page papers *or* three 5-page papers and one 10-page paper. In either case, you must write on at least *five* of the six assigned primary authors, as well as a significant portion of the assigned secondary literature, by the end of the semester. Papers are due on the dates indicated in the schedule below.

Grades: The first three papers will each be worth 15 percent of the final grade. The remaining two papers (or single 10-page paper, for those who so choose) will each be worth 20 percent (or 40 percent). Presentations and class participation will count for 15 percent of the final grade. Students will be informed twice during the semester of their participation grade up to that date. Students have the option of rewriting any paper to improve their grade. The final grade for rewritten papers will be the average of the original and the rewrite. Rewrites should be submitted as soon as possible after receiving comments, and all rewrites must be submitted by the last day of finals week. I will distribute suggested paper topics, grading criteria, and writing tips later in the semester.

Tentative Schedule

- Jan. 27 Introduction
Jan. 29 Bhikhu Parekh, "Political Theory: Traditions in Political Philosophy," in *A New Handbook for Political Science*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- John Dewey**
Feb. 3 Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, chap. 1, pp. 64-74, 75-91.
Feb. 5 Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, chap. 4-6.
Feb. 10 Axel Honneth, "Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation: John Dewey and the Theory of Democracy Today," *Political Theory* 26 no. 6 (1998): 763-783.
Timothy V. Kaufman-Osborn, "John Dewey and the Liberal Science of Community," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4. (Nov., 1984): 1142-1165.
Feb. 12 Eric A. MacGilvray, "Experience as Experiment: Some Consequences of Pragmatism for Democratic Theory," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43, No. 2. (Apr., 1999): 542-565.
James Bohman, "Democracy as Inquiry, Inquiry as Democratic: Pragmatism, Social Science, and the Cognitive Division of Labor," *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 2 (April 1999): 590-607
- SHORT PAPERS DUE TUESDAY, FEB. 17
- Carl Schmitt**
Feb. 17 Tracy Strong, Foreword to *The Concept of the Political*
Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 19-79.
Feb. 19 Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, 1-32
Feb. 24 Leo Strauss, "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*," in *Concept of the Political*, 83-107.
John P. McCormick, "Fear, Technology, and the State: Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and the Revival of Hobbes in Weimar and National Socialist Germany," *Political Theory* 22, no. 4 (1994): 619-652.
Feb. 26 Chantal Mouffe, "On the Articulation Between Liberalism and Democracy" and "Pluralism and Modern Democracy: Around Carl Schmitt," in *The Return of the Political*, 102-134.
Chantal Mouffe, "Carl Schmitt and the Paradox of Liberal Democracy," in *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, ed. David Dyzenhaus (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 1998).
- SHORT PAPERS DUE MARCH 2.
- Michael Oakeshott**
Mar. 2 Kenneth Minogue, "Michael Oakeshott as a Character," *Society* 39, no. 3, (2002): 66-70.
Noel O'Sullivan, "Why Read Oakeshott?" *Society* 39, no. 3, (2002): 71-75.
Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," "Political Education," and "The Study of 'Politics' in a University," in *Rationalism in Politics*, 5-42, 43-69, 184-218.
Mar. 4 Oakeshott, "The Masses in Representative Democracy" and "On Being Conservative," in *Rationalism in Politics*, 363-383, 407-437.
Mar. 9 Oakeshott "The Tower of Babel" and "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of

- Mar. 11 Mankind” in *Rationalism in Politics*, 465-487, 488-541.
 Harwell Wells, “The Philosophical Michael Oakeshott,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55:1 (1994): 128-145.
 Steven Gerencser, “A Democratic Oakeshott?” *Political Research Quarterly* 52, no. 4, (1999): 845-867.
 Andrew Sullivan, “George W. Bush, meet Michael Oakeshott,” *The New Republic* (August 06, 2001): 6.

SHORT PAPERS DUE MARCH 16.

Hannah Arendt

- Mar. 16 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 1-78.
 Mar. 18 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 175-247.
 Mar. 23 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 248-257, 289-325.
 Mar. 25 George Kateb, “Political Action: Its Nature and Advantages,” in *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, 140-148.
 Jürgen Habermas, “Hannah Arendt: On the Concept of Power,” in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*.

SHORT PAPERS DUE MARCH 30.

Michel Foucault

- Mar. 30 Foucault, “Two Lectures,” in *Critique and Power*, ed. Kelly.
 Apr. 1 Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” in Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 208-226.
 Apr. 13 Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
 Apr. 15 Foucault, “Politics and Ethics: An Interview,” in *The Foucault Reader*
 Peter Digeser, “The Fourth Face of Power,” *Journal of Politics* 54, 4 (1992): 977-1007.

SHORT PAPERS DUE APRIL 20

Jürgen Habermas

- Apr. 20 Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964),” *New German Critique* 1:3 (Fall, 1974), 49-55.
 Apr. 22 Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy,” in Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other* (MIT Press 1999).
 Apr. 27 Habermas, “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure,” in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (MIT Press, 1996).
 Apr. 29 Chantal Mouffe, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?” *Social Research*, 66, 3 (1999): 745-758.
 Seyla Benhabib, “Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy,” in *Democracy and Difference. Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996): 67-94.
 Iris Marion Young, “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference. Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996): 120-135.

SHORT PAPERS DUE MAY 20

Summing Up #1

May 4

Power and the Public

Dana Villa, "Postmodernism and the Public Sphere," *APSR* 86, 3 (1992).

James Johnson / Dana Villa, "Public Sphere, Postmodernism and Polemic," *APSR* 88, 2 (1994): 427-433.

May 6

Archon Fung, "Survey Article: Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* (2003).

Summing Up #2

May 11

Politics and the Political

Mark E. Warren, "What is Political?" *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 11, no. 2 (1999): 207-31.

May 13

Mark E. Warren, "What Should We Expect From More Democracy? Radically Democratic Responses to Politics," *Political Theory* 24, no. 2 (1996): 241-70.

May 20

LONG PAPERS DUE.