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Office Hours: Mondays 1-4 and by appointment

## INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY Political Science 120, Spring 2005

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Political theory investigates how we should and how we do live together. It is an inquiry into some of the fundamental problems and priorities of collective life: liberty, authority, equality, justice, and governance. There is fairly broad agreement that these are necessary or even good things, but much less agreement about what they are. What are liberty, authority, equality, etc. and how do they relate to one another? And which of them is or are the most important? This course is designed to introduce students to the practice of thinking systematically about these and related phenomena. We will do so by reading, speaking, and writing about freedom and order, and especially about political freedom and political order. We'll see that freedom and order can be seen as complementary and antagonistic, and that each can be praised or condemned. The syllabus is structured around a series of questions. If you get disoriented, think about how a particular reading addresses the questions of the course.

### COURSE PACKET

Readings are collected in a required course packet available for purchase in class Friday, January 14.

### COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS

This course is a reading, lecture, writing, and discussion course. These four elements will set us on our way toward thinking--and by that I mean thinking critically--about freedom and order. Participation in class discussions is an essential element of this course. Assigned materials must be read by the day they are assigned and consistent attendance is mandatory. Poor attendance and attending class unprepared will seriously affect your participation grade and overall performance.

The written work for this course will consist of two 5-7 page papers in which you will be asked to analyze and/or synthesize themes from the readings, and two exams. Paper topics will be assigned and late papers will be penalized.

**Your work must be your own. Any sources you consult must be cited (to do otherwise is to plagiarize: see <http://www.uic.edu/depts/pols/Plagiarism1.pdf>). I recommend that you avoid sources outside the reading list and especially sources on the internet, which is not a useful tool for critical essay writing.**

### SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING PERCENTAGES:

- Participation 10%
- Two 5-7 page papers, 25% each, for a total of 50%  
(See "Schedule of Assignments" below for due dates)
- Midterm exam 20% (in class February 25)
- Second term exam 20% (in class April 29)

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

### **I. What do we already think and know about freedom and order?**

M-1/10: Course introduction

W-1/12: Handouts: Mark Danner, "The Torturers" (2004) and "We Are All Torturers Now" (2005); Thomas Jefferson, letter to William Stephens Smith (1787)

F-1/14: Discussion section

## **II. What do their opposites tell us about freedom and order?**

M-1/17: No class (Martin Luther King day)

W-1/19: Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave

F-1/21: Discussion section

M-1/24: Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor"

W-1/26: Sophocles, Antigone

F-1/28: Discussion section

## **III. What is political freedom and what are its sources?**

M-1/31: Arendt, "On Violence"

**\*\*Paper topic one assigned: due in class Friday 2/18**

W-2/2: Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration"

F-2/4: Discussion section

M-2/7: Paine, Common Sense

W-2/9: Declaration of Independence; the familiar letters of Abigail and John Adams; Seneca Falls Declaration; Douglass, North Star editorial; and Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?"

F-2/11: Discussion section

M-2/14: Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"

## **IV. What is political order and what are its sources?**

W-2/16: Hobbes, Leviathan, chs. 13-14 and 17-18

F-2/18: Hobbes, Leviathan, chs. 13-14 and 17-18, continued

**\*\*papers due at beginning of class!!**

M-2/21: Federalist 10 and Federalist 51

W-2/23: Constitution of the United States (required); Marbury v. Madison (recommended)

F-2/25: MIDTERM EXAM (in-class)

M-2/28: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, pp. 39-55, 112-28

W-3/2: Tocqueville, Democracy in America, pp. 198-209, 217-220

F-3/4: Discussion section

#### **V. What do freedom and order require from individuals?**

M-3/7: Minersville School District v. Gobitis and Board of Education v. Barnette (required);  
Texas v. Johnson (recommended)

W-3/9: Plato, Apology

F-3/11: Discussion section

M-3/14: Plato, Crito

W-3/16: King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

F-3/18: Discussion section

3/21-3/25: No class (Spring break)

M-3/28: Melville, "Billy Budd"

**\*\*Paper topic two assigned: due in class Friday 4/15**

W-3/30: Melville, "Billy Budd," continued

F-4/1: Discussion section

#### **VI. What do freedom and order require from societies?**

M-4/4: Marx, "On the Jewish Question"

W-4/6: Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital"

F-4/8: Discussion section

M-4/11: Rodriguez, excerpts from The Hunger for Memory

W-4/13: Anzaldua, excerpts from Borderlands

F-4/15: Discussion section

**\*\*papers due at beginning of class!!**

M-4/18: Rubin, "The Traffic in Women"

W-4/20: Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," continued

F-4/22: Discussion section

M-4/25: Berger, Ways of Seeing, Ch. 3

W-4/27: Berger, Ways of Seeing, Ch. 7

F-4/29: SECOND HALF TERM EXAM (in-class)

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THIS COURSE**