SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & LANGUAGES

ARTS2384

Utopia, Violence & Free Speech: Introducing Political Theory

SEMESTER 2, 2013
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COURSE STAFF
Name: Dr James Phillips
Room: Morven Brown 322
Phone: 9385 2987
Email: j.phillips@unsw.edu.au
Consultation Times: Mondays 1-2 pm (for other times, e-mail to make an appointment)

COURSE DETAILS
Historical introduction to political philosophy by means of close readings of texts by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Hannah Arendt (1906-75). Topics covered will include: the nature of political philosophy, the relation between moral and political values, the justification and limits of state authority, ideas of social contract, consent, power, rights, property, freedom, democracy, mechanisms of political change and conceptions of the public political sphere.

Units of credit: 6

LECTURE TIMES (WEEKS 1-9, 11-13)
Mondays 10 am -12 noon: Rupert Myers Theatre

TUTORIAL TIMES (WEEKS 2-9, 11-13)
Mondays 3-4 pm: Morven Brown G5 OR
Mondays 4-5 pm: Morven Brown G5

COURSE AIMS
The aims of this course are:
• To instil a critical appreciation of central texts of Western political philosophy
• To build on students’ existing knowledge of the history of philosophy
• To develop advanced skills in research and philosophical inquiry

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the completion of this course students will be able to:
• Identify and understand the theories and arguments of some of the major European political philosophers
• Apply critical and conceptual thought to existing and proposed political institutions
• Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches within political philosophy
• Display skills associated with scholarly inquiry in the discipline of political philosophy, such as information literacy, critical analysis, argument and written expression

LEARNING AND TEACHING RATIONALE
The course is structured around weekly readings, lectures and tutorial discussions. Preparation by reading the set texts is crucial for successful participation in the course.
The challenge of understanding a text from the history of philosophy requires both sympathy and suspicion. It requires sympathy because in order to find our feet in a text we have to put aside our own philosophical preoccupations and orient ourselves with regard to the problem
that the text sets itself. If we are sympathetic, we will not let ourselves stop too soon, judging the text by what we are inclined to find implausible, fallacious or insignificant. Without such sympathy we are at risk of never being able to step back from our own prejudices and the prejudices of our age: sympathy on one front can thus motivate critique on another. Yet sympathy turns into credulousness or condescension toward the philosophical text if it is carried too far. The text, inasmuch as it is philosophical, wants us to be suspicious and to judge it by how well it addresses the problem it lays out.

The history of philosophy is, for philosophy, never something done and dusted, since new interpretations keep arising in response to perceived disproportions between later readers' sympathy and suspicion. In this context of open-ended engagement, the history of philosophy is not so much a store of solutions to which we can resort or a cautionary tale about blind alleys as it is a means of throwing our current conceptions off balance as we attempt to arrive at truth and understanding.

What the three political thinkers we will be studying in the course have in common is that they all wrote in English. From there their paths diverge, for whereas Hobbes offers a philosophical defence of absolutist government, Locke advocates setting limits to government in the name of private property and Arendt champions a participatory and pluralist political realm. From an engagement with their thought students can expect an initial orientation in the Anglophone tradition of political philosophy.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

The course will run as a weekly two-hour lecture with tutorials addressing the material covered in the previous week’s lecture.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>29/7</td>
<td>Hobbes, <em>Leviathan</em>, pp. 75-149</td>
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<td>Hobbes</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Locke</td>
<td>16/9</td>
<td>Locke, <em>The Second Treatise of Government</em>, pp. 57-112</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Public Holiday</td>
<td>7/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Arendt</td>
<td>14/10</td>
<td>Arendt, <em>On Revolution</em>, pp. 49-131</td>
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**COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Student evaluative feedback on this course is welcomed and is gathered periodically, using among other means UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) process.

Student feedback is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback. Significant changes to the course will be communicated to subsequent cohorts of students taking the course.

**REFERENCES**

**Texts**

There are three required texts for this course. All are available for purchase from the UNSW Bookshop.


**Moodle**

One of the first things to do in this course is to make sure you have access to ARTS2384 on Moodle.

Lecture notes will be posted on Moodle.
Suggested further reading on Hobbes:


Suggested further reading on Locke:


Suggested further reading on Arendt:


Students are strongly advised to venture beyond these recommendations. An engagement with the secondary literature will assist students in orienting their own interpretations of the primary texts covered in the course. Each of the three thinkers with whom we will be dealing is the subject of a vast secondary literature that continues to grow. It is a feature of an academic essay that a position is adopted in relation to previous commentaries.

**Websites**

Students seeking resources can also obtain assistance from the UNSW Library. One starting point for assistance is:

http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html

The database “Philosopher’s Index” is one recommended research tool for exploring the scholarly literature on political philosophy.

**ASSESSMENT**

Tutorial Questions. Percentage of total mark: 10%

All students are expected to write a comment and question each week on the set reading. These should demonstrate an engagement with the reading.

The point of this exercise is to help students feel their way into the arguments, terminology and aims of the prescribed texts.

The comments and questions will be read aloud at the start of the tutorials and will guide the discussion. Comments and questions that are vague and/or simplistic are unlikely to generate discussion.

In week 13 each student should also send all his or her comments and questions in a single e-mail to the lecturer. The lecturer will then review them and assign a grade. Without a copy of the comments and questions no grade can be awarded.

90% of the course mark is drawn from three academic essays that students will need to write on the three thinkers dealt with in the course. Students are welcome to devise their own topics but must obtain the course convenor’s approval of the topic prior to submission.

First Essay: 1,600 words. Percentage of total mark: 30%

**Topic: Hobbes**

Due date: Monday 2 September (week 6).

Essay questions: 1) Discuss and evaluate Hobbes’s materialism in its bearing on his account of law and liberty.

2) What is Hobbes’s view of religion? How does it inform his political thought?
3) What is the problem for which Hobbes proposes the sovereign as a solution? What are the merits/defects of this solution?

4) What is Hobbes’s legacy for modern political thought?

Second Essay: 1,600 words. Percentage of total mark: 30%
Topic: Locke
Due date: Monday 30 September (week 9).
Essay questions: 1) Discuss and evaluate Locke’s arguments for limited government.
2) Discuss and evaluate Locke’s impact on Western politics.
3) Analyse Locke’s account of the relations between church and state.

Third Essay: 1,600 words. Percentage of total mark: 30%
Topic: Arendt
Due date: Friday 1 November (week 13).
Essay questions: 1) How does Arendt define the political and the social? What follows from her definitions? What problems do these definitions surmount/create?
2) Discuss and evaluate Arendt’s account of the French Revolution?
3) Discuss and evaluate Arendt’s account of the American Revolution?

The criteria against which the essays will be marked are:

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<th>C</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>CONTENT/STRUCTURE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Coherent overall argument</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Argument lacks overall coherence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear exposition of key issues that demonstrates understanding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Issues unclear/poorly chosen</td>
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<td>Insightful/original analysis of primary texts and commentaries</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Superficial/perfunctory analysis of primary texts and commentaries</td>
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| ACADEMIC ESSAY STYLE | | | ACADEMIC ESSAY STYLE |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Grammatically correct | Numerous/grave grammatical errors |
| Accurate referencing | Poor referencing |
| Pertinent quotations supporting argument | Quotations poorly used |

Your overall grade is **not** obtained by averaging your grades against the six criteria.
Rationale for Essays
Successful completion of the essays will help you to develop a number of the attributes that UNSW expects of its graduates, most notably scholarly methods, critical thinking, independent learning and effective communication skills.

Assignment Submission
- The cut-off time for all assignment submissions in the School is 4 pm of the stated due date.
- 2 assignment copies must be submitted for every assessment task - 1 paper copy and 1 electronic copy.
- All hard/paper copy assessments should be posted into the Assignment Drop Boxes outside the front counter of the School of Humanities and Languages on level 2, Morven Brown Building by 4pm on the due date.
- A completed cover sheet must be securely attached to assignments. The School is not responsible for any missing pages from poorly bound or stapled assignments.
- In addition, a soft copy must be sent through Moodle on Turnitin by 4 pm on the due date

Important Note
Only hard copies submitted in the drop boxes will be marked/assessed.

Assignment Collection
Assignments should be collected from your lecturer and must be collected by the owner/author of the assignment. A stamped self-addressed envelope must be provided on submission if students require their assignment to be posted back to their home address.

Assignment Extensions
A student may apply to the lecturer for an extension to the submission date of an assignment. Requests for extension must be made via myUNSW before the submission due date, and must demonstrate exceptional circumstances, which warrant the granting of an extension. If medical grounds preclude submission of assignment by due date, contact should be made with the course convenor as soon as possible. A medical certificate will be required for late submission and must be appropriate for the extension period.
To apply for an extension please log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration

Late Submission of Assignments
Assignments submitted after the due or extended date will incur a 1% penalty per day including weekends (calculated from the maximum marks available for the entire course). Assignments received more than 14 calendar days after the due or extended date will not be allocated a mark.

ATTENDANCE
To successfully complete this unit you are required to attend minimum 80% of classes. If this requirement is not met, you will fail the unit. The course convenor will keep attendance records.
ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM
Students seeking information on plagiarism should visit the following web site:
http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
UNSW’s Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others.

Any OHS concerns should be raised with your immediate supervisor, the School’s OHS representative, or the Head of School. The OHS guidelines are available at:

STUDENT EQUITY AND DIVERSITY
Students who have a disability that requires some adjustment in their learning and teaching environment are encouraged to discuss their study needs with the course convener prior to, or at the commencement of the course. Alternatively, the Student Equity and Diversity Unit can be contacted on 9385 4734. Further information is available at:
http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au

GRIEVANCES
All students should be treated fairly in the course of their studies at UNSW. Students who feel they have not been dealt with fairly should in the first instance attempt to resolve any issues with their tutor or the course convenors. If such an approach fails to resolve the matter, the School of Humanities and Languages has an academic member of staff who acts as a Grievance Officer for the School. This staff member is identified on the notice board in the School of Humanities and Languages. Further information about UNSW grievance procedures is available at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html

OTHER STUDENT INFORMATION
myUNSW is the single online access point for UNSW services and information, integrating online services for applicants, commencing & current students and UNSW staff. To visit myUNSW please visit either of the below links:

https://my.unsw.edu.au
https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/ABC.html