

Political Science 2060
Ideology from Aristotle to Postmoderns: Introduction to Political Theory
Fall 2019

Instructor: M. Riley

Pronouns: they/them/theirs

Office: 328 Stubbs Hall

Class Time: M/W/F 1:30-2:20

Office Hours: M/W/F 2:30-3:30

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Section One: Habituating Ideals and Cultivating Procedures

The first section will begin with an analysis of Aristotle, Hobbes, the Federalists, and Antifederalists. We will examine how their beliefs shaped their ideology, focusing on the differences between them. The questions that will be asked during this section are: How do ideologies reflect cultural beliefs? How do contemporary ideologies reference these thinkers? Students are asked, as always to consider the ideology of each thinker and the beliefs and ideas that contribute to this ideology.

Memos and Questions due: September 20, October 2

Reading Schedule:

August 28-4: Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, III, V

Topics: Importance of ethics; human flourishing and politics; justice

August 6-September 11: Aristotle *Politics*, Book III

Topic: Human nature as political; the good citizen; the relationship of the citizenry to the economic realm

September 13-18: Hobbes *Leviathan* Ch. 13-15

Topics: Politics and order; rationality as opposed to anarchism; comparison to Aristotle

September 23-25: Federalist No. 10, 84

Topics: Procedural democracy; technocracy; factions; view of wealth/poverty

September 27-30: Antifederalist, Brutus No. 1, DeWitt 2

Topics: Power and trust; who protects rights and who gives them up; comparison of human nature with the Federalists

Section Two: *Homo Economicus*

Michel Foucault and Wendy Brown are two of neoliberalism's prominent critics. Each writer argues that the ideology of neoliberalism is holistic; something that shapes us, and we project upon the world. We will look at this ideology in light of contemporary discourse on the sociopolitical implications of neoliberalism. We will discuss and examine neoliberalism's relationship to other forms of ideology, and its importance in politics.

Memos and Questions due: November 4, November 22

Question only discussion: December 2

October 21: Foucault, Chapter 1

Topics: Truth as collective; Chomsky and Foucault's conceptions of human nature; justice; who holds power

October 23: Foucault, Chapter 2-3

Topics: Innate capacity to see the truth; American ideology as cohesive; the role of students in politics; history and political science.

October 25: Foucault, Chapter 4, 6

Topics: Creation of knowledge; ideology in everyday life; biopolitics

November 13: Brown, Chapter 1-2

Topic: Democracy and neoliberalism; depoliticization of politics

November 15: Brown, Chapter 2-4

Topics: *Homo economicus*; neoliberalism as a governmentality; change in governance

November 18: Brown, Chapter 5-Epilogue

Topics: Social and political impacts of neoliberalism; education no longer educative; returning to Aristotle's notion of human being

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to introduce you to political theorists who have greatly influenced our understanding of ideology. The goal of this course is to explore theoretical conceptions of ideology as well as its cultural components and how they contribute to our current understanding of politics. The course focuses on critically thinking about questions of ideology and how ideology has changed from Aristotle to Wendy Brown, a contemporary theorist. The question of ideology is consistent and requires us to think about how cultural beliefs and ideas contribute to ideology. Thus, we will attempt to contextualize these texts in our analyses.

This class is meant to encourage you to think about how we encounter ideology in our lives, both politically and socially. My goal is that this class will help you to think critically about the world in which we live. In keeping with this outlook, we will approach the books analytically and hope to engage in the world with a more critical lens. In order to develop this lens we will discuss the texts each class period with the intention of understanding these theorists' conception of political society, and within that political society who we are as political actors.

Texts

Michel Foucault, *The Chomsky Foucault Debate*

Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos*

All other texts are available on Moodle

Grading

The class is out of 1000 points.

1 paper (500 points)

4 book memos (200 points)

4 discussion days (150 points)

5 question assignments (150 points)

A+= 100-97/ A= 96-93/ A-=92-90

B+= 89-87/ B= 86-83/ B-= 82-80

C+= 79-77/ C=76-73/ C-=72-70

D+= 69-67/ D= 66-63/ D-= 62-60

F= 59 and below

Assignments

Each writing assignment must be 5-7 double spaced pages using Times New Roman 12 pt. font double-spaced. All citations should be in Chicago format. Throughout the semester students will

be asked to write a one-page double spaced memo on four of the texts. The memo should cover *one* premise the author examines. You should use these memos to think about which book you will want to write. For example, you could investigate Hobbes' usage of love as a passion, and what that means for a society founded on controlling passions.

This semester is discussion focused. At the end of our reading of the text, we will have discussion days in which students bring a question on the text that we will discuss as a class. On those days there will be no lecture; we will only discuss the texts. The final discussion day, December 2, is not mandatory attendance. It will be a dedicated class period to discussing the books, their arguments, and their ramifications.

A good question is directed and motivated by the text. You can also address what aspect of a thinker's ideology do you question, and in that you must elaborate on why, using the text. For example,

Michel Foucault argues that discourse and practice create human nature. His methodology largely centers around this belief of societal creation. However, does placing the physical body only in the context of discourse and how it is measured and treated dismiss the lived experience?

Your final paper is due December 9th. The paper will be a critical analysis of one of the texts read in class. You will address one point that the author raises on the idea of power, ideology, beliefs, or ideas; you are required to examine the author's argument. You can pick any of the books to write on. The paper should not use personal pronouns such as "I"; it should use formal language. It is intended to examine the text critically.

Classroom Policies

Due to the classroom size, the course focuses on in-class discussion. Students are required to write memos on four of the readings. During discussion of the texts, students will be expected to have at least one question prepared for classroom discussion. Please bring a typed copy of your question to class as an indication of being present. I expect students to be respectful to one another during class. Students should not interrupt one another and should be willing to fully hear another student's argument, whether or not they agree with one another.

Students are expected to attend every class. However, roll will not be taken at every class. You are only required to attend classes on discussion days. The question assignments cannot be made up, so it is in your best interest to attend class. If you experience an exceptional problem regarding your classroom attendances makeup assignments are available. Regular attendance and keeping up with the readings are necessary to do well in the class.

Technology is more than welcome in the classroom. However, if you are going to use a laptop, you must sit at the back of the class to avoid distracting other students. If you need to sit to the front of the class for any reason, we can discuss this.