

Political Science 4913 Contemporary Political Theory

Spring 2009

Lecture: Coleman 2140

TU-TR 3:30-4:45

Kevin Anderson, Instructor

Office: Coleman Hall 2335

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11:00-12:00 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appointment

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Course Description: This is a course that explores the fundamental ideas that help shape modern political philosophy. What is the role of the morality and power in shaping society? Are economics and politics separate spheres of influence or do they mutually reinforce each other? We will read and discuss the most important ideas of several modern political thinkers in order to illuminate how their ideas continue to impact our perceptions of modern politics and society.

Required Text:

Cahn, Steven *Classics of Modern Political Theory: Machiavelli to Mill*

* Readings on Reserve to be selected by Instructor.

Class Attendance: Your attendance will be critical to your success. If you must miss a class, it will be your responsibility to obtain any missed lecture notes; I will not go over lecture material again. **Special Note:** The format of this class lends itself to open class discussion and I welcome all relevant insights into the topic of the day however, I do not want the class to be dominated by one person, or reduced to a shouting match. Come prepared to discuss the topic of the day (and only that) by reading the assigned materials.

* Please respect your classmates by turning off all Cell Phones and other electronic devices when you enter class and leaving them off until class ends. NO TEXTING!!

Reading Assignments: Students are expected to complete all reading assignments prior to the class in which a topic will be discussed. Some material for this course may be placed on reserve and assigned during specific sections of the course. I will instruct the class on any reading assignments not listed in the syllabus.

Papers: There will be short papers assigned in each section of the course in which you will select a thinker and discuss the primary ideas presented in the text or debated in class.* These papers will be short (3-4 pages in length; preferably typed) and graded according to the understanding of the theorist and the strength, originality, and coherence of the argument presented. They will be worth 100 points each.

Note: Any paper turned in after the listed deadline will lose one letter grade for each class period it is late.

* Graduate students will be assigned longer papers on a specific work of a thinker and will clear their choice and topic with the instructor. Graduate students are also exempt from the final exam but will be responsible for a final research essay (10-15 pages) to be turned in on the day of the final.

Exams: There will be two (2) exams in this class; a midterm and a final exam worth 100 points each. The exams may contain essays, short answers, and identification questions. I will discuss the format of the exam before it is administered.

The grading scale will be:

500-450=A
449-400=B
399-350=C
349-300=D
299-000=F

Make-Up Exams: Make-Up Exams will be given only when a valid excuse has been presented. Please notify your Instructor as soon as possible if you miss an exam.

Academic Honesty: Anyone caught cheating on an exam or plagiarizing a paper will receive an 'F' for that exam or paper and will be reported to university administrators for disciplinary action. In short: DON'T CHEAT!

Learning Disabilities/Special Needs: Students with disabilities who require special accommodation are encouraged to meet with the Instructor during the first week of class. If you need any special assistance to learn in this class, please notify me and steps will be taken to assist you. For further assistance or information, please contact the EIU Office of Disability Services at 581-6583.

Important Dates to Remember:

January 26, 2009-Last day to drop a course without a grade
April 3, 2009-Last day to withdraw from a course
March 26, 2009-Midterm Exam
May 7, 2009- Final Exam

Reading Assignments:

Part 1: Modern Ideals and Moral Individuals

Introduction: **Individuals and Society**

Understanding Morality and the Individual

Reading Assignments: Cahn:

Niccolo Machiavelli *The Prince* (Chapters XV-XIX; XXII-XXIII)

Baruch Spinoza *Theologico-Political Treatise* (Chapters XVI and XX)

John Locke *The Second Treatise of Government* (Chapters II, V, VII, VIII, IX)

1st Paper due February 12th

Part 2: Modern Individuals and Moral Systems

Reading Assignments: Cahn:

Montesquieu *The Spirit of the Laws* (Book 1 Chapters 1-3; Book II Chapter 2; Book III Chapter 3 Book VIII Chapters 1-4, 16)

Jean Jacques Rousseau *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (The Second Part)

Adam Smith *The Wealth of Nations* (Book 1 Chapters 1-2, 4; Book IV Chapter II Book V Chapters II-III)

2nd Paper due March 12th

Spring Break March 16-20th

Midterm Exam March 26th

Part 3 Individuals, Systems, and Modern Society

Reading Assignments: Cahn:

Edmund Burke *Reflections on The Revolution in France* (All)

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels *The Communist Manifesto* (All)

The German Ideology (All)

John Stuart Mill *Considerations on Representative Government* (Chapter 3)

Alexis De Tocqueville *Democracy in America* (Chapter 7)

3rd Paper due April 30th

Final Exam Thursday May 7, 2009 12:30-2:30

