

PSCI 6301
CORE SEMINAR IN POLITICAL THEORY

Tuesdays 2.35 to 5:25 pm.

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Prof. Waller R. Newell
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Theme of the Course:

An interesting debate in the social sciences today surrounds the question of "foundationalist" versus "non-foundationalist" approaches to the study of politics. The foundationalist approach argues that political legitimacy can be deduced from a set of rational premises, as in Hobbes' theory of the social contract. Non-foundationalists such as Habermas argue, by contrast, that politics should be viewed historically and pragmatically, and that legitimacy is always mediated by a particular community and context.

This debate is grounded in a deeper reflection on whether philosophy, and therefore political philosophy and the reasoned study of political life, is itself based on a rational premise, or whether, by contrast, the search for philosophical clarity is grounded in some prior existential concern or experience that cannot itself be defended in rational terms. Is philosophy, in other words, grounded in a prior act or faith or existential decision?

Accompanying this question is a kindred one: How does the world have to present itself to us to make philosophy both necessary and possible? What set of historical and psychological experiences make philosophy imaginable in the first place? Does it depend on a particular historical setting, like the ancient Greek polis? Or on religious revelation? Or on a pre-philosophic experience of "wonder" like that evoked by Socrates in his attempt to account for his "turn" from natural science to the study of the human things? As Nietzsche was to put it in trying to re-evolve the origins of philosophy from the sedimentation of millennia of received philosophical doctrines, the question we need to ask may not be so much "What is the truth?" as – "Why truth?" Where does the need for truth originate?

We will consider these issues as they arise in three paradigmatic attempts by philosophers to uncover the horizon of experiences within which philosophy emerges. First, we will re-visit the issue of Socrates' "turn" and his varying attempts to explain allegorically his experience of "wonder" and his search for the ideas prompted by the erotic need to clarify that wonder. Then we will examine Hegel's evocation of *Sittlichkeit*, the realm of customary being, the natural horizon of pre-philosophic experience that gives rise to the need for philosophical clarity, located in the archaic Greek polis and its burgeoning tragic tension between ethical and divine laws. Following this, we will consider Nietzsche's understanding of the origin of philosophy in a series of "prejudices" that philosophy itself cannot explain, leading us to search for the pre-philosophic originary ground of all philosophizing, the will to power. Finally, we will consider Heidegger's evocation of the existential anthropology of everyday being-in-the-world as the antecedent experiences of uncanniness and care that ground the search for formal theoretical clarity.

All of these varying searches for the pre-philosophic life-world that explains the move to philosophy will, as we will see, have profound implications for our approach to the study of politics and questions of justice, civic fulfilment and political legitimacy.

Requirements and Evaluation:

1) A term paper of 20 pages double-spaced typed to be submitted at my office from 12-2pm on the last day of winter term, Tuesday April 7th. Worth 50% of grade.

2) Weekly oral presentations on the readings on an equally rotating basis. Worth 50% of grade.

Texts: On order at the Carleton University Bookstore (B) or on reserve in Political Science Resource Centre (C):

Leo Strauss, "Progress or Return?" **C**

Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, chapters 1 and 2. **C**

Waller R. Newell, "Did Plato Believe In His Own Metaphysics?" **C**

Plato, excerpts from *Apology*, *Theaetetus*, *Symposium*, *Phaedo*. **C**

G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. **B***

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. **B**

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. **B**

Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*. **B**

* The Baillie translation of Hegel is now available free on the internet. I have ordered Miller's because it is readily available in print. Baillie's translation is in my view better, and he provides invaluable prefaces that explain each section including the specific historical context. On the other hand, Miller's translation includes Hegel's own section numbers and his language is less ornate.

Schedule of Readings:

January 6. Introductory remarks.

January 13. Essays by Strauss, Voegelin, Newell. Excerpts from Plato.

January 20. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Readings are by section number in the Miller translation. Preface (1-41). Introduction (entire).

January 27. Spirit. Ethical World (438-476). Right and Legal Status (477-483). Religion (entire).

February 3. Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Books 1-3.

February 10. Books 4-6.

February 24. Books 7-9.

March 3. Heidegger. BEING AND TIME. Readings are by section numbers, not page numbers. The Question of Being (1 - 4. 5-8). The Existential Analytic of Dasein: Being in the World (12, 14-16, 18) Being with Others (25-29).

March 10. Being with Others cont'd (30-38). Care and the Primordial Wholeness of Dasein (39-42).

March 17. Authenticity, Resoluteness and Freedom Towards Death (45, 49, 50, 53-55) (56-58, 60-62, 64). Historicity and the Authentic Political Community. (72-74).

March 24. "Letter on Humanism." "Essay Concerning Technology."

March 31. Concluding remarks.

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your letter of accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by November 7, 2008 for December examinations, and March 6, 2009 for April examinations.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;

submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;

using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;

using another’s data or research findings;

failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or

failing to use quotation marks;

handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course. The Department's Style Guide is available at: <http://www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/Essay%20Style%20Guide.html>

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: The Department of Political Science only communicates with students via Connect accounts. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.