

Liberty University

From the Selected Works of Steven Alan Samson

Fall 1998

Political Theory

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GOVT 349
Political Theory
Liberty University

FALL 1998

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Office Hours:
MWF 1:15-2:15; W 8-11; TR 9:20-11:20, 3:20-4:20

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

An application of methodological individualism to the study of collective decision making. The behavior of voters, bureaucrats and elected political agents will be examined. Special attention will be given to group theory, constitutional theory, and the economic reasons for limiting the size and growth of government.

PURPOSE

1. The student will be exposed to philosophical and social scientific endeavors to explain and evaluate political institutions and behavior.
2. The student will learn how to analyze and systematize various systems of ideas by examining primary as well as secondary sources.
3. The student will thereby become better equipped to understand, participate in, and evaluate political processes.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student is responsible for assigned readings and should keep a looseleaf notebook of class materials. A separate notebook or folder of reading materials will be kept on reserve on the library, along with a few other resources.
2. Participation is an essential part of class. Reading assignments should be completed before the class meets. Be prepared to discuss readings, report on assigned articles, and review current events. Additional topical readings may be assigned from time to time.
3. Attendance is required. A week's absence may be excused, but lengthy absences or erratic attendance will have a detrimental effect on grades (possibly 10% of the grade or more). If you expect to miss class or leave class early, please notify the department before class meets.
4. Students will be tested on the lecture, reading, and discussion material through four short answer and/or essay exams. (20% each)
5. The grading scale is 100-91=A, 90-81=B, 80-71=C, 70-61=D, 60 and below=F.
6. Students will make one or two brief presentations (5-7 minutes apiece) on selected articles from the optional or recommended reading list.
7. Each student will write an analytical essay (6-8 pages) comparing and/or contrasting the themes of Bastiat's The Law with one or two other works from the reading list using the study questions for Bastiat and the framework supplied in the textbook as guides. (20%) DUE: November 23.

or

8. Each student may write a bibliographic essay (6-8 pages) on a twentieth century political thinker that examines and comments upon the writer's major primary materials and at least two secondary sources. (20%) DUE: November 23. Each student should choose a different subject on a "first come, first served" basis. The list of readings for each week should suggest possible candidates. If there is time, brief oral presentations may be made during the last week of class.

READING LIST

Textbooks

Bastiat, Frederic. The Law
Minogue, Kenneth. Politics: A Very Short Introduction [M]
Schall, James V. A Student's Guide to Liberal Learning
Schumaker, Paul, et al. Great Ideas/Grand Schemes [G]

Handouts

Budziszewski, J. "Politics of Virtues, Government of Knaves"
Hayek, Friedrich. The Road to Serfdom [abridged]
Hughes, Jonathan. "Regulatory Legerdemain"
Kirk, Russell. "The Idea of Conservatism," from The Conservative Mind
_____. "Three Types of Imagination," from "Introduction" to Irving Babbitt,
Literature and the American College
Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von. Leftism Revisited, Introduction, chs. 1-4.
Locke, John. Second Treatise on Civil Government (excerpts)
Lieber, Francis. "The Ancient and Modern Teacher of Politics," from
Miscellaneous Writings
Mitchell, William C., and Randy T. Simmons. "Political Pursuit of Private
Gain: Coercive Redistribution"
Portland Declaration
Rahe, Paul. "Don Corleone, Multiculturalist"
Rushdoony, Rousas John. Politics of Guilt and Pity, ch. II:6
Samson, Steven Alan. "Models of Historical Interpretation," Contra Mundum
Sumner, William Graham. "What Social Classes Owe Each Other."

Reserve Desk

Bronner, Stephen Eric. Twentieth Century Political Theory: A Reader [B]
Curtis, Michael, ed. The Nature of Politics [C]
Panichas, George A., ed. Modern Age: The First Twenty-Five Years [P]
Rothbard, Murray N. For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto
Rushdoony, Rousas John. The One and the Many
_____. Politics of Guilt and Pity
Schumaker, Paul, et al. Ideological Voices: An Anthology [A]
Sorokin, Pitirim. The Crisis of Our Age
Vasquez, John A. Classics of International Relations [V]

Notebook

Budziszewski, J. "The Problem with Communitarianism" (also on internet)
_____. "The Problem with Conservatism"
_____. "The Problem with Liberalism"
Christensen, Bryce J. "Pitirim A. Sorokin: A Forerunner to Solzhenitsyn,"
Modern Age, 38:4 (Fall 1996): 383-91
Francis, Samuel. "Beautiful Losers"
Marty, William R. "Liberalism Without Transcendence"
Sandlin, Andrew. "Failure of Conservatism"
Wirls, Stephen H. "The Moral Imperative: Old Liberalism's New Challenge"

SCHEDULE

FIRST WEEK: INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL THINKING IN CONTEXT

Required: G. 1; Schall; Samson, "Models of Historical Interpretation;"
Kirk, "Three Types of Imagination;" Rushdoony, "The Relationship of Man
To Law" in Politics of Guilt and Pity
Recommended: Rushdoony, The One and the Many, ch. 1
Optional: C. 10 Becker and 13 Lerner, 11 Spykman and 12 Hauser, 15 Lasswell
and 16 Wright

PART I: HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCES

SECOND WEEK: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL POLITICAL THOUGHT

Required: M. 1-4; C. 38, 40; Lieber, "Teacher of Politics"
Recommended: Rushdoony, The One and the Many, ch. 2
Optional: P. 60 Voegelin; C. 38 Radcliffe and 40 Weber

THIRD WEEK: MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Required: M. 5-8; P. 44; Rahe, "Don Corleone, Multiculturalist"
Optional: C. 39 Simon and 51 Polanyi

FOURTH WEEK: POLITICS: SOCIAL SCIENCE AND IDEOLOGY

Required: M. 9-13
Optional: C. 1 Social Science Research Council and 3 Easton, 4 Catlin and 5
Morgenthau, 6 Rostow and 7 Carr, 7 Thompson and Ortega y Gasset,
86 Group Theory: Truman and Odegard

FIRST EXAM: October 5

FIFTH WEEK: CLASSICAL LIBERALISM AND CONSERVATISM

Required: S. 2-3; Locke, Sumner
Optional: A. 2 Nozick; A. 3 Kirk

SIXTH WEEK: ANARCHISM AND MARXISM

Required: S. 4-5; Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Leftism Revisited, Introduction, chs. 1-4

Optional: A. 4 Goldman, Kropotkin, Wolff; A. 5 Marx, Engels, Tucker

PART II: TWENTIETH CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

SEVENTH WEEK: POLITICAL ECONOMY: INDIVIDUALIST PERSPECTIVES

Required: Bastiat; Mitchell and Simmons, "Political Pursuit of Private Gain;" Hughes, "Regulatory Legerdemain."

Optional: Rothbard 1, 2, 3, 8, Epilogue

SECOND EXAM: October 23³⁰

EIGHTH WEEK: POLITICAL ECONOMY: COLLECTIVIST PERSPECTIVES

Required: S. 6-7

Optional: C. 43 Rostow and 44 Hook, 54 Tawney and 55 Drucker; B. Lenin, Gramsci and Stalin, Mussolini and Primo de Rivera, Hitler, Marcuse, Foucault

NINTH WEEK: THE MODERN THEME: PROGRESSIVE LIBERALISM

Required: S. 8; Hayek, The Road to Serfdom (abridged); Garrett, "The Revolution Was"

Recommended: Budziszewski, "The Problem with Liberalism"

Optional: A. 8 Dewey; P. 7 Regnery, 63 Burnham; B. Habermas and Croce, Jaspers, Rawls, Arendt, Sandel

TENTH WEEK: VARIETIES OF LEFTISM

Required: S. 9 284-91, 296-309

Recommended: Budziszewski, "The Problem with Communitarianism"

Optional: A. 9 Pateman, Walzer, Harrington; Von Mises, "Socialism;" P. 50 Niemeyer, 52 Molnar

THIRD EXAM: November 20²⁰

ELEVENTH WEEK: CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Required: S. 12-13

Optional: A. 12 Kahane, Falwell, Khomeini; A. 13 Leopold, Kelly, Regan; B. Gandhi and Fanon, DuBois, King, Beauvoir, Rowbotham, Beck

ESSAYS DUE: November 23

TWELFTH WEEK: VARIETIES OF CONSERVATISM

Required: S. 10; Sandlin, "Failure of Conservatism"

Recommended: Budziszewski, "The Problem with Conservatism"

Optional: A. 10 Huntington, Kristol, Gilder, Sowell; Francis, "Beautiful Losers;" P. 6 Meyer, 8 Habsburg, 12 Nisbet, 21 Nash on Kendall,

GOVT 349 DUALISTIC MODELS

A variety of religious traditions, social conventions, and political ideologies are animated by a dynamic tension -- often dualistic or dialectical -- in which fundamentally different realities, principles, or interests are seen to be at work. Manicheanism, for example, is a dualistic religious system based on the irreconcilable conflict between light and darkness, spirit and matter. Hegel's dialectical process philosophy, on the other hand, permits the reconciliation of opposites -- thesis and antithesis -- through a new synthesis.

Many of the most influential political theories and ideologies are based on antinomies, contradictions, and dilemmas. These range from Karl Marx's infrastructure and superstructure, the public and private spheres of the ancient Greeks, and the distinction between good and evil that Friedrich Nietzsche attributed to a priestly caste's radical revaluation of the knightly-aristocratic values of a rival warrior caste. Very often they become embedded in our popular culture as morality tales through the use of stereotypes, caricatures, and scapegoats, such as venal businessmen, monocled Nazis, renegade generals, and brilliant sociopaths. The Star Wars series, for example, deliberately drew upon Jungian archetypes and used Nazi imagery (much of which derived from occult traditions) to depict the Empire.

A dualistic or dialectical conception of the world is characteristic of many of the ideologies we have been studying. Like the ancient Gnostic religions, they either suggest or actually teach that a fundamental contradiction lies at the heart of things, whether it is a duality of spirit and matter, society and individual, infrastructure and superstructure, public and private, or good and evil. These opposites are often given cosmic significance and, in many cases, a human face. Racism, nationalism, nativism, eugenics, social castes, economic classes, and dualistic religions are all based to some degree on a distinction between "us" and "them," which may correspond with ideas about good and bad or even good and evil.

Each question is designed for considering similarities and differences between, and possibly internal contradictions within, two or more political theories. Pick any four questions for your short essays. Be sure to comment on each element of the question.

1. Identify and discuss four specific criticisms environmentalists and feminists make of conventional liberal (individualist/utilitarian) epistemologies, such as instrumental reason and Enlightenment science. If Man (or man) is the problem, how do various schools of environmentalist and feminist thought view the effects of a homocentric and/or androcentric perspective? What solutions, if any, do they offer?
2. Apply the Marxist and/or fascist concept of alienation to analyze problems identified by any three other ideologies: contemporary liberalism, democratic socialism, contemporary conservatism, environmentalism, and/or feminism. What in each case is seen as the cause or causes of alienation? What is required to overcome it?
3. How do contemporary liberals and conservatives differ regarding justice, especially with respect to the causes and remedies for racial discrimination? Identify and discuss at least two non-racial causes of income differences and two negative consequences of preferential policies. Why does Thomas Sowell believe such policies sometimes hurt the very groups they are intended to help (as in the perversity thesis)?
4. Identify several democratic socialist criticisms of capitalism, comparing them with the environmentalist and feminist critiques. Examine any ideological common ground you may find in the ways their respective adherents discuss such topics as "desperate (inequitable) exchanges," the public/private distinction, long-term vs. short-term considerations, patriarchy, and the absence of a holistic approach.
5. How do contemporary liberals and conservatives differ as to their views of liberty and the role of the state? Discuss the implications of T. H. Green's concept of positive liberty and identify four contemporary liberal applications of it to an expansion of rights and entitlements. Compare and contrast the perspectives of any four of the following: Edward Bernays, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Garet Garrett, Friedrich von Hayek, William Mitchell, and/or Jonathan R. T. Hughes.
6. Compare and contrast the views of Friedrich von Hayek and the democratic socialists on the reasons for or against of state planning. Why did Hayek, who was influenced by Alexis de Tocqueville, believe that a planned society (whether Communist or fascist) would favor the unscrupulous? Compare his views with those of the elitist theorists and those of Lenin on the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat.
7. (Instead of 5 or 6) How do contemporary liberalism, democratic socialism, and contemporary conservatism differ with respect to the ideas of government regulation, planning, and redistribution? Discuss its attractions and dangers as seen by any three of the following: Bastiat, Hayek, Garrett, Mitchell, and Hughes.

22 East on Strauss, 23 Sandoz on Voegelin, 28 Lytle, 34 Shenfield
on Hayek, 38 Ervin; B. Oakeshott, Strauss, Podhoretz

THIRTEENTH WEEK: RELIGION AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

~~Required: S. 11;~~ Budziszewski, "Politics of Virtues, Government of Knaves."

Recommended: Wirls, "Moral Imperative;" Marty, "Liberalism Without Transcendence"

Optional: Christensen, "Pitirim A. Sorokin;" P. 41 Schall, 43 Roepke, 45 Williamson, 46 Herberg, 47 Ward on Dawson

FOURTEENTH: THE END OF IDEOLOGY?

~~Required: S. 14;~~ Portland Declaration

Recommended: Rushdoony, II:7 "Truth and Liberty" and III:3 "The Moral Foundations of Money," in Politics of Guilt and Pity

Optional: V. Morgenthau, Freud, Mead, Wallerstein

FIFTEENTH WEEK

Wrap-Up

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 14, 2:00-3:50 PM

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Garrett, Garet. The People's Pottage, 1953.
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