

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Methods of Political Theory

Political Science 839

Fall 2019

Instructor: R. Avramenko
Office: 203 Meiklejohn House
Office Hours: by appointment

Course: PS839
Location: Education L155
Time: R 4:00 – 6:30

Course Objective:

This seminar is designed for graduate students training to study and to teach philosophical texts as a vocation. After first exploring the purpose of political theory generally speaking, the course then focuses on the major approaches to texts. Each method will be explored from two angles—first, we will analyze the theoretical underpinnings with an eye to the nuts and bolts of the method. Second, we will study the method in practice. Over the course of the semester we will consider the exegetical approach of the Straussian school, the historical approach of Quentin Skinner (the Cambridge School), phenomenological hermeneutics (Martin Heidegger), hermeneutics (Hans-Georg Gadamer), deconstruction (Jacques Derrida), genealogy (Michel Foucault), and finally, the cross-cultural approach of Comparative Political Theory. Other schools that may be considered include the analytical tradition and vantageism.

Required Texts:

John Caputo. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy)*

Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books; 1984). (ISBN: 0394713400)

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995)

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method (Second Revised Edition)*, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company; 1989)

Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, transl. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1969)

Leo Strauss. *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*. (ISBN: 0226777138)

Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press; 1987).

Please purchase these editions and translations. This is a text-based course and full participation requires that we navigate and explore the text together—that we be on the same page, so to speak.

Requirements:

Seminar Participation:	10%
Presentations and papers (4 @ 5-10 pp.):	80%
Syllabi:	10%

1. Participation:

First, this course assumes all students have read, sometime in recent history, Plato's *Republic* and Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses*. If you have not, please read soon.

Second, this a seminar. This means its effectiveness depends on two things: reading and participation. The grading schema is therefore designed to encourage both. The participation is based on attendance, preparedness, and participation in discussion. Carefully reading the assigned material before each class will go far to ensuring a full participation grade.

2. Presentations:

Students will be responsible for five presentations (2-3 students per week). On the students' assigned day for presentation they will serve as our resident hermeneuts. That is, students will be our experts on the text. The task is not to talk for the whole class, but rather to facilitate the discussion, to present what are perceived to be the major themes and statements in the text, and to be the experts guiding us in our interpretation and discussion.

The week following the conclusion of that section of the class, students will submit a 4-6 page paper. In short, there will be about 25 pages of writing for the semester.

3. Syllabi:

Near the end of the semester, students will create two syllabi. These syllabi will demonstrate how they would teach this class. One syllabus shall be for a graduate level class, the other for undergraduate. The syllabi should be polished and complete, and ready for inclusion in your teaching portfolio.

Schedule:

September 12: What is Political Theory?

Required:

- i) Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy?" in *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*, pp. 9-27.
- ii) Voegelin, Eric. *The New Science of Politics*, Introduction, pp. 1-26.
- iii) Mark E. Warren. "What is Political Theory/Philosophy?" in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 1989), pp. 606-612.
- iv) Bhikhu Parekh. "Theorizing Political Theory" in *Political Theory in Transition*, O'Sullivan
- v) Sheldon S. Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation." *American Political Science Review* 63 (1969), pp.1062-82.
- vi) Isaiah Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?" in *Concepts and Categories*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1988).

Suggested Readings:

- i) Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Indispensability of Political Theory," in D. Miller and L. Siendentop, *The Nature of Political Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983)

- ii) Jeffrey Isaac, "The Strange Silence of Political Theory," in *Political Theory* 23(4) [1995], pp. 636-652.
- iii) Elizabeth Kiss, "The Strange Silence of Political Theory: Response," in *Political Theory*. 23(4) [1995], pp. 664-669.
- iv) Seyla Benhabib, "The Strange Silence of Political Theory: Response," in *Political Theory*. 23(4) [1995], pp. 664-669.
- v) John Gray, "After the New Liberalism"
- vi) Alfred Cobban, "The Decline of Political Theory," in *Political Science Quarterly* 68(3) [1953], pp. 321-3.
- vii) Dante Germino, "The Revival of Political Theory," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Aug., 1963), pp. 437-460.

September 19: The Chicago School

A) Theory

- i) Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," in *Social Research* 8:4, pp. 488-504.
- ii) Leo Strauss, "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing" in *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (pp. 221-232).
- iii) Allan Bloom, "The Study of Texts" in *Giants and Dwarves* (pp. 295-314).
- iv) Shadia Drury, "The Esoteric Philosophy of Leo Strauss" in *Political Theory* 3:13.

September 26: The Chicago School

B) Practice

- i) Strauss, Leo, "On Plato's *Republic*," in *The City and Man* (pp. 50-138).
- ii) Strauss, Leo, "Machiavelli's Intention: *The Prince*," in *APSR* 51:1 (1957), pp. 13-40.
- iii) Leon Craig, *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's Republic*, Prologue (pp. xiii-xxxviii).

October 3: The Cambridge School

A) Theory

- i) Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," in *History and Theory* 8 (1969).
- ii) Quentin Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts," *New Literary History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter 1972)
- iii) Quentin Skinner, "'Social Meaning' and the Explanation of Social Action" in *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 106-127.
- iv) Parekh, Bhikhu and R.N. Berki. "The History of Political Ideas: A Critique of Q. Skinner's Methodology," in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 34. No. 2. pp. 163-184.

Suggested Readings:

- i) Quentin Skinner, "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action," *Political Theory* 23 (1974), pp. 277-303.
- ii) James Tully, *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*: pp. 1-135.

- iii) John Dunn, "The History of Political Theory," in *The History of Political Theory and Other Essays* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1996).

October 10: The Cambridge School

B) Practice

- i) Quentin Skinner, "Machiavelli on virtue and the maintenance of liberty," in *Visions of Politics Vol. II: Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 2002), pp. 160-185
- ii) Quentin Skinner, "The idea of negative liberty: Machiavellian and modern perspectives," in *Visions of Politics*, pp. 186-212
- iii) Quentin Skinner, on The Rediscovery of Republican Values (in *Visions of Politics* Vol. II).
- iv) Nathan Tarcov, "Quentin Skinner's Method and Machiavelli's *Prince*," *Ethics* 92 (1982), pp. 692-709

October 17: Phenomenological Hermeneutics¹

A) Theory

- i) Martin Heidegger, Introduction of *Being and Time*, in *Basic Writings*
- ii) Richard Palmer, "*Hermēneuein and Hermēneia: The Modern Significance of Their Ancient Usage*," pp. 12-32; "Six Modern Definitions of Hermeneutics," pp. 32-45; "Heidegger's Contribution to Hermeneutics in *Being and Time*," pp. 124-139, all in *Hermeneutics*

Suggested Readings:

- i) Leo Strauss, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy"
- ii) Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics & the Human Sciences*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
- iii) Jan Patočka, "Qu'est-ce que la phénoménologie?" In: *Qu'est-ce que la phénoménologie?*, ed. and trans. E. Abrams (Grenoble: J. Millon 1988), pp. 263–302

October 22: Phenomenological Hermeneutics

A) Practice

- i) Martin Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," in *Philosophy of the Twentieth Century: An Anthology*, Vol. III, eds William Barrett and Henry D. A. Ken (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 251-270.
- ii) Richard Avramenko, "The Grammar of Indifference"

¹ For background readings in phenomenology, see Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (New York: Collier Books, 1967); Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, eds. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981); Richard Velkley, "Edmund Husserl" in *History of Political Philosophy*, Third Edition, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 870-887; Don Ihde, "Introduction: Doing Phenomenology," in *Experimental Phenomenology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), pp. 13-28; Leszek Kolakowski, *Husserl and the Search for Certitude* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, preface pp. vi-xxiv

October 31: Hermeneutics

A) Theory

- i) Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*: Introduction; Part II, Section II (pp. 265-379).
- ii) Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hermeneutics as Practical Philosophy," in *Reason in the Age of Science* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981), pp. 88-112.
- iii) Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hermeneutics as a Theoretical and Practical Task," in *Reason in the Age of Science* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981), pp. 113-138.

Suggested Readings:

- i) Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation" in *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of Later Writings* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), pp. 156-191.
- ii) Friedrich Schleiermacher. "The Hermeneutics: Outline of the 1819 Lectures" in *New Literary History* 10:1, pp. 1-16.
- iii) Wilhelm Dilthey. "The Rise of Hermeneutics" in *New Literary History* 3:2, pp. 229-244.
- iv) Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Science of Man" *The Review of Metaphysics* Vol. 25 1971.
- v) Paul Ricoeur. "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology," in Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics & the Human Sciences*, ed. and transl. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 63-100.

November 7: Hermeneutics

B) Practice

- i) Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Plato and the Poets," in *Dialogue and Dialectic* (pp. 39-72).
- ii) Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Gadamer on Strauss: an Interview" by Ernest L. Fortin, in *Interpretation*, Vol. 12/1 (January 1984).
- iii) Catherine H. Zuckert, "Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 201-224.

November 14: Deconstruction

A) Theory

- i) Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York, NY: Routledge; 2002).
- ii) Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," in Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988).
- iii) Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in *Writing and Difference* (trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge, pp 278-294).
- iv) "The Villanova Roundtable: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida," in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, pp. 3-28.

November 21: Deconstruction

B) Practice

- i) Jacques Derrida, "Khora," in *On the Name* (Stanford University Press, 1995, pp. 89-127).
- ii) Jacques Derrida, "The Politics of Friendship," (*Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 85, Number 11, pp. 632-644).
- iii) Catherine Zuckert, "Derrida's Deconstruction of Plato," in *Postmodern Platos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 201-225).
- iv) John Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, pp. 71-105, 156-180.

Suggested Readings

- i) Fred Dallmayr, "Hermeneutics and Deconstruction: Gadamer and Derrida in Dialogue."
- ii) Jacques Derrida, "Three Questions to Hans-Georg Gadamer"
- iii) Hans-Georg Gadamer. "Reply to Jacques Derrida"

November 28: Thanksgiving

December 5: Genealogy

A) Theory

- i) Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, (Preface, Essay 1 and Essay 2).
- ii) Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 51-75)
- iii) Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 76-100)
- iv) Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author," in *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 101-120)
- v) Michel Foucault, "We 'Other Victorians,'" in *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 292-300)

December 12 (Syllabi due)

A) Practice

- i) Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (pp. 3-31, 104-131, 135-169, 195-228)
- ii) Richard Avramenko, "Of Homesteaders and Orangemen: An Archeology of Western Canadian Political Identity"

Other Approaches:

Comparative Political Theory

A) Theory

- i) Eric Voegelin, "Equivalences of Experiences and Symbolization in History," *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin (Volume 12)*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press; 1990).
- ii) Farah Godrej, "Toward a Cosmopolitan Political Thought: the Hermeneutics of Interpreting the 'Other'" (*Polity* (2009) 41, 135-165)
- iii) Lee Jenco, "'What Does Heaven Ever Say?' A Methods-centered Approach to Cross-cultural Engagement," (*APSR* 101:04, November 2007, pp 741-755)

- iv) Andrew March, "What is Comparative Political Theory," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 4, pp. 531–565, Fall 2009

Suggested Reading:

- i) Farah Godrej, *Cosmopolitan Political Thought: Method, Practice, Discipline* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
- ii) Roxanne Euben. "Traveling Theorists and Translating Practices," in *What is Political Theory*, ed. Stephen K. White and Moon.

B) Practice

- i) Farah Godrej, "Nonviolence and Gandhi's Truth: A Method for Moral and Political Arbitration." *Review of Politics*, Spring 2006, Volume 68, no. 2.
- ii) Brooke Ackerly, "Is Liberalism the Only Way toward Democracy? Confucianism and Democracy." *Political Theory*. 3:4 (August): 547-576, 2005

Suggested Reading:

- i) Roland Bleiker. "Globalizing Political Theory," in *What is Political Theory*, ed. Stephen K. White and Moon.
- ii) Anthony Parel and Ronald Keith, *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies Under the Upas Tree* (Lexington Books, 2003)

Vantagism

A) Theory

- i) Sheldon S. Wolin, "Paradigms and Political Theories," *Politics and Experience*, eds. Preston King and B.C. Parekh (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1968).

B) Practice

- i) Richard Avramenko, "Bedeviled by Boredom: A Voegelinian Reading of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*." *Humanitas*, vol. XVII, nos. 1&2, 2004).
- ii) Selections from: *Feminist Interpretations of Alexis de Tocqueville*, ed. Jill Locke (Penn State Press, 2009)
- iii) Selections from: *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana (Penn State Press, 1994).

Analytical Political Theory

A) Theory

- i) Williams, Bernard. "Political Philosophy and the Analytical Tradition"

B) Practice

- i) John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*
- ii) Richard Avramenko and Richard Boyd, "Subprime Virtues: The Moral Dimensions of American Housing and Mortgage Policy" (*Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 11:1, March 2013)