

POLITICAL SCIENCE 306
FALL, 1999
SYLLABUS

This is a course in political philosophy; in other words, it is a course in which we systematically study what some of the greatest minds have concluded about justice. To discover justice would be to discover the truth about political life or the best way for people to live together. In order to determine this superior way of life political philosophers have attempted to find "human nature." The notion was that discovering this would allow one to construct a regime appropriate for or complementary to that nature, and that this would be the most just political order. However, most of the time the search for *human* nature has meant the search for a generic nature, ignoring the issue of whether or not there is a distinctively male nature and a distinctively female nature. The assumption was that male and female natures, respectively, were decisively the same. This course will take that "assumption" to be a question. We will consider "human nature" from this perspective; we will study what some of the greatest minds have concluded about the natures of men and women.

This course will be graded according to the preparation you do for the class and the quality of thought and writing you add to that preparation. Ten papers (one on each of the assignments) will be required. They should be no less than one page and no more than two pages long, based on a typed, double-spaced standard of approximately three hundred words per page. These papers will be summaries or highlights of the main themes, respectively, of the works. Each paper will account for 5% of your grade. A three to five page summary of The Second Sex will also be required, and it will count for 10% of your grade. And a take-home final examination of five to seven pages that counts for 40% of your grade will be required. It should be noted that your grade will be influenced to some extent by your relevant and helpful contributions to class, whether in the form of questions or comments. However, failure to hand in any assignments will result in failure in the course, no matter what your average may be.

Some remarks about the assignments and about the course are in order. First, you will notice that you are required to read a few pages in The Bible, but you are not required to purchase a copy. If you do not own a copy, a number of editions are available in the library and others are available in the bookstore. Second, you will be expected to have read the entire assignment on the first day that we begin to discuss it. If you are unable to meet this requirement, do not take this course. The course is difficult and requires a good deal of reading and thought about that reading. Any less effort than this will surely result in a poor grade.

Books to be Purchased:

1. Medea and Other Plays, by Euripides. Penquin.
2. The Complete Plays, by Aristophanes. Bantam.
3. "The Taming of the Shrew," by William Shakespeare. Signet

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4. The First and Second Discourses, by Rousseau. St. Martins.
5. Elective Affinities, by Goethe.
6. Essays on Sex Equality, by Mill and Taylor. Chicago.
7. A Room of One's Own, by Woolf, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
8. Hedda Gabler and Other Plays, by Ibsen. Penquin.
9. The Diary of Rachel Varnhagen, by Arendt.
10. The Second Sex, by de Beauvoir. Vintage.

Schedule of Classes

August 25:	Introduction
Aug. 27, 30; Sept. 1:	"Genesis 1, 2, 3." Paper on 27th.
September 3, 8, 10:	"Medea" Paper on 3rd.
September 13, 15, 17:	"Lysistrata" Paper on 13th.
September 20:	No class
Sept. 22, 24, 27, 29:	"The Taming of the Shrew" Paper on 22 nd .
October 1, 4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 18:	<u>Second Discourse</u> . Paper on 1st.
October 18:	Deadline for paper on <u>The Second Sex</u>
October 20, 22, 25, 27, 29:	<u>Elective Affinities</u> . Paper on 20th.
November 1, 3, 5:	"Hedda Gabler" Paper on 1st.
November 8, 10, 12:	<u>Essays on Sex Equality</u> Paper on 8th.
November 15, 17, 19:	<u>A Room of One's Own</u> Paper on 15th.
November 22, 29; Dec. 1:	<u>The Diary of Rachel Varnhagen</u> Paper on 22 nd .
Dec. 3, 6:	Conclusion

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A Note on the Papers

They must be typed. They must be at least 300 words and no more than 600. As I grade them, I will be expecting you to answer three questions. First, what is the work about? Second, what is the main thing or things the author is trying to say? Third, what do you think about the author's standpoint and why? Obviously, the second and third questions are more subjective than the first. Failure to answer the first clearly will surely result in a poor grade.

The Honor Code

You must do your own work, though I encourage you to discuss the readings among yourselves. However, do not write papers together and do not read each other's papers until they have been graded and handed back. Avoid discussing works with students you know have not read them, and report to me about students who are trying to find out what the works are about (who are seeking answers to question 1) without having read them. The Honor Code is always in force.