Seminar in Political Theory
The Poet and the Polis
Political Science 7991 & 7995 — Fall 2009

August 26: INTRODUCTION TO POETICS AND POLITICS

September 2 & 9: THE ANCIENT POET AND THE MODERN MYSTIC
Required Reading: The Iliad
Simone Weil: An Anthology

September 16 & 23: A MYTHOPOEIC AND RATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOOD
Required Reading: Aeschylus, The Oresteia
Plato, The Republic (Books 5, 6, 7, & 10)
Plato, Phaedrus
I. Murdoch, Sovereignty of Good

October 7: THE POLITICS OF PLACE
Required Reading: Sophocles, Antigone
Heidegger, Introduction to Metaphysics

October 14: THE POLITICS OF DWELLING & HOSPITALITY
Required Reading: Genesis (Chapters 12 - 25)
E. Levinas, Otherwise than Being

October 21: JUDGEMENT, WILDERNESS, & HOPE
Required Reading: Exodus
M. Walzer, Exodus & Revolution

October 28: THE PROPHETIC VOICE & POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
Required Reading: Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Amos, Isaiah
W. Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination

November 4: RESENTMENT, COMMUNITY, AND TRANSCENDENCE
Required Reading: Sophocles, Philoctetes
F. Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morality
Course Requirements

In each seminar session, the focus of our attention will be a particular set of readings. **Emphasis will be placed, therefore, on a careful and thorough understanding, interpretation, and analysis of these readings.** Part of my evaluation of your performance in the seminar will be an assessment of how effectively you accomplish this exegetical and interpretive task.

Each week, approximately one-half of the class will be responsible for preparing an interpretive essay on the readings for that week. These essays should be no more than 3-5 pages in length. They will provide the basis of our discussion for that class. Most of the time, **these interpretive essays will focus on the assigned readings; on occasion you may be asked to focus on an analytical issue I raise about the readings.** In preparing your interpretive essays, you may consult sources other than those assigned. **Your essays will be due via email on Mondays by 7:00 p.m. Please send them to me and to every member of the class. You will be asked to present all or a portion of them in class on the following Wednesday. Those who are not presenting will be asked to comment on the interpretive essays.**

Finally, in addition to the interpretive essays you will be asked to choose one of two options. **You may prepare and write an individual research project on some topic relating to the course; or, you may take a final examination (take-home),** in which you will be asked a broad analytical question covering the course material. What follows is a guide to how the class requirements described above will be factored into my evaluation of your class performance:

- **Six Interpretive Essays...........................................60%**
- **Oral Presentations & Class Discussion............10%**
- **Research Project or Final Examination........30%**

Office Hours: MWF from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM — or— By appointment at your convenience.
Office: 237 Stubbs Hall — Telephone: [O] 388-1944 — Email: poeubk@lsu.edu