POLITICAL THEOLOGY

Political Science 4097
MWF 9:30 AM
C. L. Eubanks
Fall – 2010

MYTHOPOEIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOOD

“A man thought the gods deigned not to punish mortals who trampled down the delicacy of things inviolable. That man was wicked. The curse on great daring shincs clear; it wrings atonement from those high hearts that drive to evil, from houses blossoming to pride and peril”

Aeschylus

Required Readings: Aeschylus, The Oresteia
**Plato, The Republic, Books V, VI, VII, & X
http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plato/p71r/

ANCIENT COVENANTS, THE PROPHETIC VOICE, AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

“Wherever you live, it is probably Egypt. There is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land. The way to that land is through the wilderness.”

M. Walzer

Required Reading: **Exodus http://www.hareidi.org/bible/Exodus.htm
M. Walzer, Exodus and Revolution
**Isaiah http://www.hareidi.org/bible/Isaiah.htm

THE CHRISTIAN LEGACY OF PLATO (AUGUSTINE) & ARISTOTLE (AQUINAS)

“Though there are very many nations all over the earth, ...there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, ...one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God.”

Augustine

Required Reading: **Augustine, City of God – Books 11 - 22
http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120111.htm
**Aquinas on Law
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aquinas2.html

THE DIALECTICS OF GRACE AND POWER

I...believe...that love may be the motive of social action, but...justice must be the instrument of love in a world in which self-interest is bound to defy the canons of love at every level.”

R. Niebuhr

Required Reading: R. Niebuhr, The Essential Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses
**Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum,
**Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus
http://www.osispm.org/social_teaching_documents.aspx
PATHOS AND POLITICS

“There are three possible ways in which the church can act toward the state: It can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state; it can aid the victims of state action... [and it can] jam a spoke in the wheel itself.”

D. Bonhoeffer

Required Reading:  D. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison
**Theological Declaration of Barmen
http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/barmen.htm

THE TRACE OF THE OTHER

“For me, the negative element, the element of violence in the state, in the hierarchy, appears even when the hierarchy functions perfectly, when everyone submits to universal ideas. There are cruelties which are terrible because they proceed from the necessity of the reasonable order. There are, if you like, the tears that a civil servant cannot see, the tears of the Other (Autrui).”

E. Levinas

Required Reading: **E. Levinas, “God and Philosophy” and “The State of David, the State of Caesar”

EXILE, JUDGEMENT, AND THE KINGDOM

“[H]e knew that the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts, despite their personal afflictions, by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers.”

A. Camus

Required Reading:  A. Camus, The Fall and Exile and the Kingdom
COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to examine analytically and critically the intersection of the human search for transcendence with the standards of conduct, both personal and social, engendered by that search. A central corollary of this purpose is to examine the social and political institutions we construct to shape those standards. This intersection may be found in the poetry of the ancient Greek tragedians or the rational constructs of first philosophy in Greece; in the ancient history of the Israelites or the prophetic voice of the Hebrew prophets; in the pronouncements of social ethicists, Protestant and Catholic or the letters from prison of a German pastor; in the phenomenological musings of a Lithuanian/French philosopher and Talmudic interpreter or the fiction of a French moralist.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course requirements consist of one semester examination, to be taken in class (worth 30%), a take-home final examination (worth 30%), and an analytical essay (worth 40%). Your final examination will be due in my office on Thursday, December 9th, no later than Noon. All of the examinations will be essay in nature. You will be provided with review questions for the semester examinations. Graduate students will be expected to do additional work. Please consult with me on this matter.

The analytical essay will consist of an 8-10 page exegetical and critical analysis. A list of suggested topics, as well as a detailed description of the nature of this assignment, will be provided for you. If you depart from the suggested list, you must have your topic approved. The analytical essay will be due on Monday, November 8, 2010. Late submissions will be penalized one letter grade.

For those of you who wish to take it, a second, optional examination will be given during the second half of the semester. It may be substituted for your first examination grade.

There are six books required for the course, all of which are listed on the above syllabus outline of topics. There are additional assigned readings – marked with a double asterisk, which are available on the internet, as indicated by the web site addresses given or may be posted on Moodle. All of the books are available at the LSU and area bookstores.

A final note: This is a lecture intensive course. It is virtually impossible for anyone to receive a satisfactory grade without regular attendance. Moreover, regular class attendance is a signal of respect for the process of inquiry and the life of the mind and imagination.

My office hours are as follows: MW 2:00 to 4:00 PM or, by appointment at your convenience. My office is Room 237 Stubbs Hall. Phone 578-1944. E-Mail Address: pocubk@lsu.edu