

# CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

Political Science 4096  
C. L. Eubanks

MWF 10:30 AM  
Spring – 2018

## THE FACES OF MODERNITY: DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING

“Philosophy is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes — I mean the universe — but we cannot understand it if we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols, in which it is written. This book is written in the mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it; without which one wanders in vain through a dark labyrinth.”

Galileo

“But what then am I? A thing which thinks. What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels.”

René Descartes

“The rational awareness of an objective principle which constrains will is a *command of reason*; and the expression of this command is called an *imperative*.”

I. Kant

The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations.

Max Weber

### Required Readings:

René Descartes, Selections from *Meditations on First Philosophy*

<http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/descartesmeditations.html>

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Especially the Preface)

[http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political\\_Thought/Kant%20-%20groundwork%20for%20the%20metaphysics%20of%20morals%20with%20essays.pdf](http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political_Thought/Kant%20-%20groundwork%20for%20the%20metaphysics%20of%20morals%20with%20essays.pdf)

Immanuel Kant, “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch”

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm>

Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation” (E-Reserve)

## MISGIVINGS WITHIN MODERNITY

“Universal freedom, therefore, can produce neither a positive work nor a deed; there is left for it only *negative* action; it is merely the *fury* of destruction.”

G. W. F. Hegel

“Alienated labour turns the species-life of man, and also nature as mental species-property, into an alien being and into a means for his individual existence. It alienates from man his own body, external nature, his mental life and his human life. A direct consequence of the alienation of a man from the produce of his labour, from his life activity and from his species-life, is that man is alienated from other men.”

K. Marx & F. Engels

civ - i - li - za - tion, n. 1. an advanced state of human society in which a high level of art, science, religion, and government has been reached. 2. that which is largely responsible for our misery.

*American College Dictionary & Sigmund Freud*

### Required Readings:

G. W. Hegel, Excerpts from *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*  
(A. Consciousness & B. Self-Consciousness)

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/phindex.htm>

C. L. Eubanks, “Subject and Substance: Hegel on Modernity,” *Loyola Journal of Public Interest Law*. Vol. 6, Fall 2005, pp. 101-125. (E-Reserve)

K. Marx & F. Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, “Bourgeois and Proletarians

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>

K. Marx & F. Engels, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, “Estranged Labour”

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

S. Freud, from *Civilization and its Discontents*, Excerpt

<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Freud-CivDis.html>

\*\*\*\*\*FIRST EXAMINATION\*\*\*\*\*

## NIETZSCHE'S CHALLENGE TO MODERNITY

“We need a *critique* of moral values – *the value of these values themselves must first be called into question* – and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed . . . a knowledge of a kind that has never yet existed or even been desired. One has taken the *value* of these “values” as given, as factual, as beyond all question.”

F. Nietzsche

“My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is ‘dangerous,’ which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism.”

M. Foucault

### Required Readings:

F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*,  
Especially “The Problem of Socrates” and “‘Reason’ in Philosophy”  
<http://www.handprint.com/SC/NIE/GotDamer.html>

F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

Truth and Power, An Interview with Michel Foucault  
<http://www.naturalthinker.net/trl/texts/Foucault,Michel/Foucault,%20Michel%20-%20Truth,%20Power,%20Self.pdf>

\*\*\*\*\*SECOND EXAMINATION – OPTIONAL\*\*\*\*\*

### A BRIEF HUSSERLIAN INTERLUDE ON THE RECOVERY OF NAÏVETÉ

“It will gradually become clearer, and finally be completely clear, that the proper return to the naïveté of life – but in a reflection which raises above this naïveté – is the only possible way to overcome the philosophical naïveté which lies in the [supposedly] ‘scientific’ character of traditional objectivistic philosophy.”

E. Husserl

## MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND THE REMEMBRANCE OF BEING

“But now we must note something of the highest importance that occurred even as early as Galileo: the surreptitious substitution of the mathematically substructured world of idealities for the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable – our everyday life-world.”

E. Husserl

“This thinking is neither theoretical nor practical. It takes place before this differentiation. This thinking, insofar as it is, is the remembrance of Being and nothing else. . . . Such thinking has no result. It has no effect. It satisfies its nature simply by being. It lets Being be.”

M. Heidegger

### Required Reading:

J. P. Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism”

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm>

M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings* (Especially: Being and Time: Introduction; What is Metaphysics; On the Essence of Truth; Letter on Humanism; Building Dwelling Thinking; What Calls for Thinking?; and The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking)

## POIESIS, POLITICS, AND AUTHENTICITY

“Kyle Bode objected to the hills and hollows. He objected to them especially if they were all overgrown with trees. They offended his sense of the way things ought to be. That the government of the streets and highways persisted in having business in hills and hollows and woods and Briar patches in every kind of weather was no small part of his disillusionment.”

W. Berry

### Required Reading:

Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity* (E-reserve)

Wendell Berry, *Fidelity* (E-reserve)

**\*\*\*\*\*FINAL EXAMINATION DUE: FRIDAY, MAY 4, AT 9:30 AM\*\*\*\*\***

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

The study of political theory or philosophy is the study of meaning: the meaning of time, of being, of history, of individual and communal existence. It is not possible to divorce that study from value or experience. Consequently, the content of this course will be rather broad and varied. We will draw upon psychology, theology, philosophy, literature, politics, and experience in order to realize the objectives of this course, which are: To achieve an understanding of the major political philosophies of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, & 21<sup>st</sup> centuries within the context of the modern/postmodern debate and to analyze abstract ideas with precision and critical imagination.

The course requirements consist of take-home mid-term (worth 30%), a take-home final examination (worth 30%), and an analytical essay (worth 40%). **Your final examination will be due on May 4, no later than NOON, submitted electronically to the Moodle Site.** All of the course examinations will be take home essays. Graduate students will be expected to do additional work. Please consult with me on this matter.

The analytical essay will consist of a 6-8 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 essays are due no later than Sunday evening (midnight), **April 15**. Late submissions will be penalized one letter grade. Important dates for the essay:

Topic Approved by: Friday, March 16 (Electronic Submission on Moodle)

Final Submission: Sunday, April 15 (Electronic Submission on Moodle)

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 two books required for the course: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*; and Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*. There are additional assigned readings – available on the Internet or on E-Reserve on the Moodle Site. All of the books are available at the LSU and area bookstores.

A final note: To be present is to be mindful, aware, sensitive, engaged. It begins, of course, in physical presence, but quickly moves to all of the aforementioned states of being, and more. This course needs your presence; the subject needs your presence. We need your presence. Mostly, you need your presence. Rather than be punitive in the absence of presence, I will give you an incentive.

Beginning on the last day to add classes, I will begin taking attendance. I shall assume that everyone has the occasional desire to meet a friend, sleep late, or recover from a difficult moment. Thus, three absences will be discounted, unquestioned. Similarly, some will have good and excusable reasons for absence. If documented, they will be honored. The remaining class days of the semester will be counted and a 90% attendance rate will be granted four bonus points; 80% will be given three; 70% two bonus points; and 60% will be given one. Below 60% - none will be granted. The bonus points will be added to your course total.

My office hours are as follows: MWF 9:00 to 10:30 AM and MW 12:00 NOON to 1:30 PM, or, by appointment at our mutual convenience. My office is Room 237 Stubbs Hall. Phone 578-1944. E-Mail Address: poeubk@lsu.