

Honors 324

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Modern Political Argument

This Honors course combines the study of literature, politics and rhetoric. The course examines key moments in the development of modern political argument and involves close reading of writers who combined great ideas and vibrant prose in the service of a political cause. The course begins with Jonathan Swift. After discussing Swift's satire and defense of the Irish, we read Edmund Burke, Mary Wollstonecraft and Thomas Paine's strong responses to the French Revolution. Next, we read Marx, Spencer and Nietzsche and their slashing critiques of the status quo. The course finishes with the contemporary left-right debate between New Deal liberals such as Franklin Roosevelt and Barack Obama and the alliance of the Old South and the New Right in the Republican Party. Here we examine the libertarian ideals of F.A. Hayek, Ayn Rand and today's Tea Party radicals as well as the legacy of George Wallace, the most influential loser in modern presidential politics.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

- Assist students to think critically about the origins, development and reformulation of political argument since the French Revolution.
- Increase ability to do close reading and analysis and to recognize rhetorical strategies and techniques
- Increase awareness of key assumptions in modern liberal and conservative argument
- Encourage class discussion, participation in a seminar setting
- Encourage students to learn from each other and to work collaboratively in groups

Books: Purchase the edition listed below/ Available at the Chapman Bookstore

REQUIRED BOOKS:

- Jonathan Swift, The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift (Norton Critical Edition, 2010)
- Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (Penguin Classics, intro by Conor Cruise O'Brien)
- Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Men (Oxford Classics)
- Thomas Paine, Rights of Man (Penguin Classics, intro by Eric Foner)
- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto (Verso)
- F. A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom (Chicago)
- Jeff Madrick, The Case for Big Government (Princeton)

OPTIONAL BOOKS:

- Dan T. Carter, The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of Modern Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics
- Charles Kessler, I am the Change: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Liberalism

Note: Students are expected to bring the day's reading to class.

Course Requirements

In-class participation (30%)

Papers (40%)

Final Exam (30%)

Grading

Attendance plays a critical role in your success since the course happens in the classroom and missed classes can't be made up.

Do the reading before class. Give yourself time to think about main themes and arguments in the assigned reading, come prepared, don't be shy, speak up and contribute to the class discussion. Classroom participation is critical to your grade.

Student with Disabilities

In compliance with ADA Guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the professor at the beginning of the term. Upon recommendation of the campus Disabilities Specialist, adaptations of teaching methods, class materials, including text and reading materials or testing, may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university. In accordance with university guidelines, plagiarism of any kind (including unacknowledged paraphrase of others' ideas) will result in a failing grade for the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART ONE: SWIFT, PROSE AND SATIRE

WEEK 1 Introduction and Rhetoric (Ethos, Logos and Pathos)

Feb 4 – Introduction to the Class

Leith, Words Like Loaded Pistols, pp. 48-71, 279-280

Feb 6 – Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and A Tale of a Tub (1704)

Claude Rawson, Introduction, The Essential Writing, pp. ix-xxviii

Swift, The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, pp. 3-92

Leo Damrosch, Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World (Yale, 2013),

Ch. 8 “The Scandalous Tub”

WEEK 2 Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and A Tale of a Tub

Feb 11 – A Tale of a Tub (continued)

Feb 13 – Swift – Satire and Writings on Ireland

Foster, The Oxford History of Ireland,

Ch. 3 Early Modern Ireland, 1500-1700, pp. 88-133

Swift, The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift

“Causes of the Wretched Condition of Ireland” (1715)

“The Drapier’s Letters” (1724)

“A Modest Proposal” (1729)

Damrosch, Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World, pp. 416-423

WEEK 3 – Swift – Writings on Ireland

Feb 18 – Swift, The Essential Writings of Jonathan Swift

“Causes of the Wretched Condition of Ireland” (1715)

“The Drapier’s Letters” (1724)

A Modest Proposal (1729)

Damrosch, Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World, pp. 416-423

Feb. 20 – Swift, Gulliver’s Travels –

Swift, The Essential Writings - Gulliver’s Travels

Part One: A Voyage to Lilliput, pp. 313-364

Part Two: A Voyage to Brobdingnag, pp. 366-407

Damrosch, Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World, Ch 24, The Astonishing Travels, pp. 357-378

WEEK 4 - Swift, Gulliver’s Travels – (continued)

Feb. 25 - the Yahoos

Part Three: A Voyage to Laputa, pp. 409-451

Part Four: Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms, pp. 453-502.

Feb. 27 – The Yahoos and Thinking about Swift

PART TWO – REVOLUTION AND THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN WORLD

WEEK 5 – The French Revolution and Burke’s Response

March 4 - The French Revolution, 1789-1793

The Ancien Regime

The Third Estate

King Louis XVI mistakes

How the Sans-Culottes drove the revolution ahead

Key Turning Points/ Choice Points

****SWIFT PAPER DUE**

March 6 – Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, 84-116

Richard Price, “On the Love of Our Country”

WEEK 6 Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France

March 11 – Burke, Reflections, Part Two pp. 117-166

Conor Cruise O’Brien, Intro (Burke’s style and importance of his Irish roots)

March 13 - Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, Part Three pp. 166-265

WEEK 7 – Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Men

March 18 – A Vindication of the Rights of Men (1791) pp. 3-62.

March 20 – Selections from A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792)

WEEK 8 – SPRING BREAK

PART THREE – CRITICS ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT

WEEK 9 – Paine, Marx, Spencer and Nietzsche

April 1 – Paine, The Rights of Man, Ch. 5 Ways and Means

Marx, The Communist Manifesto

April 3 – Beyond Burke: Spencer and Nietzsche

Spencer, “The Coming Slavery”

Social Statics, “Poor-Laws”

Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil

Ch. 5 Towards a Natural History of Morals

Ch. 7 Our Virtues

Ch. 9 What is Noble?

PART FOUR – THE POST-WAR ERA IN AMERICA

WEEK 10 – New Deal and Cold War Liberalism

April 8 – Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Vital Center (selections)

Franklin Roosevelt, Message to Congress, Jan. 1944, "Second Bill of Rights"
****BURKE and HIS CRITICS PAPER DUE**

April 10 – F.A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom

WEEK 11 – Hayek, Rand and Post-War Conservatism

April 15 – Hayek, The Road to Serfdom

April 17 – Ayn Rand and the Virtue of Selfishness

Jennifer Burns, Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right, 1-25

Ayn Rand, Atlas Shrugged, Ch. 7 "This is John Galt Speaking"

WEEK 12 – Liberals and Conservatives in the New America

April 22 – Goldwater and Wallace and 1964

Barry Goldwater, The Conscience of a Conservative (selections)

Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Democracy (selections)

Ronald Reagan, The Speech (1964)

April 24 – The Importance of George Wallace

"The Problem of the South"

WEEK 13 – From a Hatred of Blacks to a Hatred of Government

April 29 – 1963 and Three Speeches: Kennedy, King and Wallace

May 1 – From Wallace to Limbaugh to Fox News

WEEK 14 – The Right Against Obama

May 6 – Mandrick, The Case for Big Government

May 8 – Mandrick, The Case for Big Government

Charles Kessler, I am the Change: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Liberalism
(selections)

WEEK 15 – 2015 and Beyond

May 13 - Kessler, I am the Change: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Liberalism

Cass Sunstein, "The Man Who Made Libertarians Wrong About

The Constitution: How Richard Epstein's highly influential, highly politicized scholarship cemented Tea Party dogma, The New Republic, May 18, 2014

May 15 – Last Class

FINALS WEEK

