

The Narrative of Consciousness

from the Ancient to the Post-Modern World

Political Science 2060 Introduction to Political Theory
Fall 2022, MWF 12:30-1:20PM

Instructor: Stacy L Stingle

Office: Stubbs 325

Office Hours: MWF 2:30-3:30pm and by appointment

E-mail: ssting1@lsu.edu



Course Description:

Political Science 2060, Introduction to Political Theory is a general education course, which will present an overview of classical literature and an introduction to political thought. Divided into four sections, this course will examine the development of human consciousness and the relationship to politics in the ancient, modern, and post-modern world.

In this course we will ask the following questions: What is the connection between language, liberty, and consciousness? How does living in a social environment provide, guarantee, limit, and define our understanding of ourselves in the world? What does it mean to be a witness? What is the role of personal responsibility when confronted by evil and injustice? We will consider the role of writing as a rhetorical and political act, as we ask: Why do we write? Looking at memoir writing, we will ask: Why is it important to remember? How is writing an important act of resistance in a time of political and personal trauma? And, finally, we will ask, comparatively, how each of these writers examines the development of the ethical self through the origins of political consciousness in the city.

Course Objectives:

We will be pairing literature with theory in a comparative manner across time, genre, and form, looking at the central theme about which this course is situated: The Narrative of Consciousness from the Ancient to the Post-Modern World.

Amongst several literary and philosophical texts, this course will be structured around an important recommended text: *What Can Literature Do For Me?* by C. Alphonso Smith, in which he identifies six features, which will develop our understanding and appreciation of the humanities and language-arts. First, what are the humanities? And why should we value an education in the liberal arts? Your education in the liberal arts provides you the opportunity to consider and examine those questions that tell us something about human experience. Among those questions, we might ask: What is human nature? Does man have a nature? What is it? What is beauty? What value does it have to human beings? To society? What is the State? What is man's relationship to the State?

Writing! In addition, it is necessary that students purchase a writing guide, which will be useful to you throughout your academic careers and beyond as you will be required to master and display the skills inherent to professional writing. I recommend you pick up a style guide. A good one to use is *The Well-Crafted Argument: A Guide and Reader* by White Billings, 3rd to 6th Edition. (The 3rd might be cheaper!).

While this course is not an English class, one of our goals is to be strong, effective communicators, and the instruction in this manual will prepare us to write successful academic papers in this course and in future courses, whatever our major may be. And so, with that in mind, we will have **the following learning objectives with regard to writing:**

- 1). Learn how to distinguish and construct an arguable thesis statement
- 2). Understand the difference between source materials, such as primary and secondary sources, and the different merits and effectiveness of which to use—books, articles, magazines, news articles, and other commentary—when.
- 3). Distinguish between the three persuasive appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos—which come from Aristotle. We’ll also consider these when we look at the ancient Greeks and how they apply to political and social life.
- 4). Know how to use the library to search for and retrieve sources.
- 5). Develop and construct a bibliography of sources for our final papers.
- 6). Learn how to integrate and use quotations effectively, using Chicago Style citation.

Further Learning Objectives:

- 1). Students will be expected to achieve an understanding of the factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference. All general education courses are designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that facilitate the improvement of the civic life of communities.
- 2). Students will develop the ability to read and comprehend a variety of different literary texts from diverse cultural backgrounds, and to interpret literal and figurative meanings in these works while making connections between texts.
- 3). Students will be able to interpret and understand the differences between literary genres, and to note larger themes, structures, literal devices, and rhetorical patterns in texts within a discursive tradition and within broader cultural and historical contexts.
- 4). Students will further develop their communication skills by learning to write clearly and effectively and by giving brief interpretive presentations of their understanding of selected texts.

As you go through each of the weekly readings, you should consider how reading world literature with political theory allows you to broaden your perspectives about your unique and current historical moment and its relationship to the past.

ADA Compliance

The University is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to avail themselves of services and programs offered by the University. To this end, Louisiana State University will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. If you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course, you must present a letter to me from Disability Services in 115 Johnston Hall, indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations.

LSU Integrative Curriculum Statement

Integrated learning allows students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations, and demonstrate a sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students' practical and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the BOR Area of Social/Behavioral Sciences and provides students experience with the ILC proficiency of Inquiry and Analysis.

The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes in the syllabus.

Assignments

Short Papers:

You will be assigned four short papers, one following each section. These papers must demonstrate your ability to comprehend the content of specific texts and use critical thinking as you analyze the course theme and the questions raised by each of the readings. Paper #4 will be the final exam.

Grading:

Paper 1 20%

Paper 2 20%

Paper 3 20%

Paper 4 Final 20%

Attendance/Homework/Participation: 20%

Grading Scale:

98-100 A+

93-97 A

90-92 A-

88-89 B+

85-87 B

80-84 B-

77-79 C+

75-76 C

70-74 C-

67-69 D+

66-65 D

60-64 D-

Below 60 F

I. Consciousness as Pure World

**--How does language ground us to meaning, home, place, and identity?
Why do we need the Other to recognize the self?**

Is Justice Found in the City?

The Origins of Political Consciousness

Week 1 Ancient/Classical: Language and the Birth of Consciousness

Monday, 8/22 Introduction to the course Syllabus

Wednesday, 8/24 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Friday, 8/26 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Week 2 Justice and the State

Monday, 8/29 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Wednesday, 8/31 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Friday, 9/2 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Week 3 Fate, Freedom, and Free Will

No class on Monday 9/5 Labor Day

Wednesday, 9/7 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Friday, 9/9 Aeschylus *The Oresteia*

Week 4 Subjectivity and the Makings of Defiance: Natural Law versus Human Law

Monday, 9/12 Sophocles *Antigone*

Wednesday, 9/14 Sophocles *Antigone*

Friday, 9/16 Sophocles *Antigone*

Week 5 Exile and Death

Monday, 9/19 “Euthyphro” and “The Apology” from *The Trial and Death of Socrates*

Wednesday, 9/21 “Euthyphro” and “The Apology” from *The Trial and Death of Socrates*

Friday, 9/23 “Euthyphro” and “The Apology” from *Trial and Death of Socrates*

II. Modernity and the Emergence of Reason

Modernity, Revolution, and Enlightenment

We saw these first stirrings of Civil Disobedience in Antigone, a figure, who rejects the laws of the State, appealing to the older laws of the gods, to Divine or Natural Law. Who should have the authority to rule? This question will dominate the movement of Consciousness through Modern political thought as revolutions, with Romantic underpinnings, and calls for a return to pathos and to the poetic of the earlier Ancient regime will break out—with a new call for Rights and an emphasis on the individual, and the State as the ever-expanding Institution designated to protect those Rights.

What is the transition in Consciousness from the Ancient world of the Greeks to the Modern world? How might we understand this transition? What characteristics define this contrast?

Divine Right of Kings, European Absolutism....The end of the Old Regime...The French Revolution, the American Revolution, Enlightenment, Romanticism...Rights, Duties, Contracts

Week 6 Consciousness and the State of Nature

Monday, 9/26 Immanuel Kant: "What is Enlightenment?"

Hobbes *Leviathan* (Selections from)

Douglass *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*

Declaration of Independence

Declaration of Dependence

Wednesday, 9/28 Immanuel Kant: "What is Enlightenment?"

Hobbes *Leviathan* (Selections from)

Douglass *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*

Declaration of Independence

Declaration of Dependence

Friday, 9/30 Immanuel Kant: "What is Enlightenment?"

Hobbes *Leviathan* (Selections from)

Douglass *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*

Declaration of Independence
Declaration of Dependence

Week 7 Resistance and Rebellion

“I would prefer not to” Language and the Body as Resistance and Form

Monday, 10/3 What is Romanticism?—Shelley “The Defence of Poetry”

Henry David Thoreau *Civil Disobedience*

Bodies and Institutions and their relationship to Social Contracts

Herman Melville *Bartleby*

Kafka *Metamorphosis*

Wednesday, 10/5 Melville *Bartleby*

Kafka *Metamorphosis*

Friday, 10/7 Melville *Bartleby*

Kafka *Metamorphosis*

III. Conquest of the Poet in Word and Spirit: Time and the Historical Self

What is the romantic spirit? What is it about the poetic and romantic spirit that is so threatening to the ideal city? How does it serve as a force of both creation and destruction? What is the relationship between madness and creativity? How does history and its mythos aid in the construction of self and State?

Magic Theater
Entrance not for Everybody
For Madmen only!

Post-Modernism and the Return of the Poet

How does Consciousness move through Post-Modernity? What question does it seek to answer? If the Poet is its voice, what do we know of the Poet’s experience and response to Reason? To subjectivity? Why does the Poet return at this specific historical point of consciousness? Why is he called? Who calls him? To whom and for what does he answer? What is his answer?

Week 8 Ideal Cities and Who should Rule?

Banishment of the Poet

Monday, 10/10 Henrik Ibsen *A Public Enemy*

Plato *The Republic Books 2, 4, 10*

Heidegger "Poetically Man Dwells" and "What are Poets For?"

Wednesday, 10/12 Henrik Ibsen *A Public Enemy*

Plato *The Republic Books 2, 4, 10*

Heidegger "Poetically Man Dwells" and "What are Poets For?"

Friday, No Class Fall Break

"But I live in my own light; I drink back into myself the flames that break from
me!"

"One must have chaos in one to give birth to a dancing star; I tell you, you
still have chaos in you!"

(Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)

Week 9 Human Nature and the Wolf

Monday, 10/17 Herman Hesse *Steppenwolf*

Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections from)

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (Selections from)

Wednesday, 10/19 Herman Hesse *Steppenwolf*

Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections from)

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (Selections from)

Friday, 10/21 Herman Hesse *Steppenwolf*

Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections from)

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (Selections from)

Week 10 The Will to Power

Monday, 10/24 Herman Hesse *Steppenwolf*

Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections from)

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (Selections from)

Shelley *Ozymandias* (return) self-mastery and Zarathustra

Wednesday, 10/26 Herman Hesse *Steppenwolf*

Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections from)

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (Selections from)

Shelley *Ozymandias* (return) self-mastery and Zarathustra

Friday, 10/28 Herman Hesse *Steppenwolf*

Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Selections from)

Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy* (Selections from)

Shelley *Ozymandias* (return) self-mastery and Zarathustra

I am Zarathustra the godless! Where shall I find my equal? All those who give themselves their own will and renounce all submission—they are my equals!—Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

----My name is Ozymandias, King of kings, look on my works, ye mighty and despair!—Shelley, *Ozymandias*

IV. Freedom and Captivity

Exile and the Return Home

In this narrative of Consciousness that you have been asked to explore, we turn to the final chapter, and examine the Consciousness of Captivity, where Social Contracts have failed, and it is man against man, in the State of Nature.

Post-Modernism

Bodies, Freedom, and Captivity

Reconciliation

Week 11 "Stalin's Purges and the Soviet Gulag"

Monday, 10/31 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Hobbes *Leviathan* (return to selections)

Locke (selections)

Wednesday, 11/2 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Friday, 11/4 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

"In his record it said Shukhov was in for treason. And it's true he gave evidence against himself and said he'd surrendered to the enemy with the intention of betraying his

country, and come back with instructions from the Germans. But just what was he supposed to do for the Germans neither Shukhov nor the interrogator could say. So they just left it at that and put down: "On instructions from the Germans." The way Shukhov figured, it was very simple. If he didn't sign, he was as good as buried. But if he did, he'd still go on living for a while. So he signed" (Solzhenitsyn 54).

*

"And you could kill yourself with work here or you could lay down and die, but you'd never beat any more food out of this earth than what the Commandant handed over. And you didn't get that in full either, what with the cooks and all their pals. They stole all the way down the line—out here on the site, in the camp, and in the stores too. And you never saw those thieves doing any hard work. But it was you who sweated, and you took what they gave you and didn't hang around the hatch. It was every man for himself" (Solzhenitsyn 59).

Week 12 Freedom and Responsibility

Monday, 11/7 Albert Camus *The Stranger*

Wednesday, 11/9 Albert Camus *The Stranger*

Friday, 11/11 Albert Camus *The Stranger*

Week 13 Occupation and its Aftermath

Monday, 11/14 Elie Wiesel *Night*

Jean-Paul Sartre "Why Write?" from *What is Literature?*
(Selections from).

Wednesday, 11/16 Elie Wiesel *Night*

Jean-Paul Sartre "Why Write?" from *What is Literature?*
(Selections from)

Friday, 11/18 Elie Wiesel *Night*

Jean-Paul Sartre "Why Write?" from *What is Literature?*
(Selections from)

"Not far from us, flames were leaping up from a ditch, gigantic flames. They were burning something. A lorry drew up at the pit and delivered its load—little children. Babies!" On this first night, witnessing this horrific act, he does not believe it. He turns to his father. "I told him I did not believe that they could burn people in our age, that humanity would never tolerate it." His father replied, "Humanity? Humanity is not

concerned with us. Today anything is allowed. Anything is possible. Even these crematories" (Wiesel 30).

In *Why Write?* Jean-Paul Sartre argues that we write for flight and we write for conquest. Looking at both Wiesel and Solzhenitsyn, how does their writing express the dichotomy Sartre proposes in suggesting we write for conquest and we write in desperation to flee?

"God knows what I would not have given for a few moments of sleep. But deep down, I felt that to sleep would mean to die. And something within me revolted against this death.

All round me death was moving in, silently, without violence. It would seize upon some sleeping being, enter into him, and consume him bit by bit" (Wiesel 83).

Week 14 Hope and Return

Monday, 11/21 Wendell Berry "Making it Home"

Wednesday, Friday, Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 Wendell Berry and Concluding Remarks

Monday, 11/28 Wendell Berry "Making it Home"

Wednesday, Concentrated Study Period Begins

Friday, Concentrated Study Period

Week 16 Final Exam

Thursday, December 8, 2022 7:30-9:30am

