

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

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

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-

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

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 19th, 20th, & 21st 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