

Politics & Ethics
Political Science 4098 & Philosophy 4098
Fall 2017

Introduction: Thoughtfulness and Moral Sensibility

Thinking, is not the same as the faculty of thinking. Thinking deals with invisibles, with representations of things that are absent; judging always concerns particulars and things close at hand.

Hannah Arendt

Topics: The Origins of the Moral Sense

<http://www.breslov.com/bible/Genesis3.htm#3>

Sophocles Antigone

3 ODE Euthyphro (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html>)

Matthew 25: 31-41

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Reflection 1: Thinking and Moral Sensibility

Aristotelian Interlude I: Politics and the Good

Covenants and Contracts

Days are coming ... when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt...but this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days. . .

Second Aristotelian Interlude: General and Particular Justice

Reading: Nicomachean Ethics Book V

John Rawls and the Question of Distributive Justice

The natural distribution is neither just nor unjust; nor is it unjust that persons are born into society at some particular position. These are simply natural facts. What is just and unjust is the way that institutions deal with these facts.

John Rawls

Reading: John Rawls, Justice as Fairness: A Restatement

Robert Nozick and the Question of Distributive Justice

Individuals have rights and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights). So strong and far-reaching are these rights that they raise the question of what, if anything, the state and its officials may do. How much room do individual rights leave for the state?

Robert Nozick

Reading: Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia

Reflections #3: Individual and State

Third Aristotelian Interlude: The Twofold Nature of Being

Reading: Aristotle, Ethics, Book VI

Human Flourishing = Happiness - Capabilities = Authenticity

Human activity always goes on in complex interdependence. The task of politics must be to imagine forms of interdependence that are human rather than slavish, and to forge those circumstances, where possible, the world

Martha Nussbaum

Topics:

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Aquinas and Catholic Social Doctrine
Maslow and Self-Actualization
Nussbaum and Capability

Reading: Martha Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Developmental Approach

Thoughtfulness & Judgment Revisited

For there is but one essential justice which cements society, and one law which establishes this justice. This law is right reason, which is the true rule of all commandments and prohibitions. Whoever neglects this law, whether written or unwritten, is necessarily unjust and wicked.

Cicero

God could create only by hiding himself. Otherwise, there would be nothing but himself. Holiness should then be hidden too, even from consciousness to a certain measure. And it should be hidden in the world.

Simone Weil

Readings: **

Readings: The course includes a number of required readings available on internet sites or via electronic reserve. The former will be indicated by two asterisks, with links provided; the latter with one asterisk and on the electronic reserve library in Moodle. You should obtain four books for the course: Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics; Rawls, Justice as Fairness: A Restatement; Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia; and Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach. *U L V E W I R S A V A I L A B L E on the internet and Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities is an Electronic Book with the LSU Library

Office Hours:

My office hours are as follows: MWF 1:30 to 1:30 or, by appointment at your convenience. My office is Room 237 Stubbs Hall. Phone: 578-4444. EMail Address: poeubk@lsu.edu

Presence:

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 yet another incentive, beyond meaning.

Beginning on the last day to add classes, 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 other, good and excusable reasons for absence. They will be honored. The remaining class days of the semester will be discounted 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.