

POLITICAL THEOLOGY

Political Science 7991/7990 Spring 2017

August 28: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEOLOGY

“An immutable facet of human existence seems to be the desire for metaphysical solace, or a sense of being beyond oneself, in short, of transcendence. We call it by many names, construct myths about it, tell stories of its power and presence, and construct symbols that evoke it. Equally inevitable, it appears, is that this desire includes a sense of the good, the ethical, which beckons us to a standard of conduct, both individual and social. As we construct our social institutions, we are motivated to shape them in a fashion that respects and resembles those ethical codes. Thus, our politics is shaped by a sense of transcendence, (a God, the Gods, the Good, or Justice are just some of the names we give it), and we are in this fashion the creators and possessors of a political theolog

February 15 & 22 and March 1: AUGUSTINIAN REALISM

I . . . believe . . . that love may be the motive of social action, but
. . . justice must be the instrument of love in a world in which
self-interest is bound to defy the canons of love at every level.”

R. Niebuhr

Required Reading: Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*
Augustine, Jean Bethke Elshstain, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*.
Edited by Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (E-reserve)

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses*, ed.
Robert McAfee Brown

Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, eds. Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith
Chelius Stark

March 8 & 15: NATURAL ORDER AND THE LAW

It must not be supposed that the Church so concentrates her
energies on caring for souls as to overlook things which pertain
to mortal and earthly life.

Rerum Novarum

Required Reading: Aquinas, *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Edited by Dino Bigongiari
“Aquinas,” Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *The Blackwell Companion to Political
Theology*. Edited by Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (E-reserve)

Catholic Social Teaching:

“On the Condition of Labor” (*Rerum Novarum*), Pope Leo XIII, 1891

“After Forty Years” (*Quadragesimo Anno*), Pope Pius XI, 1931

“Christianity & Social Progress” (*Mater et Magistra*), Pope John XXIII, 1961

March 22 & 29: PATHOS AND POLITICS

There are . . . three possibilities for action that the church can take vis

Course Requirements:

In each seminar session, the focus of our attention will be a particular set of readings. **Emphasis will be**