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UMass Amherst
Political Science 391A
Tuesday and Thursday, 1 -2:15 pm
Machmer Hall W-21
Fall 2008

WHAT IS POLITICS?

We all think we know what a political act is, but do we really? Is having sex a political act? When the US played Iran in the World Cup was it a political act? Is wearing Nike sneakers a political act? Are your relationships with your professors political ones? Are your “politics” revealed in the food you eat and the car you drive? Is your decision whether or not to take this course political?

Political science distinguishes itself as a field of inquiry by having politics as its subject matter. This fact raises obvious questions about what “politics” means, and what it is that political scientists study. This seminar-style course uses film, journalistic writings, scholarly works, and your own actual experience in politics (a requirement of this class is to do something political) to answer the question “what is politics?” The goal is to develop a broader and deeper sense of what politics is all about.

Spark

We will be using a SPARK course website for this class. Among other things, you will use it to submit your essays and papers.

If you have not used SPARK before, you can find instructions here:

<http://www.oit.umass.edu/spark/students/index.html>

If you are already familiar with SPARK, you can log directly into the course by using the following URL: <https://spark.oit.umass.edu/webct/entryPageIns.doweбct>

Computer access

If you do not have access to an internet-connected computer, you can use one in the Du Bois Library, which has computers available in the Learning Commons. Computers may also be available in various computer classrooms (Du Bois Library rooms 720, 767, 1667; Fine Arts Center 444; Goodell 613; and LGRC A127), depending on class scheduling. You can find real-time information on computer availability at these various locations by checking this URL: <http://classrooms-av.oit.umass.edu/view.php>. Also, students with a valid UCard can borrow a laptop (with wireless connectivity) for four hours at a time from the Reserves Desk on the 3rd Floor of the Du Bois Library. Laptops are for use in the library only. To find out if a laptop is available, type “du bois laptop” into the Library Catalog search box. Laptops can be renewed for another four hours when no one is waiting. In addition, you can also upload and download files (you will need to bring a portable usb drive) from computer kiosks at the following locations: Bartlett Lobby, Commonwealth College Lobby, Goodell (6th floor), LGRC South Lobby, Thompson Café, Whitmore Lobby.

Grading

Grades will be based on class attendance (10%), preparation and participation (15%), four five-page papers (15% each), the “Doing Politics” one-page essay (5%), the “When Did You First Become Political?” one-page essay (5%), and the December 9 ordinary language assignment (5%).

All late papers and assignments will be penalized one third of a grade (for instance, A to A-) for each day, or portion of a day, late. Each class absence - beyond two - will lower the attendance grade by one third of a grade. Late paper and absence grade reductions will not apply in the event of medical or family emergency. In such circumstances you will have to provide appropriate documentation from your doctor or the Dean of Students.

Due dates

Monday, September 8 (2 pm) - “Doing Politics” essay

Monday, September 22 (2 pm) - “When Did You Become Political?” essay

Wednesday, October 1 (10 am) - Paper #1

Wednesday, November 5 (10 am) - Paper #2

Monday, November 24 (10 am) - Paper #3

Tuesday, December 9 (in class) - Ordinary analysis diagram

Thursday, December 18 (10 am) - Paper #4

Academic honesty

You are expected to adhere to the university's regulations regarding academic honesty. As stated in the Academic Regulations, page 6.

Paper and essay submission policies

All papers and essays are to be double-spaced, paginated, and fully referenced using the "in-text reference + list of works cited" method described in the *Guide to Referencing* handout that I posted to the course website in SPARK.

As a condition of continued enrollment in this course, you agree to submit each paper and essay via the Turnitin service on the SPARK course website. This service performs textual comparison and originality review for the detection of possible plagiarism. All submissions will be included in the UMass Amherst dedicated databases of assignments at Turnitin. These databases will be used solely for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism during the grading process this term and in the future. *Students who do not submit their paper or essay electronically to Turnitin will not receive a passing grade for that paper or essay.*

Please submit your paper as an MS Word (.doc), WordPerfect (.wpd), or Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. Since Turnitin does not currently recognize XML files, Office 2007 files cannot be successfully uploaded. If you are using Office 2007, you should save the document in a compatible format by selecting the Office Button > Save As > Tools > Save Options. Then set the file format drop down window to .doc .

A weblink to instructions for how to submit a paper using Turnitin can be found in the Turnitin folder on the course webpage in SPARK.

Readings

It is very important that you do all the assigned readings prior to each class meeting (and bring a copy of the readings with you to class) since they are foundation upon which our class discussions will be built. There are no "filler" readings; all are integral to the course. I have tried to keep the amount of reading down to about 100 pages per week, but some weeks there are a bit more, some less, and some none at all.

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. Preliminaries

Tuesday, September 2. Course intro: our questions

No readings

Thursday, September 4. “What is politics?” exercise

No readings

Monday, September 8. “Doing politics” essay

Your assignment is to go out and do something political. It is up to you to figure out what kind of activity counts as “doing something political.” Be creative in choosing an activity and find something that genuinely interests you. Anything counts as long as you can reasonably justify that you are somehow “doing politics.” In the past, students have done everything from blogging to wearing dreadlocks to volunteering in an election campaign.

You will need to write up a one-page essay that (1) describes the activity that you engaged in, and (2) explains why you believe that activity to be political. Submit the essay via Turnitin on the course website by 2 pm, Monday September 8.

Tuesday, September 9. “Doing politics” discussion

No readings

Thursday, September 11. “Political” realities?

Studs Terkel, *American Dreams*

Ann Banks, pp. 43-47

Vine Deloria, pp. 47-51

Jill Robinson, pp. 51-59

Leon Duncan, pp. 122-124

Jessie de la Cruz, pp. 151-161

Aki and Jun Kurose, pp. 161-171

C.P. Ellis, pp. 200-211

Ray Kaepplinger, pp. 242-248

Mary Lou Wolff, pp. 265-272

Dr. Whitney Addington, pp. 297-299

Linda Christianson, pp. 317-322

The question: how can, or should, one think about the realities assembled in this book?
Are they political? If so, how?

II. Origins

Tuesday, September 16. The evolutionary origins of politics? Power among the apes

Frans de Waal, *Our Inner Ape* (New York: Riverhead, 2005) pp. 7-16, 43-88.

Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and Sex Among the Apes*, 25th anniversary edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) pp. ix, 205-09.

Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: Peter Smith, 1950) pp. 3, 25.

Michael Tomasello, "How are Humans Unique?" *New York Times Magazine*, May 25, 2008.

Thursday, September 18. The origins of "politics": The ancient Greek *polis*, human nature, and artifice

Mogens Herman Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Greek City-State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp. 31-2, 56-65, 106-15.

Christian Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) p 1.

Aristotle, *Politics*, translated by Ernest Barker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975): Book IA, Book IIIA1 (pp. 1-8, 92-6).

Aristotle, *History of Animals*, Book 1, Part 1 [2 pages].

Thomas Hobbes, extract from *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury* [1 page].

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter XVII [4 pages].

Monday, September 22. "When did you become political" assignment

Your assignment is to write a one-page essay answering the following question: When did you first become political? (Before you begin this assignment I strongly encourage

you to listen to the NPR segment and read the Kurtz essay listed under Tuesday, Sept 23). Submit the essay via Turnitin on the course website by 2 pm, Monday September 22.

Tuesday, September 23. The origins of your politics. When did you first become political?

NPR, Talk of the Nation. When did you first become political? March 29, 2008 [30 minutes] <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88606834>

Stanley Kurtz, "Pig Heads." In *Why I Turned Right: Leading baby Boom Conservatives Chronicle Their Political Journeys* edited by Mary Eberstadt (New York: Threshold, 1997) pp. 131-51.

III. Four views from the 20th century

1. Max Weber

Thursday, September 25. Rationalization and bureaucracy

"Social Psychology of the World Religions," *From Max Weber* pp. 294 (start at "All ruling power...") to 299 (stop at "The differences between...").

"Bureaucracy," *From Max Weber* pp. 196-98, 204-16, 224-35, 244 (last paragraph only).

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 3rd edition (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2002) pp. 13-22, 122-25.

Tuesday, September 30. Politics and political ethics in a bureaucratized world

"Politics as a Vocation," *From Max Weber* pp. 77-84 (stop at "A staff was also necessary..."), 95 (last paragraph only), 112 (read only the paragraph that begins "Considering all this..."), 115 (start at "With this we enter...") to 128.

"Religious Rejections of the World and their Direction" *From Max Weber* pp. 333-35 (stop at "The mutual strangeness...").

Wednesday, October 1. Paper #1 due

Submit via Turnitin by 10 am

Thursday, October 2. The Fog of War (video, 107 minutes), Part 1

“Chronology of the Life and Times of Robert S. McNamara” in James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *The Fog of War: Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005) pp. 243-47.

Tuesday, October 7. The Fog of War, Part 2

“Lesson Four: ‘Proportionality Should be a Guideline for War’” in James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *The Fog of War: Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005) pp. 113-37.

Thursday, October 9. Discussion of Fog of War

Review readings for Sept 25, Sept 30, Oct 2, and Oct 7.

Tuesday, October 14. No class. Monday schedule of classes.

2. Carl Schmitt

Thursday, October 16. Friends and enemies

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, pp. 19-49, 60-61, 66-73, 76.

Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) pp. 5-7.

Declaration of Independence (excerpt)

U.S. Constitution - Bill of Rights

Tuesday, October 21. Friends and enemies, continued

Review readings for Oct 16.

Thursday, October 23. Habeas Corpus and the war on terror: the case of José Padilla

Wikipedia entry for “Habeas Corpus.”

Wikipedia entry for “José Padilla.”

Interview with Donna Newman (counsel for José Padilla), August 2005.

“U.S. Can Confine Citizens Without Charges, Court Rules,” *Washington Post*, September 10, 2005.

John Yoo, “Terrorist Tort Travesty,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 19, 2008.

Alan Wolfe, “A Fascist Philosopher Helps Us Understand Contemporary Politics,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 2, 2004.

3. *Hannah Arendt*

Tuesday, October 28. Action in the public realm

Hannah Arendt, “Introduction into Politics” in *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken, 2005) pp. 93-96.

Hannah Arendt, *Human Condition*, pp. 1-11, 22-73.

Thursday, October 30. Action in the public realm, continued

Hannah Arendt, *Human Condition*, pp. 121, 160-62, 173, 175-81, 191-92, 220-30, 236-57.

“On Hannah Arendt” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World* edited by Melvyn A. Hill (New York: St. Martin’s, 1979) pp. 315-19. (Panel discussion with Hannah Arendt in 1972)

Tuesday, November 4. Avoiding politics

Nina Eliasoph, *Avoiding Politics*, pp. 85-111, 127-53.

Wednesday, November 5. Paper #2 due

Submit via Turnitin by 10 am

4. *Michael Oakeshott*

Thursday, November 6. Attending to the general arrangements

Michael Oakeshott, “Political Education” in *Rationalism in Politics and other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991): pp. 43-69.

Tuesday, November 11. No class. Veteran's Day.

Wednesday, November 12 [Tuesday schedule of classes]. Attending to the general arrangements, continued

Review reading for Nov. 6.

Thursday, November 13. The dangers of rationalism: villagization in Tanzania

James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) pp. 223-61, 309-41.

IV. Do people in other cultures experience "politics"?

Tuesday, November 18. Politics in translation

Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Science and Linguistics." In *Language, Thought, and Reality*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1956) pp. 207-19.

Frederic C. Schaffer, "Do You Speak Politig? The Meanings of Politics in American English and Wolof" [English Translation] *EspacesTemps* 76/77 (2001).

Thursday, November 20. Hyenas (video from Senegal, 1992, 113 min), Part 1

No readings

Monday, November 24. Paper #3 due

Submit via Turnitin by 10 am

Tuesday, November 25. Hyenas, Part 2

No readings

Thursday, November 27. No class. Thanksgiving.

Tuesday, December 2. Hyenas discussion

Review readings for Nov 18.

V. Is There A Big Picture? Two Ways to Put It All Together

1. Family Resemblances

Thursday, December 4. Ordinary language philosophy

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd edition (New York: Macmillan, 1958) paragraphs 66 and 67 (pp. 31-32).

Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice: On the Significance of Ludwig Wittgenstein for Social and Political Thought*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) pp. 50-70.

Eight “politics” in-use articles

[1] “Office Politics: How to Play the Game.” CNN.Com 7/14/08.

[2] “Polling Place Privacy Pared in Primary.” *Chicago Tribune* 3/17/98.

[3] “Grazyna: Caught in the Middle.” *Business Week*. 3/16/98.

[4] “The Getty Sullies Itself with Ethnic Politics.” *Los Angeles Times* 3/6/98.

[5] “Compromise on Unions is Bad Politics.” *Scotsman* 5/13/98.

[6] “Lawmakers Back Off Phone Plan.” *St. Petersburg Times* 3/24/98.

[7] “Going Soft? Britain is Still a Nation of Hard-Headed People.” *Sunday Times* 4/19/98.

[8] “We're Still Caught in the Slender Trap.” *Scotsman* 5/7/98.

Tuesday, December 9. Ordinary language analysis of “politics”

Ordinary analysis diagrams due in class. Instructions will be distributed on December 4.

No readings

2. Politics and Epic Political Theory

Thursday, December 11. Epic political theory and the meaning of politics

Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation." *American Political Science Review* 63, 4 (1969) pp. 1062-82.

Thursday, December 18. Paper #4 due.

Submit via Turnitin by 10 am