

**Political Science 4096:  
Twentieth Century Political Thought  
Louisiana State University, Fall 2011**

**Course Description:**

This course offers a survey of some important contributions to contemporary political thought. The premise of this course is that *political* theory or philosophy *is* possible in the twentieth (and twenty-first) century, and that this activity can help us to understand the modern political world. As we read some representative thinkers and engage, what is at times, a dialogue among them, we will have the opportunity to ask what this activity is, what its principle questions or problems are, what approach is (or approaches are) most helpful, and why or how it remains relevant today in the wake of twentieth-century events. Throughout the semester our inquiry addresses the question, meaning, and possibility of “the political.”

**Instructor:**

Trevor Shelley  
tshell1@tigers.lsu.edu

**Office Hours:**

M & W, 2:30-3:30  
And by appointment  
Stubbs 216

**Class Time, and Location:**

MWF 1:40-2:30      Tureaud 201

**Assignments:**

***Book Review (20%)*** – You will be asked to choose a book that is *not* on the reading list and write a 4-5 page critical review of the work. This entails briefly summarizing the argument, but predominantly consists in critically engaging the text—that is, addressing the validity of the problem(s) addressed, the significance and adequacy of the matter and manner of treatment, etc. You may choose to write on any works by our authors for this semester (again: so long as it is *not* one of the already assigned texts), or a work by other 20<sup>th</sup> century political theorists/philosophers, subject to instructor’s approval.

*Due Monday, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> in-class*

***Quizzes (20%)*** – There will be random or spontaneous quizzes throughout the semester, typically once a week, but some weeks with more than one and others without a quiz. These will be basic multiple choice or fill in the blank questions based on the day’s/week’s readings and class discussions. Quizzes will be administered in the first 5 minutes of class. There is no opportunity to write missed quizzes without official documentation justifying one’s absence.

***Reflections (20%)*** – 10 Fridays out of the semester you will be asked to submit a typed reflection of the week’s readings (500-750 words in length). These will be graded on a two-point scale, with full marks given for demonstrating that you have engaged the text and reflected on the class discussions of the week by asking questions, raising problems, addressing relevant issues, etc.

*See schedule below for relevant Fridays.*

**Paper Proposal (5%)** – You will be asked to write a final paper that engages in some way the texts and themes of the class. Prior to writing the full length of the paper, a 2-3-page paper proposal will be required, to ensure students are on track, engaging a suitable and manageable subject matter and thesis. This will be an opportunity to get feedback and engage issues prior to writing the final draft.  
*Indefinite due date (at least two weeks before final paper is due).*

**Final Paper/Exam (35%)** – The final paper of 12-15 pages in length will consist of engaging one or more themes and thinkers from our course, drawing out important arguments, similarities/disagreements, consequences, and/or critiques of the works read and discussed. Students will be asked to consult some secondary sources (e.g., journal articles, etc.), but the main emphasis will be on primary textual engagement. NB: This paper serves as the final exam for this course.  
*Due Thurs. Dec. 9, in exam week, prior to 4pm (to my office or Stubbs mail box).*

### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious violations of academic integrity and thus violations of the LSU Academic and Student Code of Conduct. Any such violation will result in automatic failure in the course. Furthermore, the Code specifies that a student may be expelled from the university for academic misconduct. For the purposes of this class, plagiarism will be defined as *submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source*. For further details see: <http://saa.lsu.edu/Plagiarism.html>

### **Required Books:**

Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures: "Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation"* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 2004). ISBN: 0872206653

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political; With Notes by Leo Strauss* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). ISBN: 0226738922

Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny; Including the Strauss – Kojève Correspondence* (University of Chicago Press, 2000). ISBN: 0226776875

Eric Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003). ISBN: 0826214665

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). ISBN: 0226025985

Joseph Ratzinger [now: Pope Benedict XVI] and Jürgen Habermas, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006). ISBN: 1586171666

Pierre Manent, *A World Beyond Politics? A Defense of the Nation-State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). ISBN: 0691125120

## **Reading and Lecture Schedule:**

Aug. 22 – Introduction

### **1. Science and Politics and the Problem of Rationalization**

Aug. 24. – Weber, pp. 1-31

Aug. 26 – *No class*

Aug. 29 – Weber, pp., 1-31 cont.

Aug. 31 – Weber, pp. 32-94.

Sept. 2 – Weber, cont. *Reflection due*

Sept. 5 – Labor Day, No class

### **2. The Intensity of Politics and the Question of Depoliticization**

Sept. 7 – Schmitt, pp. 19-53

Sept. 9 – Schmitt, pp. 53-79, *Reflection due*

Sept. 12 – Schmitt/Strauss, pp. 80-122

Sept. 14 – Schmitt/Strauss, cont.

### **3. The Tyranny of Science and the Science of Wisdom**

Sept. 16 – Strauss, pp. 3-48, *Reflection due*

Sept. 19 – Strauss, pp. 48-105

Sept. 21 – Strauss/Kojeve, pp. 135-176

Sept. 23 – Strauss/Kojeve, pp. 177-212, *Reflection due*

Sept. 26 – Strauss/Kojeve, pp. 217-314

Sept. 28 – Strauss/Kojeve, cont.

### **4. The Science of Experience and the Politics of Stupidity**

Sept. 30 – Voegelin, pp. 51-109, *Reflection due*

Oct. 3 – Voegelin, pp. 110-154

Oct. 5 – Voegelin, pp. 155-212

Oct. 7 – Voegelin, pp. 213-256, *Reflection due*

Oct. 10 – Voegelin, pp. 257-273

Oct. 12 – Selected letters from *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Strauss and Voegelin*  
(provided on Moodle)

Oct. 13 – Fall holiday begins, classes resume Oct. 17

### 5. The Politics of Performance and the Problem of Worldlessness

Oct. 17 – Arendt, pp. 1-78           **NB: Book Review due in-class**

Oct. 19 – Arendt, pp. 79-135

Oct. 21 – Arendt, pp. 136-174, Reflection due

Oct. 24 – Arendt, pp. 175-247

Oct. 26 – Arendt, pp. 248-325

Oct. 28 – Arendt, “Philosophy and Politics”  
(provided on Moodle), Reflection due

### 6. The Question of Pre-Political Moral Foundations of Order

Oct. 31 – Habermas/Benedict, “Foreword” + pp. 21-52

Nov. 2 – Habermas/Benedict, pp. 55-80

Nov. 4 – Habermas/Benedict, excerpts from *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, pp. 325-394  
(provided on Moodle), Reflection due

Nov. 7 – Habermas/Benedict, Habermas, “Public Space and Politics of the Public Sphere”  
(provided on Moodle)

Nov. 9 – Strauss, “Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections”  
(provided on Moodle)

Nov. 11 – Voegelin, “The Gospel and Culture”  
(provided on Moodle), Reflection due

### 7. The Present Situation and The Questionability of Politics

Nov. 14 – Manent, “Preface” + pp. 1-41, & “The Return of Political Philosophy”  
(provided on Moodle)

Nov. 16 – Manent, pp.42-69

Nov. 18 – No Class

Nov. 21 – Manent, pp. 70-109

Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving holiday begins, classes resume Nov. 28

Nov. 28 – Manent, pp. 110-140

Nov. 30 – Manent, pp. 141-170

Dec. 2 – Manent, pp. 171-206

Dec. 9 – Final Paper due by 4pm (to my office or mailbox; NB: This is the University scheduled exam date).

### Additional Notes:

Please make sure to bring the week’s readings to class, as we will be making reference to them regularly. Use of cell phones (including text messaging, etc.) is prohibited. Laptops are for scholarly purposes only, and not for personal entertainment or *divertissement*.