Political Science 419Z (9706):
Seminar in Political Theory
Spring 2010

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MWF 10:25-11:20
HU 108
Office Hours: HU B16
MW 11:45-12:45 & by appt.

Course Objectives
Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

1. Understand and critically assess the significant political writings of John Locke.
2. Describe the historical context that gave rise to the concepts and debates associated with Locke’s thought.
3. Explain and analyze the continuing relevance of Locke’s key concepts in contemporary politics.
4. Develop critical thinking skills exhibited in reading, discussion, and writing.

John Locke figures auspiciously and notoriously in the history of political thought as a founding figure of Anglo-American liberalism, an agent of British imperialism, a spokesman for early capitalist society, and defender of individual rights and religious toleration. Locke’s legacy continues to be invoked today by critics and admirers alike, weighing in on questions of gender, racial, and class equality, religious freedom, and the limits of state power. What should we make of this legacy? How do Locke’s ideas help us to better understand our political practices and assumptions today? How do contemporary political questions shed new light on Locke’s ideas?

This course will be conducted as a seminar, emphasizing active, thoughtful contribution to weekly discussions by each member of the class. This is a writing intensive course, which will require you to write 25 pages and to rewrite the major writing assignment. Completing all reading and viewing assignments prior to each class meeting is essential to successful completion of this course. Because of the small size of the course, students are encouraged to take advantage of office hours and email to discuss questions and difficulties with assigned readings and written work.

Required Texts:
The following texts are required for this course and are available for purchase at Mary Jane Books (corner of Western Avenue and Quail Street). There will be a few additional readings made available on-line through Blackboard (marked by ** in schedule of readings).

Course Requirements
As a student in this course, you are required to:

• Attend class.
• Arrive on time.
• Complete all readings by the assigned date.
• Come to class prepared to participate actively in discussions on the assigned readings.
• Bring assigned texts to class with you.

** The use of laptops in class is strongly discouraged.

Evaluation
Students will be assessed in the course based on the following criteria:
Response Papers (3 total, each 2 pages): 15%
Short Paper (5-7 pages): 20%
Long paper (10-12 pages): 30%
Participation, In-class, and On-line Assignments: 15%
Quizzes 20% (10% each)

Papers
Response Papers and Presentation (3 2-page papers): You are required to write three response papers of 1-2 pages (double-spaced) each. The purpose of these response pieces is to observe central themes and debates and, most important, raise questions for discussion. You will sign up in advance for the readings for which you will write response pieces. Response pieces must be submitted to Blackboard by noon the day before the class meeting in which the reading will be discussed. In class discussion, you will briefly (5 minutes) present the major questions posed in your response piece in order to generate discussion.

Short Paper (5-7 pages): You will write an analytical essay interpreting a contemporary film through the framework of Locke’s political thought. The film will be made available by streaming through Blackboard. The purpose of this essay is to hone your skills of interpretation and argumentation on both canonical theory texts and popular narrative. No outside research is needed and your paper should show your own observations, criticisms, and evaluations of the text or film without relying on the views of others. If you need to draw on an outside source for a minor point of fact or argument, you must cite the source appropriately in your paper.

Final Paper (10-12 pages): You will write an essay in response to a question posed by the professor. You will have a choice of questions and may also propose your own topic. Individual topics require approval of the instructor no less than one week after the questions have been distributed. The primary purpose of this paper is for you to reflect, analyze and critically evaluate the ideas covered in readings, viewings, lectures and discussions of this course. It is possible that some minimal outside research will be involved, but for the most part this essay emphasizes interpretation and analysis of ideas and debates covered in this class.
You will be required to submit two copies of your papers: 1) on paper at the beginning of class on the due date; and 2) electronically through Blackboard’s Safe Assign, a program that evaluates the originality of written work. The purpose of SafeAssign is to guard against academic dishonesty by judging whether essays draw from sources without citation. For more information on SafeAssign, see http://www.albany.edu/its/bls/safe_assign.htm.

For both papers, you will have the opportunity to revise your work. For the short paper, you may revise the paper once after having received a grade in order to improve your grade on this assignment. For the final paper, a draft is due May . Your draft will be returned within one week, leaving enough time for you to make revisions before the final version is due. The draft of the final paper is worth 5% of the course grade. You ability to incorporate suggestions for revision will be factored into your grade for the final paper.

Participation is highly valued in this course and is essential for your success. The greater the quality and quantity of your participation, the more rewarding the class will be for everyone. Always come to class prepared with some contribution: a question, an interesting observation about the text, and/or an opinion on the readings. When the material is particularly difficult is the best time to bring questions.

The participation grade is based on three components:

1) Class Discussion: Each student is expected to regularly make an active and thoughtful contribution to class discussions. This includes asking questions, offering observations about the readings and formulating opinions. You are particularly encouraged to respectfully respond to your fellow students’ thoughts and opinions.

2) On-line Assignments: On the schedule of meetings, you will find several on-line assignments that ask you to consult Blackboard in preparation for class discussion. Because these assignments use web technology to enhance classroom discussion, no late assignments will be accepted.

3) Attendance: Attendance will be taken each week, but attendance alone is insufficient to receive full credit for participation. Missing more than two classes, lateness, or arriving unprepared to lecture will guarantee a grade of a C or lower.

Excused Absences
Students who are sick are strongly encouraged to stay home as necessary. For this reason, two absences will not be counted against your grade. This policy DOES NOT APPLY TO EXAM DATES. If you must miss an exam or more than two normal classes, you must have documentation from the dean of undergraduate studies (Lecture Center 30 Phone: 518-442-3950) or your grade will be adversely affected.

Reasonable accommodation
“Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations (http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html).”
If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course please also inform the instructor as soon as possible. In addition, the instructor will make every effort to accommodate difficulties arising from religious observance. You are asked to bring any possible conflicts to the instructor's attention as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations are generally established well in advance and are rarely granted after retroactively.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**
You will be required to complete the library's on-line tutorial on plagiarism for this course. Cheating on an exam or plagiarizing written work will result in failure in the course and referral of the case to a university committee. For more information, please see the undergraduate bulletin: [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)

**Improvement**
In cases where you have shown marked improvement over the term, I will take this into consideration in computing final course grades.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

**This schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class.**

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Week 1
Jan 20 Introduction

Jan 22 Why Read John Locke?
Read: Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 13 - 56

**Online assignment #1:** Post a link to Blackboard featuring a video, text, or other contemporary example of appeals to Locke’s political legacy (e.g. rights, consent, rule of law, social contract). Due **Sunday, Jan 24, 5:00pm.**

I. The Seventeenth Century Background

Week 2
Jan 25

Jan 27
Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 113-123, 151-183

Jan 29
Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, pp. 344-386

**Online Assignment #2:** Complete the tutorial on plagiarism offered through the university library. Go to http://library.albany.edu and follow links to ‘tutorials’ to ‘plagiarism 101’ to ‘credit’. The library will confirm when you have completed the tutorial. Must be completed by **Friday, Feb 5.**

II. Social Contract and Political Authority

Week 3
Feb 1:
1) Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, pp. 3-28
2) *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 1-4

Feb 3
*Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 5-6

Feb 5
*Second Treatise of Government*, ch. 7

**Online assignment #3:** Follow the links on Blackboard to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Make a list of (or highlight) phrases and ideas that reflect Locke’s influence. In addition, note any ideas that sound very un-Lockean. Bring assignment to class **Friday, Feb. 12.**

Week 4
Feb 8
*Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 8-13
Feb 10  Second Treatise of Government, chs. 14-19

Feb 12  Declaration of Independence
        U.S. Constitution

III.  The Other Face of the Contract

Week 5
Feb 15:  No Class
Feb 17:  Quiz #1
Feb 19:  Moses and Monotheism, Parts 1 and 2 **

Week 6
Feb 22  Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, Pt. 1, ch. 1, Pt. 2, ch. 2 **
Feb 24:  Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, Pt. 2, ch. 3 **
Feb 26:  Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America, pp. Pt. 6, ch. 11 **

Week 7:
Mar 1  The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
        Paper #1: Topic Distributed
Mar 3  Michael Rogin, “Liberal Society and the Indian Question,” continued **
Mar 5  Rogin, “Liberal Society and the Indian Question,” continued

Week 8
Mar 8  Melissa Butler, “Early Liberal Roots of Feminism: John Locke and the Attack
       on Patriarchy” **
Mar 10 Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman, ‘Mere Auxiliaries to the Commonwealth’:
        Women and the Origins of Liberalism” **
Mar 12  Brennan & Pateman, continued
        Paper #1 due

Week 9
Mar 17  C. B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, pp. 197-251 **
Mar 19  Waldron and Macpherson, continued
Week 10
**Paper #2: Topics distributed**


Mar 29 – Apr 5:  Spring Break --- No Class

**IV. Tolerating Differences**

Week 11
Apr 7  Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Apr 9  Locke *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, continued

Week 12

Apr 14  Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, ch 3

Apr 16  Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, ch. 4

Week 13
Apr 19  Brown, chs. 5-7

Apr 21  **Draft of final paper due**

Apr 23  1) Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*, ch. 1 (pp. 1-12) **
        2) Locke, *First Treatise of Government*, ch. 1-2
        3) Review Hill, ch. 6 “A Nation of Prophets”

Week 14
Apr 26  *First Treatise*, chs. 3-7

Apr 28  *First Treatise*, chs. 8-10

Apr 30  *First Treatise*, ch. 11

May 3  **Quiz #2**

**Final Paper due: Monday, May 10 **