Course Description
This course introduces students to key works of two major political theorists of mid and late 20th century: Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière. These thinkers differ in their philosophical-theoretical approach to the subject of politics. While Hannah Arendt is considered by many a theoretician of the republican tradition Jacques Rancière is known for his radical, post-Marxian interpretation of democratic politics. Despite these and other differences both theorists are also similar in their view of politics as the realm of collective action, spontaneity, revolutionary breaks, unpredictability and political transformations. Both thinkers challenge and in some cases openly oppose the view of institutional, governmental framework as a primary and exclusive domain of politics. Instead, they argue for politics being the realm of egalitarian political participation, collective action, creativity and spontaneity.

This course is also an exercise in theoretical political thinking and political thought in general therefore, while the course is technically a lecture, we will proceed in a form of a seminar based on exchange of ideas, discussions, valuations and re-valuations of key arguments represented in writings of both thinkers as well as evaluating these ideas in the light of contemporary political events. Overall, the consists of in-depth reading of assigned texts, intensive class sessions, which will require your active participation and contribution to class discussions and short individual presentations. The course does not have traditional form exams instead, for your mid-term and final exams you will be required to write research papers in an academic, philosophical-theoretical format. In addition, there will be short written homework assignments and in-class presentations, which also will be evaluated. Overall, you should be ready to dedicate a substantial amount of time and effort for this course. Your prior engagement in classes of political theory will be useful but is not required.

Learning Objectives
✓ To become familiar with the major topics of theoretical inquiry by Hannah Arendt and Jacques Ranciere.
✓ To be able to analyze, interpret and critically evaluate the key concepts, ideas and arguments presented in the selected works of Hannah Arendt and Jacques Ranciere.
✓ Expand and “deepen” the understanding of concepts such as freedom, democracy, politics, political action, power and others around which the major arguments of both thinkers are situated.
✓ Expand the ability to interpret political theory texts – their arguments, style, and different levels of meaning.
✓ Strengthen skills of analytical thinking and argumentative academic writing.

Course Requirements
As a student enrolled in this course and receiving institutional academic credit, your responsibilities are:
✓ Attend all lectures
✓ Arrive to lectures on time and not be late
✓ Complete all readings prior or by the assigned date, and come to class prepared
✓ Contribute to a respectful academic environment, refraining from unrelated conversations or use of technology (cell phones, laptops and other devices)
✓ Every time bring assigned readings to class with you.
✓ Be an active listener during the lectures: take notes, ask questions, raise points of critique
✓ Be respectful to other people points of view and engage in an intellectual conversation with your class mates in a civilized manner

**Required Books:**

Reading and writing are essential tools and of crucial importance in theoretical academic work. By reading we engage with ideas of different thinkers each of whom interpret different subjects of their studies in their own way, using specific methodologies and constructing arguments. Through close reading of assigned texts you should be able to deconstruct these arguments, critically evaluate and use the knowledge and understanding of them to formulate and develop your own ideas. There is a list of required books for this course. We will not read all of them in their entirety, but selected chapters and sections. The required books have been ordered and are available for you in University’s bookstore. If you decide to acquire books from other sources, make sure you have the same exact editions as a bookstore as we want to make sure we are literally “on the same page” of the text during the lectures. It is important for you to have the exact same editions as stated in this syllabus. If you order books from somewhere else, make sure you time your orders properly so books arrive on time when you need them for the class and not later.

**Note:** Books are a must for this course. There will be virtually no additional study material such as power points, summary tables and alike. Books are the primary and only necessary “tool” for this course.


ISBN – 0 14 01.8650 6

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ISBN 0-8047-1874-1 (cl)


Office Hours:
You should not feel any hesitation to come see me to talk about the course material during my office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:35 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in Humanities B16 office. You are also very welcome to approach me for a conversation after or before class if you have time.

Blackboard and SUNY E-mail inboxes
Your homework assignments will be posted on Blackboard in addition to being e-mailed to your “suny.edu” mailboxes. Make sure you check blackboard and your university E-mail regularly for course updates, changes in syllabus and other announcements.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism means to pass off someone else’s work as your own. Please be warned that if found guilty of plagiarism, you will automatically fail the course and receive an E grade. Further actions will be taken, including sending your case before a university committee. Remember, taking text off internet sites and "reworking them" will also earn you an E along with further disciplinary actions. The whole idea of this course is for you to engage in active, critical thinking of your own and to demonstrate that you worked with the texts, understood them and, based on understanding and knowledge acquired, were able to develop your own ideas and arguments. Any attempt to plagiarize in this course will be taken very seriously and may have an extremely negative outcome.

Course grade breakdown
Attendance, presentation and class participation 15%
Two short homework papers 20% (15% each)
Midterm paper: 20%
Final paper: 35%
Final paper proposal: 10%

Grade Appeals
In order to appeal a grade on a particular assignment, you should contact your TA or the professor during office hours within 2 weeks of receiving the assignment back and submit a written explanation of your reasons for believing that the grade should be changed, not to exceed 2 pages. A grade appeal may result in the grade being raised, or left as is, depending on the results of the review. After two weeks, grade complaints will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances like a serious illness.

What do I do if I am sick or need alternate arrangements to fulfill course requirements?
Any mitigating circumstances should be brought to the attention of the professor or a TA as soon as possible. Any foreseeable circumstances (athletic event, religious holidays, travel, etc…) must be raised at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible.

Excused Absences
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. For more on University's Medical Excuse Policy see: http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml

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 the above reasons or other cases including religious holidays, inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. Reasonable accommodations are generally established well in advance and rarely granted retroactively.

**What can I do to succeed academically in this course?**

The Basics: *Read, show up, participate, do a good homework*

The most important factor for success is studying assigned readings, regular attendance of lectures and discussion sections, good presentation and participation in the course in a form of paying attention, taking notes, participating in discussions.

**Attendance**

Regular attendance of class sessions is of crucial importance. It is during the class sessions we will be unpacking and braking down more complicated ideas and arguments and analyzing certain concepts of key importance in the texts of both thinkers. Missing the class will mean you are left on your own to go through the same process. It is easier and more rewarding to participate in this process together with instructor and your fellow students.

**Writing Center Services (Humanities 140)**


**Academic Support Services (Library Room 94)**

Arrange individual and group tutorial as well as study skills workshops on time management, how to improve your concentration, essay exam skills, listening skills, and overcoming procrastination. Visit their website: http://www.albany.edu/oass/support_services.htm or contact them at 442-5180.

*************** Course Outline ***************

**PART I**

Hannah Arendt

Human Condition and the Political

1) **Jan.23, Tuesday**
   - Introduction. Course and syllabus overview.

2) **Jan. 25, Thursday**

3) **Jan. 30, Tuesday**

4) **Feb. 1, Thursday**

5) **Feb. 6, Tuesday**

6) **Feb. 8, Thursday**

7) **Feb. 13, Tuesday**
   - *First homework announced*

8) **Feb. 15, Thursday**
Jacques Rancière
Equality and Power

9) Feb. 20, Tuesday
- First homework due hardcopy in class

10) Feb. 22, Thursday

12) Feb. 27, Tuesday

13) March 1, Thursday
- Midterm assignment announced

Hannah Arendt
History

14) March 6, Tuesday

15) March 8, Thursday
- Midterm papers due hard copy in class
- March 12 – March 18

*********** SPRING BREAK ***********

Jacques Rancière
History

13) March 20, Tuesday

14) March 22, Thursday

15) March 27, Tuesday
- Second homework announced

*Jacques Rancière

16) March 29, Thursday

*Hannah Arendt

17) April 3, Tuesday
- Second homework due hardcopy in class.

*Hannah Arendt

18) April 5, Thursday
*Jacques Rancière

19) April 10, Tuesday

*Jacques Rancière

20) April 12, Thursday

*Jacques Rancière

21) April 17, Tuesday

*Hannah Arendt

22) April 19, Thursday
• Final exam paper proposals due hard copy in class

23) April 24, Tuesday

24) April 26, Thursday
• Final exam paper proposals returned

24) May 1, Tuesday

*Jacques Rancière

25) May 3, Thursday

26) May 8, Tuesday
• Course wrap up

MAY 11

Final Exam Papers Due