

PHI 3233 Social and Political Philosophy

H05; T01-02 UCC 110

Teacher: Prof. Hans Sluga
(Professor of Philosophy
University of California at Berkeley)
Visiting Professor

Introduction:

Social engagement and political activism presuppose an understanding of the situation in which one is to act. This, in turn, requires the possession of an appropriate set of concepts. The course will examine some (but only some) of the fundamental concepts for understanding society and politics. Among them will be the concepts of action, power, violence, war and peace, freedom, the public (and the private), the state, domination and participation, and above all the concepts of the social and the political.

Course requirements:

(a) Reading, (b) a midterm and a final paper, (c) active class participation.

Course structure

Part 1: Introduction

Philosophy, society, and politics
The classical (Western) conception of society and politics
Aristotle
Why the classical conception has disintegrated

Part 2: Twentieth century attempts at understanding society and politics

(a) Carl Schmitt: politics as the organization of social conflict
(b) Hannah Arendt: politics as free (inter)action in the public sphere
(c) Michel Foucault: politics as power acting on social relations of power

Part 3: New challenges

(a) Globalization
(b) Terrorism
(c) The environment

Part 4: Where do we go from here?

Readings:

Leo Strauss, "What is political philosophy?" selections
Aristotle, Politics, selections
Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto,
Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients vs. the Liberty of the Moderns"
Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political
Carl Schmitt, The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations
Carl Schmitt, Political Theology, selections
Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition, selections
Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?"
Hannah Arendt, On Aggression, selections
Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures"
Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality
Michel Foucault, Security, Territory, Population, selection
Michel Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics, selection
Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power"
Peter Euben, "The Polis, Globalization, and the Politics of Place"
Richard Falk, "The Making of Global Citizenship"
Judith Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear"
Joseph Margolis, "Terrorism and the New Forms of War"
Arne Naess, "Politics and the Ecological Crisis"
Arne Naess, "The Politics of the Deep Ecology Movement"