PHIL 308 – Social and Political Philosophy
University of Oregon
Winter, 2015

Instructor: Dr. Steven Brence
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Office: 250 Susan Campbell Hall
Hours: 1-3, Thursdays (and by appointment)

Course Description:

This course will focus on several key works in social and political philosophy in the 20th century that remain timely, even radical, in the 21st. In the last century, developments such as that of evolutionary theory, Freudian psychology, advanced technologies, and the rise of large scale institutions like business corporations, among others, severely challenged our dominant political theories, many of which were developed hundreds of years prior. Yet these theories, however staggered and hobbled, remain those to which we still largely turn today. The texts presented in this course will both explore how these developments challenge the viability of our time-worn conceptions of such things as individualism, democratic agency, political rationality, and the form and function of desire in social and political life, and offer suggestions as to how those conceptions may be modified in light of those developments. We will reconsider, through these texts, the challenges provided by those broad cultural and intellectual shifts, and will critically consider the applicability of those texts to our present.

Required Texts: (available for purchase at the UO Bookstore, a.k.a. campus “Duckstore”)

- John Dewey, Individualism Old and New
- Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society
- Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition

Course Requirements and Grades:

- Three Essays, 5 pages in length. (75%)
- Attendance, Participation, and Written Responses, 1 page in length, to selected readings. These will be assigned in class. They are also due in class, the day the relevant reading is discussed in class, and may not be submitted late. Two of these may be missed with no penalty, but none will be accepted late. Extra credit will be granted if all are submitted and of high quality. (25%)

Assignment Guidelines:

All written work, unless otherwise specified, should be written independently. You are encouraged to discuss all aspects of this course with your fellow students, but the work you turn in must be entirely your own. Any academic dishonesty will result, at minimum, in course failure. University of Oregon Academic Misconduct Code:
All work is to be submitted in class, unless otherwise directed. No work may be submitted via email without prior arrangement. Late essays will be marked down according to degree of lateness. Smaller written assignments will not be accepted late.

Philosophy Department Grading Rubric:

- **A** = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
- **B** = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
- **C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
- **D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
- **F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

**Technology Guidelines:**

No electronic devices (including laptops, tablets, and mobile phones) are to be used during class time. Email communication with your instructors is sincerely encouraged but proper language (spelling, punctuation, etc.) should be used. Your messages should also be addressed, signed, and have a subject heading which makes reference to the course (PHIL 308).

**Classroom Guidelines:**

Class attendance is required. You are expected to arrive before class begins, be respectful and polite to everyone in the room, and to stay until it ends. If you should need to leave before the end of class, please let me know before class begins.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Delineate the history of Western social and political philosophy and differentiate the main schools of thought, key authors, debates, terms, and methods, that have emerged therein.
2. Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through academic format essays and the use of primary sources in the literature.
3. Compare, contrast, and critique representative authors from various philosophical traditions and historical periods.
4. Engage in philosophical inquiry that examines a broad range of topics such as human nature, the self and the community, political authority, morality, justice, recognition and identity.

**Accessibility:**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if aspects of the instruction or course design result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Accessible Education in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu
Sexual Harassment and Assault:

The University of Oregon is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

Schedule*:

Week 1 (Jan. 5-7)

- Mon. (1/05): Introduction.

Week 2 (Jan. 12-14)

- Mon. (1/12): Dewey, *Individualism*, Ch. 3 and 4
- Wed. (1/14): Dewey, Individualism, Ch. 5 and 6

**Wednesday Jan. 18th: Essay #1 Assigned**

Week 3 (Jan. 21)

- Mon. (1/19): Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Friday, Jan. 27th (5 p.m.): Essay #1 Due**

Week 4 (Jan. 26-28)

- Mon. (1/26): Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Introduction and Ch. 1
- Wed. (1/28): Marcuse, *ODM*, Ch. 2 and 3
Week 5 (Feb. 2 - 4)

Mon. (2/04): Marcuse, *ODE*, Ch. 3 and 4  
Wed. (2/06): Marcuse, *ODE*, Ch. 5

Week 6 (Feb. 9 - 11)

Mon. (2/11): Marcuse, *ODE*, Ch. 6 and 8  
Wed. (2/13): Marcuse, *ODE*, Ch. 9 and Conclusion

**Wednesday Feb. 13th: Essay #2 Assigned**

Week 7 (Feb. 16 - 18)

Wed. (2/20): Arendt, *HC*, Ch. II

**Friday, Feb. 22nd (5 p.m.): Essay #2 Due**

Week 8 (Feb. 23 - 25)

Mon. (2/23): Arendt, *HC*, Ch. III  

Week 9 (Mar. 2 - 4)

Mon. (3/02): Arendt, *HC*, Ch. V, parts 24-29  

Week 10 (Mar. 9 - 11)

Wed. (3/11): Arendt, *HC*, Ch. VI, parts 41-45

**Monday Mar. 9th: Essay #3 Assigned**

Finals Week

**Tuesday, March 20th (5 p.m.): Essay #3 Due**

*I reserve the right to modify this schedule at any time. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of announced changes.*