

Department of Political Science

The University of Oklahoma

Norman Campus

Course Title: Justice, Liberty, and the Good Society

Course Number: PSC 2703

Fall 2000

Instructor: Professor Ron Peters

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Hours: Hours: 2:00-4:00, MWF

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Description: This course will examine the concepts of justice, liberty, and the conception of the good society in several important works of political theory and literature. We will begin with a consideration of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, the foundation of our understanding of the liberal society grounded in concepts of liberty, rights, and property. We will apply Locke's theory to the American experience by a consideration of *The Declaration of Independence* and the western novel *Shane*. Next, we will study Rousseau's challenge to Locke in *The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Rousseau suggests that a society grounded on Locke's principles would corrupt human nature. To illustrate this possibility, we will consider Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Both Locke and Rousseau are sometimes said to have left no good place for women in their conceptions of justice and the good society. A classic critique is Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, which we will consider next. Finally, we will read and discuss John Fowles's, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, novel that will bring together various themes in the course. Students will be expected to come to class have read and being prepared to discuss the reading assignments. It is possible that we will arrange for the showing of a movie or two during non-class hours.

Requirements: There will be a number of opportunities for students to demonstrate their grasp of the subject matter. There will be two hourly exams and a final exam. Students will be graded on participation. Attendance will be taken and a good attendance record will contribute positively to the course grade. Students are asked to write a ten page paper due the last day of class.

Grading:

First Exam - 20%

Second Exam - 20%

Final Exam - 25%

Paper - 25%

Attendance and Participation - 10%

Required Texts:

The required readings are listed in the order in which they will be considered. The books have been ordered through the OU Bookstore. Several of the readings are available online. Since we will be making reference to the text in our class discussions, I strongly recommend that you buy the books. The articles can be downloaded and printed.

Locke, John *Second Treatise of Civil Government*
<http://www.swan.ac.uk/poli/texts/locke/lockcont.htm>

Schaeffer, Jack *Shane*

Rousseau, J.J. *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*
<http://www.constitution.org/jjr/ineq.htm>

Conrad, Joseph *Heart of Darkness*
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/ConDark.html>

Wollstoncraft, Mary *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
<http://www.bartleby.com/144/>

The Declaration of Independence
<http://thisnation.com/library/declaration.html>

The "Declaration of Sentiments" of the Seneca Falls Convention, 1848
<http://www.closeup.org/sentimnt.htm>

King, Martin Luther "Speech on the Washington Mall," August 28, 1963
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/mlkpapers/>

John Fowles *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Course Outline

August 22 Introduction

August 24-September 19 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*

21 *The Declaration of Independence*

26 *Shane*

28 *Shane*

October 3 First Examination

5-19 Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

24-26 Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

October 31 Second Examination

November 2-16 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

21 *Seneca Falls "Declaration of Sentiments"*

Martin Luther King, "*Speech on the Washington Mall*"

28-Dec 5 Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (read the entire novel over Thanksgiving Break)

December 7 Course Overview (Paper Due)

13 Final Exam (8:00-10:00 am)

Paper Assignment

Select one of the novels assigned for this course. Write a paper in which you analyze the novel in relationship to the themes of this course, “justice, liberty, and the good society.” Make specific reference to the arguments of Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate your grasp of the novels but also your grasp of the political theories we have studied. Your paper should not exceed ten pages in length, double-spaced and typewritten, using 1 inch margins all around. References to the texts can be made parenthetically in the paper (e.g. Locke, p.x). Provide a reference list of the works you cite. Due December 7. 25% of course grade.

Relevant Web Sites

Joseph Conrad

<http://www.americanliterature.com/HD/HDINDEX.HTML>

Fowles

<http://www.fowlesbooks.com/>

Locke

<http://www.thisnation.com/library/books/locke/2ndtreatise.html>

<http://www.swan.ac.uk/poli/texts/locke/lockcont.htm>

<http://www.orst.edu/instruct/phl302/philosophers/locke.html>

M.L. King

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/mlkpapers/>

Rousseau

<http://members.aol.com/Heraklit1/rousseau.htm>

Schaefer

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/schaeef.htm>

Wollstonecraft

<http://www.constitution.org/woll/row.htm>

Study Questions

Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*

1. What are Locke’s assumptions about human nature? How do they affect his theory?
2. What are the inconveniences of the State of Nature? How do they relate to the need for civil society?
3. What is the difference between liberty and license?
4. Upon what basis does the right of property rest? To what obligations does it give rise?
5. What justification is there for unequal property holdings?

6. Why do parents have the right to control their children? What is the proper relationship between husband and wife?
7. Upon what foundation does the authority of government rest? Under what circumstances can government become illegitimate and warrant dissolution? Who has the right to decide this?
8. What would a good society be like if it were based on Locke's theory? Upon what conception of justice would it rest?

Schaefer, *Shane*

1. What was the legal basis of Fletcher's right to run his cattle on the open range?
2. What was the legal basis of Starrett's right to homestead his land?
3. What law governed the Valley?
4. Characterize the role played by Marian Starrett in her family and in the novel.
5. How does the right of private property undergird the plot of *Shane*?
6. Is there a "state of nature" a "state of war" a "state of peace" and a "civil society" in *Shane*?
7. By what right did Shane kill Fletcher and Wilson? Did they have any right to try and kill him?
8. What happened in the Valley after Shane left? Where did Shane go? Why?

Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*

1. What are Rousseau's assumptions about human nature? How do they affect his theory?
2. What is the main question the "Discourse" seeks to answer? Why is it important?
3. To what extent is man a rational creature? To the extent that he is not rational, then what other features of his being shape his behavior?
4. What has caused mankind to "progress"? What has been the effect of progress on mankind?
5. What is history? How does it come about? What difference does it make?
6. How do Rousseau's views of property compare to Locke's? What difference does it make in comparing their respective theories?
7. Did the Noble Savage lead a good life?
8. What would a society grounded on Rousseau's theory look like? Would it be good society? Would it be a just society? Would you want to live in it?

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

1. Who was Marlow? For whom did he work? Why was he sent to Africa?
2. When Marlow arrives at the Outer Station he is disgusted by the waste of the tools of industry (machinery, etc.). How does this reflect his attitude toward industry and progress?
3. Who was Kurtz? For whom did he work? Why was he sent to Africa? What were his ideals? What happened to him?
4. What attitude does the novel evoke toward the native Africans? How might this relate to the concept of nature? Are the Africans depicted as natural, uncivilized, differently civilized, corrupted by civilization?
5. Where is the "Heart of Darkness"? How does the motif of darkness and light illustrate the novel's theme?
6. What is the main theme of *Heart of Darkness*? How might Rousseau have responded to it?
7. What happens to Marlow as the novel progresses?
8. What is the implication of the novel's conclusion?

Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

1. What view does Wollstonecraft take of natural rights? Is her view closer to Locke's or Rousseau's, or neither?
2. How does Wollstonecraft's view of human nature compare that those of Locke and Rousseau?
3. What distinctions does Wollstonecraft draw between the situation of aristocratic, middle class, and lower class women? Why does she address herself primarily to middle class women?
4. What is Wollstonecraft's view of progress? How does it compare to Rousseau's?
5. What is Wollstonecraft's view of reason? How does it compare to Locke's?
6. Does Wollstonecraft offer a coherent political theory that is distinct from that of Rousseau and Locke?
7. What would a good society built on Wollstonecraft's principles look like? Would you want to live in it?
8. What is the primary reason that thinkers such as Rousseau and Locke have erred, according to Wollstonecraft?

Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

1. In what ways is nature depicted in the novel? In what way is it contrasted with "civilization?" Which characters represent the "natural" as opposed to the "conventional?"
2. How does the concept of private property link the characters of Charles, Ernestina, Mr. Freeman, Sam, and Mary?
3. Charles is a man of science, as is Dr. Grogan. How does their love of science shape their perceptions of reality? How does it link to their political views? In general, what posture does the novel take on science and progress?
4. Mr. Freeman is a man of commerce. Sam aspires to be. Charles is a scion of an aristocratic class that is rapidly dying away. What affect does capitalism appear to have on Victorian society? To what extent is it relevant to Sarah's predicament?
5. A main theme of the novel is the role of women in Victorian society. In what way do the various female characters depict the roles that women played? What forces shaped those roles?
6. Sarah is obviously at odds with her time. What explanations are offered of her character and behavior? Which seems the most convincing?
7. The novel appears to be about Sarah's liberation; but what of Charles? What happens to him as the novel progresses? In what respect, if any, is Charles representative of modern men?
8. The novel is famous for its two endings. What do we learn from each of them? Which do you prefer? Why?
9. What might book reviews of this novel be like, if written by Locke, Rousseau, or Wollstonecraft?

Policies

Policy on Withdrawals and Incompletes

You will only be allowed to withdraw from this course with a passing grade if you are in fact passing. If you are ill or have some personal situation that prevents you from attending class, your obligation is to contact me as soon as you start missing class in order to discuss your situation. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in cases of complete withdrawal from the University approved by Student Affairs and the Dean's office.

Incompletes will be given only upon request and for good cause. Incompletes will not be given if a student has missed so much of the course that it is in a practical sense impossible to make up the work. If an incomplete is given, the student will be asked to sign an agreement specifying the work to be completed and the date the work will be due. The student will participate in the determination of the deadline. Extensions will be given only under exceptional circumstances.

Policy on Disabilities

If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities you should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work as if it were your own. It can take many forms. The most obvious form is to turn in a paper that someone else wrote over your signature. Or, you might copy material from a book or an article and present it as your own work. When you use words that are directly copied from a source, you *must* place them in quotation marks and cite the source. A person might make a few changes in the text, and then think that it is permissible to present the material without using quotation marks or without citing the source. This is a form of paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is still plagiarism, unless you explicitly say that you are paraphrasing and cite the source from which the original material comes. Plagiarism is academic misconduct and is severely penalized. Do not plagiarize. If you do, expect that if you are caught you will face disciplinary procedures that can include expulsion from the University and will almost certainly result in your receiving an F in this class.

Special Notice

You are kindly requested to turn OFF your cell phones during this class. Thank You.