

# Department of Political Science

## The University of Oklahoma

### Norman Campus

**Course Title: Politics and the Arts**

**Course Number: PSC 3970 (Honors Seminar)**

**Fall 2003**

**Instructor:** Professor R. Peters

**Day and Time:** Tuesday and Thursday 3:00-4:15

**Room:** Monnet Hall, Room 101

**Office:** Monnet Hall, Room 101

**Hours:** Monday and Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 or by appointment

**Phone:** 325-6372

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**Course Description:** This course will examine the relationship between politics and the arts in theory and in practice. Much of the course will be devoted to consideration of a variety of theoretical perspectives on politics and aesthetics. This component of the course will be conducted as a reading seminar. Students will be asked to prepare short (2 page) response papers as we go along.

A variety of artistic forms will be addressed, including theater, opera, music, film, and the plastic arts. The focus will not be on aesthetic theory per se, much less on art criticism. I do not offer myself as an expert on the arts. I do have an interest in the relationship between politics and art taken from the perspective of political theory. That is the approach the course will take.

The second component of the course will be devoted to an examination of issues relating to politics and the arts, such as public support of the arts, the use of the arts for propaganda, public censorship of the arts, art as a challenge to political authority, and the relationship between art, politics, and culture.

Toward this end, a list of potential research paper topics will be provided and arrayed under a set of broad topics as indicated above. Students will be asked to select particular topics on which to write independent research papers. It is anticipated that the last part of the semester will be given over to discussion of the broad topics to which individual papers relate.

I plan to divide the class into two or more groups. The exact number of groups and the amount of class time devoted to this aspect of the course cannot be determined until we see how many students are enrolled and the number of broad topics and specific papers with which we are dealing. Student research paper assignments will be made early in the semester so that students can begin working. Papers will be due the Friday before Thanksgiving break. Research papers will be approximately 20 double-spaced pages in length. I plan to have them submitted in electronic files and all papers will be posted on Blackboard for the other members of the class to read.

**Requirements:** Graded requirements will include: the final examination, short response papers, the individual research paper, class participation, and the final exam. Group activities will be factored into the course grade as appropriate.

1. During the first part of the course, during which we will be discussing political and aesthetic theory, students will be asked to write short response papers (1-2 pages). I do not know at this time how many such response papers might be assigned, but they will be connected directly to the readings as we go along and will require no research or additional reading. 20%
2. The research paper. 40%.
3. Participation in class discussion will be included in the assessment of the course grade, which of course presupposes attendance. 20%
4. Each group will be assessed on the quality of its work and any presentation made to the class. 10%
5. There will be a final examination, essay in form, during the regularly scheduled examination period for this class. 20%

To facilitate the course, we will utilize the Blackboard platform for announcements, posting of assignments, organizing groups, and posting of readings, etc. Student papers will be posted electronically on Blackboard and may, where appropriate, include images as well as text.

**Readings: The books listed below have been ordered through the OU Book Store. The articles will be either posted on Blackboard or distributed in class.**

Moliere, *The Misanthrope*

Rousseau, *Politics and Art (Letter to D'Alembert on the Theater)*

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Contra Wagner*

John Ruskin, *Unto This Last*

Laurence des Cars, *The Pre-Raphaelites*

De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume II, Part I

Richard Rorty, "The Decline of Redemptive Truth and the Rise of Literary Culture" (posted on Blackboard)

Robert Hughes, "Culture of Complaint" (posted on Blackboard)

Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism" (posted on Blackboard)

**Videos: We will settle upon one or more viewing opportunities for each of the following videos. Others may be added or substituted. Only the Rousseau video will be shown in class.**

Jean-Jacque Rousseau: Retreat into Romanticism

Triumph of the Will

Why We Fight

Leni Riefenstahl

Parsifal

Mephisto

The French Lieutenant's Woman

### **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. Or, you might purchase or otherwise obtain a paper over the Internet. 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.

For OU's policy on Student Ethics and Plagiarism, please consult the following web site:

<http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity>

### **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. You are passing if the number of semester points that you have earned comprises 60% or more of the points available to the date of proposed withdrawal, or if you are above the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in the class. If you are ill or have some personal situation that prevents you from attending class, your obligation is to contact your group instructor 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 Challenged Persons**

If you have a disability that may affect your participation or performance in this class 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.