PT 227 Liberalism Socialism Fascism

Seminar Leader: Ewa Atanassow
Course Times: Mon 15:15-16:45, Thu 17:00-18:30
Email: e.atanassow@berlin.bard.edu
Office hours: Wed 13:30-15, and by appt

Course Description

This course will be dedicated to a comparative study of the three political creeds that have shaped the global order and the social and ideological landscape in which we live. While offering competing political and moral visions of the structure and destiny of modern society, these three ideological movements also share common roots. All three took their bearings from the sense of radical novelty and irreversible change born of the French Revolution, and were elaborated as alternative reactions to that sense of inevitable transformation. From this shared point of departure, liberal, fascist, and socialist worldviews developed in critical response to one another, and as polemical interpretations of the character and meaning of the modern age. Drawing on philosophical, political and propagandist writings as well as imaginative works, we shall study the fundamental values that characterize these ideological currents and the visions of society they propose.

Readings

Benjamin Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of Moderns,” In: Political Writings (Cambridge University Press, 1988)
* John Stuart Mill, On Liberty and Other Essays (Oxford University Press, 1991)
* Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America Tocqueville (Liberty Fund, 2009)
Arthur de Gobineau, The Inequality of Races (Howard Fertig, 1999)
Alexis de Tocqueville Correspondence with Gobineau (Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959)
Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil (Oxford University Press, 1998)
A Primer of Italian Fascism, edited by Jeffrey T. Schnapp (University of Nebraska Press, 2000)
* Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political (University of Chicago Press, 1996)
Heidegger, The Self-Assertion of the German University (Online source)
Vladimir Lenin, Revolution, Democracy, Socialism (Pluto Press, 2008)
Hannah Arendt, What is Authority? (Online source)
Leszek Kolakowski, How to be a Conservative-Liberal-Socialist, a Credo (Online source)
Requirements

Regular, active and informed class participation is a central aspect of this seminar. As an advanced elective, the course will also include a research component and a great deal of independent work. Alongside engaging with the primary material, students will be expected to do research on their own, and practice the conventions of academic presentation and writing. Systematic attendance is essential. Missing more than two sessions over the course of the semester will significantly affect the final grade.

Assessment

1) Seminar participation (40 %), including:
   • Systematic preparation and active engagement in the seminar discussion 20 %
   • 2 class presentations (max 10-minute long): 20 %

2) Writing assignments (60 %), including:
   • Bi-weekly papers (600 words each), 5 total: 25%
   • Proposal (500 words) for a final essay topic: 10 %
   • Final essay (up to 2500 words) on a topic of your choice: 25 %

Guidelines for presentations:
The presentation should introduce - in no more than 10 min – your informed reflections on the reading for the day by briefly analyzing its key point, and formulating one question for discussion. Unless necessary, do not summarize the reading. You may choose to structure your presentation in response to the following questions: What is the main claim developed in this part of the reading? What are its stakes and implications? What further questions does it raise?

Guidelines for bi-weekly papers:
The bi-weekly papers can fall into one of the following genres: 1) Reflection paper that illuminates, through close reading, the meaning of a particular section of the primary material, and raises a significant question about it. 2) Response paper that analyzes a particular theme or claim raised in the class presentations and/or seminar discussion. 3) Evaluation paper that offers a review of at least one of the weeks’ presentation(s). 4) Thesis paper that develops a specific claim about the reading and seeks to support this claim with evidence from the text. Students are required to submit at least one paper from each kind.

Deadlines

• Bi-weekly papers due by noon on alternate Sundays
• Proposals for final essays are due by 23:59 on Friday, December 4
• Final essay due TBA

Late essays will be downgraded according to the Late Submissions Policy in the Student Handbook.
## Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Monday session</th>
<th>Thursday session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Aug 31-Sep 4</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>2: Sep 7-11</td>
<td>Mill, ch. 1</td>
<td><strong>Session rescheduled for Oct. 27</strong></td>
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<td>3: Sep 14-18</td>
<td>Mill, chs. 2-3</td>
<td>Mill, chs. 4-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4: Sep 21-25</td>
<td>Tocqueville, DA Introduction, Notice, II 1.1-5</td>
<td>Tocqueville, DA II 2.1-9, 13, 14, 18, 20</td>
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<td>5: Sep 28-Oct 2</td>
<td>Tocqueville DA, II 3. 1, 5, 8, 12, 19, 21, 22</td>
<td>Tocqueville DA, II 4.1-3, 6-8</td>
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<td>6: Oct 5-9</td>
<td>Gobineau, <em>Inequality of Races</em></td>
<td>Tocqueville/Gobineau correspondence</td>
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<td>7: Oct 12-16</td>
<td>Nietzsche, BGE, Preface, part VIII</td>
<td>Nietzsche, part IX</td>
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### FALL BREAK

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>8: Oct 26-30</th>
<th>Italian Fascism</th>
<th>Tue Oct 27 19:30 <em>Democracy and Fear</em> lecture by Prof. Ira Katznelson</th>
<th>Schmitt, pp. 19-49</th>
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<tr>
<td>9: Nov 2-6</td>
<td>Schmitt, pp. 49-79</td>
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<td>Heidegger/Goebbels/Junger</td>
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<td>10: Nov 9-13</td>
<td>Marx, On the Jewish Question</td>
<td>Marx, On the Jewish Question</td>
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<td>11: Nov 16-20</td>
<td>Marx/Engels, Manifesto</td>
<td>Lenin</td>
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<td>12: Nov 23-27</td>
<td>19:30 <em>Komissar screening</em></td>
<td>Milosz, Preface, Ch. 1</td>
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<td>13: Nov 30-Dec 4</td>
<td>Milosz, chs. 2-3</td>
<td>Milosz, chs. 7-8</td>
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<td>14: Dec 7-11</td>
<td>Arendt</td>
<td>Kolakowski</td>
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