

Political Science 4801: Citizens, Beasts, or Gods?

Marquette University, Fall 2009
11:00 - 12:15 T TH; AR (ROTC Annex) 105
Professor Dobbs
421 Wm. Wehr Physics
Office Hours: 12:20 - 1:30 T TH & by appt.
<http://www.mu.edu/polisci/Dobbs.htm>

Course Description:

Is human nature best understood as the minimum set of traits all humans equally share, or does it comprehend the highest destinies (including the perfection of happiness) that only some among us will ever achieve? To what degree is the civic community, the ecclesiastical community, and civilization itself, a help or a hindrance to human beings in their pursuit of happiness? Can we even think freely about such matters, or is our very attempt to think about such questions hopelessly incarcerated by our socio-cultural situation, to say nothing of our particular passions and interests? This semester we shall consider these and other questions as they arise in the works of Rousseau, Nietzsche, Chesterton, and Aristotle.

Requirements, Expectations and Grading:

You are required to attend *every* meeting of this class and to read the assigned texts carefully and on schedule. There will be daily writing assignments. I shall grade four of these exercises, collecting them by surprise and treating them as “pop quizzes.” Additionally, you will be expected to present many more of your exercises for discussion and constructive criticism in class. The quality of your exercises (as written and presented) will account for approximately 2/3 of your final grade. The remaining 1/3 of your grade will be determined by the quality of your contribution to classroom discussion via your responses to the presentations of others.

You should expect to spend at least 6 hours each and every week studying and preparing for this class, in addition to your regular attendance. (If you carry a load of fifteen credit hours, and follow this rule of thumb in all your classes, you will still be investing no more time developing your own human capital than you will spend enlarging your employer's capital after you have graduated. My working assumption is that you are worth the investment. Would you agree?)

Date	Assigned Reading
Week 1	Fr. Guido & Justice in Higher Education http://youtube.com/watch?v=kO8x8eoU3L4 Josh Waitzkin on the Art of Learning, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTZS3SqpT-o ; Description of Writing Assignments
Weeks 2-3	Rousseau, <i>First Discourse</i> , (pp.30-74); <i>Second Discourse</i> , “To the Republic of Geneva” (pp.76-90); Rousseau, <i>Second Discourse</i> , “Preface” (pp.91-97); <i>Second Discourse</i> , (pp.99-181)
Week 4-5	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> Book 1 chs.1-3; chs.4, 5, 7 Book X chs.1-6; chs.7-9
Week 6-10	Nietzsche, <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> Preface; Part 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9
Week 11-15	Chesterton, <i>Orthodoxy</i> I; II; III; IV; V; VI; VII; VIII; IX; overview