POSCE 2801: Justice and Power

Professor Darrell Dobbs
Office Hours: 8:30-9:30 am T TH and by appointment
Office: 421 Wm. Wehr Physics

Marquette University, Spring Term 2017
Class times: 9:30-10:45; 11:00-12:15 T TH
Classroom: 198 LL, 418 WWP

Course Rationale

Think of justice, power, and authority as the ABCs of politics. Apart from an understanding of these elementary principles, one could no more hope to understand politics than an illiterate could hope to read Milton’s Paradise Lost. Yet many in the university, in government, and in the press take it for granted that justice is simply a standard in accordance with which we and others may learn to distinguish justice from injustice.

Policies, Expectations, and Grading

You are expected to attend every meeting of this class, having carefully read the assigned texts. Take it as a working premise that there is truth to be discovered and that the authors selected for attention in this class are among mankind’s most reliable guides to its discovery. Grades will be based on four papers (80%) and regular participation in class discussion (20%). Absences are excusable upon my receipt of your email request, time-stamped prior to class time the day of your absence. It remains your responsibility to make up any missed assignments. Your second, and every subsequent, unexcused absence will lower your final grade by one step: e.g., B ---> BC. Plan to spend an average of 5 hours per week preparing and studying for this class. (If you carry a full load of fifteen credit hours, following this rule of thumb will result in a 40 hour work week).

Class Schedule

Introduction

Weeks 1-2 Introductions & Exploratory Conversations on Questions concerning Justice and Power

Part One: Justice by Nature in the Understanding of Philosophers

Weeks 3-5 Plato, Republic 327a1-328b3; 328b4-331d7; 331d8-336a8; 336a9-343a2; 343a3-348b7; 348b8-354a11

Weeks 6-8 Plato, Republic 354a12-354c3, Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I-II Q.91 a.2; Aquinas, Q.94 aa.2-3; Aquinas, Q.94 aa.4-5; Machiavelli, The Prince chs.1, 6, 8, 12; Machiavelli, chs. 14-18; Aquinas, Q.95 a.2

Week 9 Spring Break

Part Two: Justice by Nature in the Practice of American Statesmen

Weeks 10-12 Tocqueville, Democracy in America pp.3-15, Roger Williams & Religious Liberty; Tocqueville, pp. 27-44, 52; Aquinas, Q.97 a.2, Lincoln, On the Declaration of Independence, The Declaration of Independence; The Northwest Ordinance, Principle Features of the U.S. Constitution; Aquinas, I-II Q.96 a.2, Lincoln, Temperance Address; Aquinas, II-II Q.64 a.3, Lincoln, Lyceum Address

Weeks 13-14 Aquinas, II-II Q.66 a.2, Locke, Second Treatise, ch.5; Easter Break; Roger Williams & the Indians, Jefferson, Confidential Memo, Letters to Harrison & von Humboldt, Adams, Letter to Tudor; Marshall, Johnson v. McIntosh

Weeks 15-16 Gates, Did Black People Own Slaves?, Horton, Free Blacks; Douglass, The U.S. Constitution; Lincoln, Repeal of the Missouri Compromise; Taney, Scott v. Sandford, Lincoln, On Dred Scott