

Political Science 234, Winter 2020

*Freedom and Empowerment*

location: Arts & Letters 304

MonWed 1:00—2:30

office hours: Tues 3:00—3:30, Thurs, 1-2 & by appt

Prof. K. Arnold

office: 990 W. Fullerton Ave, 2111

email: karnol14@depaul.edu

off. Phone: 5-4736

(please do not email  
me on D2L)

*Freedom and Empowerment:*

In this course, we will read some of the most important texts of contemporary political theory in relation to issues of freedom and power. These authors questioned Enlightenment norms such as: the feasibility of morality; the idea that history leads to progress; and particularly important for this class, the notions that people are masters of themselves and nature. In particular, all of these philosophers investigated how free we are given overly strict moral precepts (Freud); the “iron cage” of capitalism that forces us all to work beyond subsistence (Weber); gender norms that trap us in fixed and yet often contradictory roles (Beauvoir); and finally, how modern forms of power, which are local and historically specific, create a vast web in which we always must operate as agents but also as subjects (Foucault). Of all these authors, the first we will read—Nietzsche—is the most radical. He believes that unique individuals must “triumphantly affirm” themselves, acting outside of social norms and embracing not only the rational but also the animal within.

More broadly, we will consider concepts such as morality, truth, rationality, whether history is progressive, and the meaning of the political itself. Students should also gain some sense of the history of political thought as we read authors from this time period, which spans from the mid 1800s to the 1980s. We will investigate major themes such as war, the Protestant Ethic, gender, colonialism and the modern prison system. Finally, we will take into account the historical context of each author in order to situate these authors’ ideas in the broader debates, events, and beliefs of the time. Because these ideas are complex, students must write one reaction identifying and discussing the broad themes of the reading each week. The reactions are important to help students focus on what is relevant to this particular class. They are also important in developing a student’s written self-expression.

In the class, we will read the text closely, identifying major themes and arguments. Students must be prepared and come to classes with the books. **You are required to bring your book to class and it must be the assigned edition.** Everyone must be ready to go over these texts page by page and even line by line at times. This is particularly important in a class in which many students have never read these classic texts. We will be able to discuss ideas more broadly *if* this preliminary work can be done.

Learning objectives:

1 To be able to identify the most important *political* themes in each reading; be familiar with how authors define important concepts; how these concepts can be compared

2 To be able to critically analyze ideas—this means entering into the thoughts of the particular writer and understanding what s/he was arguing and why (whether you agree with the author or not); critical analysis is different than opinions or preferences (i.e. likes and dislikes) and involves an internal critique—asking if the author’s ideas are consistent, logical, well-developed

3 To be able to identify key concepts by the end of this class, including terms like nihilism, rationality, death drive, existentialism, essence, authenticity, Eternal Feminine, transcendence, immanence, disciplinary power, bio-power, post-structuralism

4 To be able to clearly discuss the political terms we study verbally and in writing

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Required texts: (no e-books or kindles allowed)

~Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), ISBN 0679724516

~Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage) 0-679-75255-2

~Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (Vintage) 0-394-74026-2

~Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* Norton, 0-393-30158-3  
THERE ARE TWO VERSIONS OF THIS BOOK—either one is fine

~Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* ed. Walter Kaufmann (Vintage Press, 1989), ISBN: 0-679-72462-1 MUST BE THIS EDITION

~Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (Ingram) 9781504025188  
(or: available on-line, link below)

~Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ed. Talcott Parsons (Routledge, 1992) ISBN: 9780415254069 MUST BE THIS EDITION (click on cover)

→It is imperative that you buy or borrow the edition listed above—it will save valuable class time if we all have the same book.

All of the books listed above are on reserve. If you use the reserve books, please do your best to read or copy the texts quickly and be aware that others might be waiting for them.

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CSD:

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your challenges and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done **early** in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

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Course Requirements:

|         |                  |                             |
|---------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| exam 1: | 40% of the grade | in class Wed, 2/5           |
| exam 2: | 40% of the grade | final Wed, 3/18, 11:30-1:45 |

~participation, attendance and written reactions: 20% (10%--attendance and participation; 10% --9 reactions + one office visit\* (or 10 reactions))

~all exams will require blue books and will include some short answers and one or two essay questions; exams are not cumulative

~\* each student has the option of visiting me during office hours at some point between week 4 and week 8 -This will help me get to know more about you and to find out how to best direct the course. Walk-in office meetings are always welcome but it's best to set up appointments via Bluestar; an office visit will replace one of the written reactions above (so you would write 9 reactions if you choose this option)

More specifically: ~attendance: more than two absences will affect your grade negatively—your average attendance will be factored in to the above percentage in addition to participation and reactions; only documented absences will be excused at the discretion of the professor and absences should always be documented with the Dean of Students first

~You must turn in 9 or 10 reactions total; 3 of these must be turned in prior to the first exam with a grade of SAT or SAT/SAT-; and absolutely no reactions will be accepted after the last day of class. The reactions should be: maximum, one page (no less than half a page); double spaced, 12-point font, normal margins, Times New Roman. If you use the author's words, make sure you put the words in quotation marks and give the page number in parentheses (no footnote necessary); these reactions should help you to study for the exams and maintain focus on the theme for that assignment; please number the paragraphs for your

records as well as mine (save all reactions until the course is over, in case there are disparities in your record keeping and mine). You can write ten reactions or write 9 + a scheduled office visit.

~ reactions:

→ you can choose when you write reactions but they must be turned in at the beginning of class time for the specific texts you have chosen to discuss; **3 of these must be turned in prior to the first exam and must receive a SAT or SAT/SAT-; and absolutely no reactions will be accepted after the last day of class.**

→ no emailed reactions will be accepted; all reactions are due at the beginning of class

→ these reactions should analyze the main themes of the readings (What are the main concepts? The most important questions authors raise? What are solutions proposed?)

→ make sure you write the reaction after you have read the entire reading

→ this reaction should not be a list but written in prose and it should focus on *specific* ideas of each author; for example, you do not need to state that an author discusses politics or political theory but rather what his specific arguments are and/or the most important questions the author raises

→ the reaction should **not be considered a journal (or a rant)** and you do not need to agree (or disagree) with the author's ideas; nor do you need to "outsmart" the author; instead, you want to show that you know how to identify the main themes of the assigned reading and can explain how these concepts are linked; ideally you can suspend your own beliefs and emotions and simply enter into the text; the goal is to show you can "speak the author's language"

→ make sure the reaction is readable—if you have trouble writing your reactions, DePaul has a writing center that will proofread drafts (by appointment)

→ all reactions should be double spaced, Times New Roman, with normal margins and no more than one page;

→ I expect there to be a learning curve—for example, I expect that if an author is difficult to understand that by the second reading, you understand the text more (because we have gone over it in class and you are now used to the author's language); second, I expect you to respond to feedback on the reaction

→make sure you discuss ideas only—please do not evaluate the emotional state of the author, “read between the lines” or discuss his or her writing style (unless it is relevant to political theory);

→using quotes—this is fine, although they should be minimized in a reaction—you should use quotation marks about the word, phrase or sentence of the author and then provide the page number in parentheses; explain all quotes and introduce them in your own words

→plagiarism: any specific words, phrases or sentences from text must have quotation marks around them and the page number should be given; merely changing a letter (for example, Hobbes’ “trayne” is changed to “train”) or simply changing a few words but retaining the syntax or diction of the author is still plagiarism—you must rephrase the idea entirely and in contemporary language (which includes contemporary spelling and avoiding Old English) to avoid plagiarism; so, for example, using parts of an author’s sentence and filling in some of your words is called “mosaic plagiarism”; using a specific word that the author uses but not using quotation marks is plagiarism; or writing as if the idea were your own....

→you will receive a mark of **SAT** (good job/satisfactory), **SAT+** (exceeds expectations—excellent), or **SAT-** (below course requirements/less than satisfactory)—2 or more SAT-s will result in no credit for those and any future reactions receiving a SAT-. **If you do not discuss all authors assigned, you will automatically receive a SAT- or NC (no credit) depending on the quality of what you did write.**

→Please do not write more than one page—this is true even if there are multiple authors—you should write a *total* of one page per class (no less than half a page, no more than one page); these should help you to study for the exams and maintain focus on the themes for that assignment; please number the reactions for your records as well as mine; finally, make sure that all your ideas are original and not culled from the internet—not only is this cheating, but the information you find will most likely be wrong or highly distorted.

~*reading*: please do not fall behind on the readings—all are theoretical in nature and cannot simply be read the night before an exam; please bring all readings to class; readings listed on the syllabus should be read by the beginning of that class; please read and interpret these texts yourself and do not rely on information from the internet—much of this information is incorrect

~*participation*: it is essential that participation is related to the topic at hand; digressions or personal stories do not count towards a grade; second, there must be respect for all opinions in order to have a good class discussion and all discussion must be kept confidential; *civility in the classroom is expected at all times*

~ use of technology during class time is not allowed—if a student is surfing the web or using his/her cell phone (including texting), s/he will be asked to leave and **marked absent** for that day; if this happens a second time, the student will be required to meet with the professor to discuss disciplinary measures; cell phones may be put on vibrate as long as they do not distract the class; you must ask the professor for permission to use technology each and every time (and only in extenuating circumstances)

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Class schedule:

week 1

1a introduction to important ideas in this course 1/6 (mon)

1b Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, pp 15—23; 24—46; 52—54; 57—70; 73—81 1/8 (wed)

week 2

2a Nietzsche, pp 84—96; 97—99; 108—112; 116—139; 143—163 1/13 (mon)

2b Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chapters 1—4 1/15 (wed)  
(do not read sections written by anyone other than Freud)

week 3

3a Freud, chapters 5—8 MLK DAY—no class but please read 1/20 (mon)  
(do not read sections written by anyone other than Freud)  
--feel free to email me reactions on this day

3b Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp xxviii—xlii (this is Weber's introduction—please make sure you read these page numbers); + ch.s 1, 2 1/22 (wed)

week 4

4a Weber, pp 39—80 1/27 (mon)

4b Weber, pp 80—125 1/29 (wed)

week 5

5a Sartre, 9—59 + review 2/3 (mon)

\*note: if you couldn't get the book for Sartre--here is a link:

<http://users.telenet.be/sterf/texts/phil/Sartre-ExistentialismandHumanEmotions.pdf>

→please read 1--18 if you choose this free online version (warning--there are no paragraph breaks, so it's not easy to read but it IS the exact same as the book)

5b exam 1 (Nietzsche, Freud, Weber) 2/5 (wed)

week 6

6a Beauvoir—intro (her intro: xix—xliv), pp 32 (bottom paragraph)—65 2/10 (mon)

6b Beauvoir, pp 109—169 2/12 (wed)

week 7

7a Beauvoir, pp 169—180, 253—263, 716—732 2/17 (mon)

7b Michel Foucault, D & P, pp 3—54 2/19 (wed)

week 8

8a Foucault, D & P, 257—308 2/24 (mon)

8b Foucault, *Hist of Sex*, pp 1—49 2/26 (wed)

week 9

9a Foucault, *Hist of Sex*, pp 53—91 3/2 (mon)

9b Foucault, *Hist of Sex*, pp 92—122 3/4 (wed)

week 10

10a Foucault, *Hist of Sex*, pp 122—159 3/9 (mon)

10b review for the final 3/11 (wed)

