

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

HIEU 390
Fall 1999
TU TH 11:00-12:15

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Off. hour TU 2-4

POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL THOUGHT IN EUROPE I: 400-1300

SYLLABUS

This is the first half of a two-semester course designed to introduce students to the historical background behind the principles of political order that governed the European and American worlds from the eighteenth until the twentieth century; principles such as sovereignty, subjectivity, national identity, constitutional government, individual rights, toleration, and the trinity of natural, international, and positive law. The structure of the course is therefore both thematic and historical. It is designed to clarify what is typical and what is unique about political order in the modern West; what is genuinely modern, and what is owed to traditions of long standing; what may be expected to be easy to change, and what will most likely prove enduring.

The course presupposes a fundamental distinction between modern industrial societies and those large scale agro-literate societies (as Ernest Gellner called them) or great world civilizations (as they are often called in textbooks) that populated the world for about five millennia prior to the industrial revolution and that have now all but disappeared. We will focus on the youngest of those large scale agro-literate societies—the one that developed about a thousand years ago in the western-most part of the Eurasian continent—because it was this most recent addition to the club of such societies that first managed to develop the features we are accustomed to consider modern and has since gone on to spread them across the globe. Accordingly, even though we will pay no explicit attention to regions of the world other than Europe, this course is implicitly comparative in design, and for three separate reasons: first, because pre-industrial civilization in Europe was in many ways similar to pre-industrial civilizations elsewhere. Second, because the notions that the ruling elites of Europe developed about the right way to go about organizing society have proved remarkably attractive to ruling elites elsewhere. And third, because much of the anthropological work that has been done on other regions of the world, especially in the areas of law and politics on which this course focuses, is founded on categories originally developed for the study of ancient and medieval Europe.

Students are encouraged, but not required, to take both semesters in sequence.

The first semester will deal with five topics:

1. The main differences between modern and traditional political order
2. Politics in a world without centralized political authority, as exemplified by the politics of early medieval Germanic tribes

3. Elements of politics that Europe took over from the Christian Roman Empire and that have proved to be of lasting significance
4. A brief overview of the development of the main political, social, and cultural structures in European civilization from about 800 to 1300
5. The medieval attempt to create a universal Christian State under the leadership of the papacy and its failure in the late middle ages

The second semester will deal with the reconfiguration of European politics in the age of Renaissance and Reformation that led to the overt abandonment of medieval universalism and its tacit continuation in those principles of sovereignty, subjectivity, and individual rights that became dominant in the Enlightenment and have shaped the course of modern politics ever since.

Lectures will alternate with discussion, and primary sources will alternate with secondary literature. The secondary literature includes one brief survey of European history (by Koenigsberger). Other than that, you will be asked to read three interpretative works (by Gellner, Brunner, and Moore) with sharply pointed and controversial theses that are meant to set the conceptual framework for the course. Pride of place, however, will be given to commenting on the primary sources—mostly, but not exclusively, produced by clerics—because it is in the primary sources that we find the clearest evidence for the ways in which the ruling elites of Europe articulated their understanding of themselves, and it is that self-understanding that needs to be subjected to critical examination. Special emphasis will be placed on grasping its place in broader social and political developments. Though we are going to spend a good deal of effort on subjects usually considered to belong in the realm of intellectual history or the history of ideas, we shall therefore refuse to treat that realm in isolation from general history. We shall rather insist on treating it as but one aspect, albeit an important aspect, of the historical development of Europe as a whole.

I have tried to even out the reading assignments for each class, but that has not always been possible. For some classes you will have to read a great deal, and for others you will have to read very little. In case you prefer to work at an even pace, I have given you detailed assignments below, so that it will be easy for you to read the heavier assignments ahead of time, or to spread them out over several days.

The following books, listed in the order in which we are going to read them, contain all of the required readings, as indicated in the schedule of classes below. They have been ordered at the University of Virginia Bookstore and are also on course reserve in the library.

Required Readings

- Gellner, Ernest. Nations and Nationalism. New Perspectives on the Past. Ed. R. I. Moore. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).
- Brunner, Otto. Land and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria. Trans. with an introduction by Howard Kaminsky and James Van Horn Melton. Middle Ages series. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).
- Donaldson, E. Talbot. Beowulf: A New Prose Translation. (New York: Norton, 1966).
- Koenigsberger, H. G. Medieval Europe, 400-1500. A History of Europe. Eds. H. G. Koenigsberger and Asa Briggs. (London: Longman, 1987).
- Tierney, Brian. The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300. (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

- Augustine. Political Writings. Eds. Ernest L. Fortin, Douglas Kries and Roland Gunn. Trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).
- The Rule of St. Benedict in English. Ed. Timothy Fry. Vintage spiritual classics. (New York: Vintage Books, 1998).
- John of Salisbury. Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers. Ed. Cary J. Nederman. Trans. Cary J. Nederman. Cambridge texts in the history of political thought. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Moore, Robert Ian. The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
- Thomas Aquinas. On Politics and Ethics: A New Translation, Backgrounds, Interpretations. Ed. Paul E. Sigmund. Trans. Paul E. Sigmund. Norton Critical Editions. (New York: Norton, 1988).
- Marsiglio of Padua. Writings on the Empire: "Defensor minor" and "De translatione Imperii". Ed. Cary J. Nederman. Trans. Cary J. Nederman. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

I am also going to ask you to read a few sections of the Bible, but I have not ordered any particular copies. Translations of the Bible abound in bookstores and in the library. Feel free to use any translation you like. It will be illuminating to compare differences in the translations, if it turns out that we run across any significant ones.

Further reading

Students who would like to deepen their knowledge of the subjects covered in this course beyond the required readings will find copious recommendations in the Guide to Further Reading accompanying this syllabus. The Guide is available on the class home page of this course (<http://toolkit.virginia.edu/HIEU390-1>) in the "materials" section.

Requirements

- 1) Attendance at the lectures
- 2) Completing the assigned readings
- 3) A paper of 8-15 pages on a topic suggested or approved by me. Details will be announced in class. The paper will count for half of the grade.
- 4) A final examination. The exam will draw on all of the material covered during the semester and will count for half of the grade.

Schedule of classes and readings

PART ONE: THE PROBLEM

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| 1. Purpose and design of the course | 9/2 |
| 2. What is a Nation?
Gellner, <u>Nations and Nationalism</u> , 1-62 | 9/7 |
| 3. Politics in large scale agro-literate societies
Gellner, <u>Nations and Nationalism</u> , 63-143 | 9/9 |

PART TWO: POLITICS WITHOUT A STATE

- 4. The Feud** 9/14
Brunner, Land and Lordship, 1-94
- 5. Custom** 9/16
Brunner, Land and Lordship, 95-138
- 6. Lords and Vassals** 9/21
Brunner, Land and Lordship, 200-293
- 7. Beowulf** 9/23
Beowulf, vii-55

PART THREE: THE LEGACY OF ANTIQUITY

- 8. Polis, Empire, and Roman law** 9/28
Koenigsberger, Medieval Europe, 1-66; Thomas Aquinas, On Politics and Ethics, 91-102 (Aristotle); Tierney, Crisis of Church and State, 101-103 (Roman law)
- 9. Christianity** 9/30
St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and Letter to the Galatians
- 10. St. Augustine A** 10/5
St. Augustine, Political Writings, 1-4, 6-8, 16-21, 31-2, 35, 44, 78-110, 140-201
- 11. Hierarchy** 10/7
Thomas Aquinas, On Politics and Ethics, 108-111 (Pseudo-Dionysius); Tierney, Crisis of Church and State, 7-15 (The Papacy)
- 12. Monasticism** 10/12
The Rule of St. Benedict, entire
- 13. Reading Holiday** 10/14

PART FOUR: THE FORMATION OF EUROPE

- 14. The Franks and the Papacy** 10/19
Koenigsberger, Medieval Europe, 67-135; Tierney, Crisis of Church and State, 16-23
- 15. The Emergence of Europe: Reform and Crusade** 10/21
Koenigsberger, Medieval Europe, 136-212
- 16. Political Structures: Monarchies and Republics** 10/26
Koenigsberger, Medieval Europe, 213-280
- 17. Culture, Education, and Law** 10/28

18. John of Salisbury A	11/2
John of Salisbury, <u>Policraticus</u> , xv-102	
19. John of Salisbury B	11/4
John of Salisbury, <u>Policraticus</u> , 103-231	
PART FIVE: THE STATE OF THE CHURCH	
R. I. Moore, <u>The Formation of a Persecuting Society</u> , furnishes the basic interpretative framework for this part of the course. It is required reading, but since it is really an extended essay, I have not subdivided it for assignments to particular classes. It should be read in its entirety by the end of November, the sooner, the better for your understanding of the course.	
20. The Gregorian Revolution A	11/9
Tierney, <u>Crisis of Church and State</u> , 24-73	
21. The Gregorian Revolution B	11/11
Tierney, <u>Crisis of Church and State</u> , 74-115	
22. The Lord of the World	11/16
Tierney, <u>Crisis of Church and State</u> , 116-157	
23. Thomas Aquinas A	11/18
Thomas Aquinas, <u>On Politics and Ethics</u> , 3-41; Tierney, <u>Crisis of Church and State</u> , 158-171	
24. Thomas Aquinas B	11/23
Thomas Aquinas, <u>On Politics and Ethics</u> , 42-83	
25. Philip IV versus Boniface VIII	11/30
Tierney, <u>Crisis of Church and State</u> , 172-92	
26. Giles of Rome and John of Paris	12/2
Tierney, <u>Crisis of Church and State</u> , 193-210	
27. Marsiglio of Padua	12/7
Marsiglio of Padua, <u>Writings on the Empire</u> , ix-63	
CONCLUSION	12/9
FINAL EXAM:	Saturday, December 18, 9-12 am