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GOVT 490 - Political Theory

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Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons

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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY GOVT 490 – POLITICAL THEORY Autumn Semester 2009

Dr. Steven Alan Samson

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Office Hours MWF 08:50-09:40, 14:55-15:45; R 3-5; and by appointment

- I. Course Description A critical examination of a variety of philosophical and social science models that seek to explain and evaluate political systems, behavior, ideologies, and collective decision-making. Special attention will be given to the political heritage of western/American civilization and the internal and external challenges it faces.
- II. Rationale This senior level course is designed to encourage students to apply a Biblical Christian worldview and a limited constitutional government/free market philosophy to an analysis of some of the major ideological, social, and cultural challenges that face America and the world today while using a number of conceptual tools and models associated with political theory.
- **III. Prerequisite** GOVT 200, GOVT 210, or GOVT 220; Junior or Senior standing. This class is designed to be taken late in the undergraduate career of a government major.

It is the student's responsibility to make up any prerequisite deficiencies, as stated in the Liberty University Catalog, which would prevent the successful completion of this course.

IV. Materials List

Each required book and/or reading will be represented on one or more tests as shown on the Class Schedule. The Minogue, Scruton, and Budziszewski texts are noted on the Class Schedule by an abbreviation: M. 1 = Minogue, chapter 1.

Required:

Bastiat, Frederic. The Law. Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education, 1972. (Available on-line or for purchase in the bookstore)
Budziszewski, J. The Revenge of Conscience: Politics and the Fall of Man. Dallas:
Spence, 1999 [B. Preface, 1-9] (Spiral-bound Xerox copies available)
Minogue, Kenneth. Politics: A Very Short Introduction. New York: Oxford, 2001 [M.1-13]. Samson, Steven. Political Theory: A Study Guide, 2009 [1-27] (available in early August) Scruton, Roger. The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2002 [S. Preface, 1-5]
Miscellaneous Readings on Blackboard and on-line (These are listed on the Class Schedule)

Suggested:

A test on **one** of these books may be substituted for a low test score:

- *Kupelian, David. The Marketing of Evil: How Radicals, Elitists, and Pseudo-Experts Sell

 Us Corruption Disguised as Freedom. Nashville, TN: WND Books, 2005 [K]. A
 hard-hitting and very readable analysis of our highly toxic culture written by a
 Christian journalist who writes for WorldNetDaily. Objective test.
- Schall, James V. <u>The Regensburg Lecture</u>. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2007. A careful analysis of the address by Pope Benedict to the faculty of Regensburg

University in September 2006 which stirred controversy over its discussion of the relationship between religion, reason, and culture. Essay test.

*Steyn, Mark. America Alone: The End of thee World as We Know It. Washington: Regnery 2006. A rich blend of satire, popular culture commentary, and political analysis of deep demographic and ideological trends. If the U.S-based Canadian journalist Steyn is correct, the next wave of boat people may be from Europe.

Collateral:

These are additional readings especially for honors students and those who wish to explore a political thinker or topic in greater depth.

Newspapers:

linternet Public Library: http://www.ipl.org/div/news/ (newspaper links by country)

Newseum's Today's Front Pages: http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/flash/

V. Learning Outcomes

- 1. The student will engage in a close and critical reading of texts by a variety of political, economic, social, and cultural theorists in order to identify and apply the tools of analysis they exemplify.
- 2. The student will apply a wide range of philosophical and social scientific models, including methodological individualism and group theory, to an examination, analysis, and evaluation of political institutions and political behavior.
- 3. The student will be challenged to identify, analyze, and evaluate various systems of ideas, schools of thought, and sub-disciplines of political science.
- 4. The student will be enabled to understand, participate in, and evaluate practical political processes.

VI. Assignments/Requirements

- 1. Reading: a) Each student is responsible for completing reading assignments listed on the Class Schedule prior to class. b) The emphasis is on close and careful reading of the texts (what the French call explication de texte). c) Keeping a loose leaf notebook of class materials is highly recommended. d) The schedule may change from time to time requiring adjustment of the schedule along the way. Changes to the schedule on the syllabus will be posted on Blackboard with the date of the change.
- Workbook: Purchase of the 2009 workbook is mandatory. Chapter outlines provide a summary of the structure and important points. Study questions are designed to help stimulate analysis. Bold-print calls attention to key concepts. Bracketed words, phrases, and sentences are inserted into the text to provide definitions, translations, contexts, and/or commentary. Review items are related to specific test questions. All of the readings and study aids are designed to elicit the four learning outcomes described above.
- 3. Participation is an essential part of class. a) Textbook chapters, readings posted on Blackboard or in the workbook, and current events will be the subject of class commentary and discussions. b) Students should be prepared to discuss readings, applications, and current events material. c) PowerPoint slides are designed to stimulate discussion and supplement (as well as summarize) the readings. Please focus your attention on the lectures and discussions in class rather than extensive note-taking. The slides will be posted on Blackboard (but without the pictorial illustrations) after each chapter or section is completed and at least two days before each test.

VII. Grading Policies

- Tests (100% of the grade): a) Students will be tested on the lecture and reading material through a series of seven tests and a comprehensive final exam composed of test questions from the first five tests. b) At least seven tests, including the final exam, must be completed in order to complete the course. c) The grade will be calculated on the average of seven tests, including the final exam. d) The 35-question final exam will substitute for the lowest test score (out of the previous seven tests) but only if the final exam score is higher; otherwise the student's grade will be calculated on the average of eight test scores. e) In preparing for the objective tests, see the **review** section for each reading. The major readings in the workbook, those posted on Blackboard, and those linked to the syllabus will have review sections near the end of the study aids for each reading or chapter either in the workbook or on Blackboard. Each review item represents a specific question that may be on the test (and most will be on the test). f) Short essays will most likely be required on the second, fourth, sixth, and final tests. Essay topics will be posted about a week in advance of each test. They will be drawn primarily from the added short readings (on Blackboard or the syllabus) that are usually marked "Primary Source Document" or "Application" in the workbook (particularly those that mainly supplement book chapters) or linked as applications to the syllabus. g) Raw scores (usually 0-35) will be recorded in the Gradebook section of Blackboard. h) Raw scores may be multiplied by 3 to show the score on a 100 point scale (30=90, 20=60). i) Tests must be taken at the scheduled date and time in the scheduled classroom. In exceptional cases, special arrangements must be made with the department secretary. j) Students who participate in University-sponsored events that conflict with the test schedule may make arrangements with the department secretary to take the test early or, only if necessary, immediately afterward. k) Tests that have been missed due to absence or tardiness must normally be made up during the final exam period (but such make-ups are strictly limited to two). I) It is always wise to check for possible schedule changes on Blackboard.
- 2. **Suggested**: There is no extra credit, but students are permitted to take a test that substitutes for one low test score. Any student may participate in a panel discussion late in the term and take an objective test (during the final exam period) on David Kupelian's <u>The Marketing of Evil</u>. A higher score on this test may substitute for a low test score. One or two other panel options (perhaps, e.g., on Mark Steyn's <u>America Alone</u>) may be considered, as well. Other options are listed on the Suggested reading list and will also require a class presentation or discussion.
- 3. Students seeking Honors credit should read one of the suggested books or one on the bibliography and pass a special essay and short answer test (in some cases, an objective test is available) on it at the end of the term. Honors students are also strongly encouraged to follow the Collateral readings, which further develop some of the major themes of the course.
- 4. **Grades**: The grading scale is 100-90=A, 89.9-80=B, 79.9-70=C, 69.9-60=D, 59.9 and below=F. A number of "curves" are already built into the grading system. Ignore the statistics on Gradebook. They cannot be accurately programmed.
- VIII. Attendance Policies a) Regular and punctual attendance is required and expected. Three (3) unexcused absences may result in the student's grade being lowered one letter grade. For an excused absence, please e-mail the professor in advance if you must be absent and please explain why. b) Valid excuses include documented medical emergencies and participation in University approved curricular and extracurricular activities (please bring documentation). c) Students are responsible for all the material covered in all scheduled class meetings. d) Six intermittent unexcused absences or a prolonged absence without notice to the professor may result in an FN without notice. e)

Students who wish to withdraw with a W should contact the professor for his signature no later than the end of October.

NOTE: Although you may not currently be concerned about it, in the near future you will need faculty members to give letters of reference, recommendations for employment, or letters of recommendation for graduate school. Your attendance, punctuality, appearance, and attitude will be areas of interest to those requesting these letters. In addition, some of you will need a security check for your future job. Be aware that cheating and plagiarism are causes for a permanent record being placed in your student folder, which will be consulted during a background security check

IX. Other Policies

Dress Code

Students are expected to come to class dressed in a manner consistent with <u>The Liberty</u> Way.

Honor Code

We, the students, faculty, and staff of Liberty University, have a responsibility to uphold the moral and ethical standards of this institution and personally confront those who do not.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes: academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and falsification. See The Liberty Way for specific definitions, penalties, and processes for reporting.

Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability may contact the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) in Teacher Education Building-TE 127 in order to make arrangements for an academic accommodation.

DROP/ADD POLICY

A Fall/Spring course may be dropped without a grade, tuition, and fee charges within the first five days of the semester. From the sixth day until the end of the tenth week, a Fall/Spring course may be withdrawn with a grade of W or WF

Classroom Policies

The inappropriate use of technology, such as cell phones, iPods, laptops, calculators, etc. in the classroom is not tolerated. Other disruptive behavior in the classroom is not tolerated. Students who engage in such misconduct will be subject the penalties and processes as written in the Liberty Way.

Food is not permitted. Students who are not in appropriate campus attire will **not** be admitted to class. Caps may not be worn in class.

School Policies

Plagiarism and Multiple Submissions of Papers:

Plagiarism is a serious offense and utilizing the work of others without proper citation is a clear violation of University policy. However, no clear directive has been established within the Helms School of Government as to the permissibility of a student submitting substantially the same paper to satisfy writing requirements in different courses. Effective spring 2007, any writing assignment required for a Helms School of Government course must be an original composition drafted specifically for the individual course. When a course requirement in an upper division course builds upon a previously researched topic, and the student desires to utilize his/her prior submission as a foundational document for the new course assignment, he/she may bring a copy of the

previous paper to the current professor. The professor will review with the student the additional research and writing elements needed to complete the current assignment without violating this policy.

Christian Service:

For those students not already involved in Christian Service, see the professor for details and other information if interested.

X. Calendar for the Semester

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to Revision)

Welcome

I hope you have enjoyed at least a bit of a respite even though, as we know, world-shaping and life-changing events are never on holiday. I have posted a tentative syllabus for the Fall term but also expect to occasionally post links to other appropriate articles.

Before the term starts, please read the two pieces by the Canadian columnist, Mark Steyn, whose book <u>America Alone</u> is highly recommended as a panel discussion option. Steyn is one of a handful of writers and columnists, like David Goldman ("Spengler") and the philosopher Roger Scruton, who clearly recognize that we have entered a time of reckoning. The question is whether or not the heirs of western civilization will summon up the faithfulness and courage to renew, defend, and transmit it future generations. But to defend and transmit it, we must first learn and understand it. Which means that we should follow Francis Schaeffer's admonition in *A Christian Manifesto* that we stop looking at things just "in bits and pieces." The Great Commission requires us to develop a world view.

I have posted links to pieces about two very interesting people who can help us understand the importance of enlarging our field of vision. Freya von Moltke is a witness to one of the worse tyrannies of the 20C, a tyranny that claimed the life of her husband, Count Helmuth James von Moltke, who was a member of the resistance in Germany. Later she worked closely with Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, one of the century's most profound Christian thinkers. Jacques Barzun, perhaps America's foremost living scholar, published the big bestseller of 2000, From Dawn to Decadence, at the age of 92. He began his teaching career at Columbia University more than 80 years ago and served as provost during the tumultuous campus rebellion of the late 1960s.

In addition, I have included some optional readings. "The Lost Tools of Learning," a piece by the mystery writer Dorothy Sayers, helped inspire the revival of classical Christian education among evangelicals in the 1980s and 1990s. "Models of Historical Interpretation" combines the two history lectures I once used to kick off the semester. I have also added Roger Scruton's "Islam and the West: Lines of Demarcation." Much of it is a highly concentrated distillation of his recent political writings and is recommended for that reason.

For the first day of class, you will find the C. S. Lewis piece reprinted in the workbook (which is available at the LU Bookstore). There is a link below to a piece on John Adams by David McCullough, whose book on John Adams was the big bestseller of 2001. I have also posted on Blackboard a reading by James V. Schall. All three give a tip of the hat to the idea of a classical and Christian education.

David Breese has stated that "the central problem of our day is **epistemology**," that is, the theory of knowledge. The question posed by the serpent in the garden was simple: "Hath God said?" From this skeptical premise—that all of our knowledge is always subject to revision—we get a presumption (or prejudice) in favor of change over continuity, a dismissal of any identifiably

human nature, and a denial that any moral code is either foundational or binding. Among countless other implications, this means:

Given the inherently restive quality of the human moral imagination, it is only natural that certain of the moral values of the pagan past should have lingered so long into the Christian era, just as any number of Christian moral values continue today to enjoy a tacit and largely unexamined authority in minds and cultures that no longer believe the Christian story [from *Atheist Delusions* by David B. Hart, quoted in *The New Criterion*, June 2009, p. 79].

The Christian message is not refuted by the shortcomings and hypocrisy of its adherents. As G. K. Chesterton put it in *Orthodoxy* (1908): "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. it has been found difficult, and left untried." In fact, the Bible leaves no doubt who is tried and found wanting.

It is the interplay of faith and reason that brings all of the readings in this class to bear upon each other. In some circles, faith and reason are regarded as polar opposites. But the English philosopher Roger Scruton knows that it is not at all that simple, as he notes in a paragraph published under the title "Blind Faith."

"If you study the opinions that prevail in modern academies, you will discover that they are of two kinds: those that emerge from the constant questioning of traditional values, and those that emerge from the attempt to prevent any questioning of the liberal alternatives. All of the following beliefs are effectively forbidden on the normal American campus: (1) The belief in the superiority of Western culture; (2) The belief that there might be morally relevant distinctions between sexes, cultures, and religions; (3) The belief in good taste, whether in literature, music, art, friendship, or behavior; and (4) The belief in traditional sexual mores. You can entertain those beliefs, but it is dangerous to confess to them, still more dangerous to defend them, lest you be held guilty of "hate speech"—in other words, of judging some group of human beings adversely. Yet the hostility to these beliefs is not founded on reason and is never subjected to rational justification. The postmodern university has not defeated reason but replaced it with a new kind of faith—a faith without authority and without transcendence, a faith all the more tenacious in that it does not recognize itself as such."

-- Roger Scruton, "Whatever Happened to Reason?"

The chief practical objective of this course is to identify and characterize this tenacious "new kind of faith" by drawing out and clarifying its implications and consequences. Perhaps this "counterculture" or "counter-faith" will lose its luster, and even some of its tenacity, in face of an honest test of its loyalties.

Preliminary Readings: Eccl. 1:1-11; 12:8-14; Rev. 2:1-7

Mark Steyn, "Live Free or Die!" and "The State Despotic"

http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis/archive/issue.asp?year=2009&month=04

http://www.newcriterion.com/articles.cfm/The-state-despotic-4096

May Akabogu-Collins http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-

dyn/content/article/2009/06/19/AR2009061902328.html

Two Remarkable Centenarians: Freya von Moltke and Jacques Barzun:

http://www.fembio.org/english/biography.php/woman/biography/freya-graefin-von-moltkehttp://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/10/22/071022fa_fact_krystal?printable=true

Collateral: Dorothy Sayers, Steven Samson, and Roger Scruton:

http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html

www.contra-mundum.org/cm/features/12_models.pdf

http://www.azure.org.il/include/print.php?id=485

August

Mon. 24 1. Introduction: Pedagogy: C. S. Lewis; James Schall [see Blackboard]; David

		McCullough [1]
		http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis/archive/issue.asp?year=2006&month=05
Wed.	26	2. Classical Liberalism: Frederic Bastiat [2]: www.jim.com/bastiat.htm
		Thieves' Paradise, Classical vs. Modern Liberalism, Tocqueville
		Applications: Max Raskin: http://mises.org/story/2678
		John Hasnas: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124355502499664627.html
Fri.	28	3. Traditional Conservatism: Russell Kirk [3], Edmund Burke; Collateral:
		Steven Samson: http://works.bepress.com/steven_samson/11/
Mon.	31	4. Conservative Intellectual Movement: Jeffrey Nelson [4], Russell Kirk
		Collateral: Robert Heineman: www.phillysoc.org/heineman.htm
Septer	nber	
Wed.	2	5. Traditional Political Science: Francis Lieber [5], Winston Churchill, Eugen
	_	Rosenstock-Huessy; Collateral : James Kurth
http://w	www fori	org/enotes/200901.kurth.samuelhuntingtonideashaveconsequences.html
Fri.	4	6. Christian Anthropology: René Girard [6]
	7	Applications: Steven F. Sage: http://hnn.us/articles/25631.html
Mon.	7	7. Hard Despotism : M. 1 [study aids are in part 2 of the workbook];
IVIOI1.	′	Herodotus/Kapuściński [7]
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Wed.	9	8. Citizenship: M. 2; Thucydides [8]
Fri.	11	9. Patriotism: M. 3; Livy (Titus Livius), Machiavelli [9]
		FIRST TEST: Readings 1-6, M. 1-2
Mon.	14	10. Christendom: Justice and Resistance to Tyranny: M. 4; Augustine [10],
		Thomas Aquinas, R. J. Rushdoony, John Calvin, Samuel Rutherford
Wed.	16	11. The Centralized State: M. 5; Thomas Hobbes [11], M. Stanton Evans
Fri.	18	12. Limited Government: M. 6; John Locke [12], Daniel Webster; Margaret
		Thatcher, Thomas Sowell
		http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=107246
	http://to	ownhall.com/columnists/ThomasSowell/2009/09/15/fables_for_adults?page=full&c
<u>ommer</u>	nts=true	
Mon.	21	13. The Achillean Rage of Nations: M. 7; David Hume [13], Angelo Codevilla,
		Simone Weil
Wed.	23	14. Political Pedagogy M. 8; Abraham Lincoln [14], Andrew Roberts;
		SECOND TEST: M. 3-6; Short Answer: Steyn, Schall, McCullough, Lewis,
		Raskin, Sage, Thatcher, Sowell, Readings 7-12
Fri.	25	15. Factions and the Public Interest: M. 9; Edmund Burke [15]; Peter Oborne,
		http://www.spectator.co.uk/the-magazine/features/162011/the-establishment-is-
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XI. Bibliography

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