

Department of Politics

327. REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Robert W. Sutherland, Instructor

January 2009

PRINTING : [Click here](#) for a conveniently printed version of the course outline.

REACHING THE INSTRUCTOR: [E-mail](#) is the best method. Others are slower and less certain. My extension is 4226, but I rarely check voice mail, so if you need to talk with someone who will get a message to me, call the South Hall Faculty Secretary, Cheryl Dake, ext. 4283.

CLASS MEETINGS: South Hall 300; see [schedule](#) below

TEXTS: *Multitude* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Penguin Books 0-14-303559-2); Burke, *Select Works of Edmund Burke*, Vols 1 & 2 (Liberty Fund vol 1: 0-86597-163-3 vol. 2: 086597-165-X). Online texts by Marx & online/photocopied speeches by Castro

GRADES:

STUDY QUESTIONS: 30%

EXAMS--70%, including a mid-term (30%) and a final exam (40%).

OTHER POLICIES--Missed exams & presentations may not be made up; credit may be reassigned for documented (e.g. Trauma Center Registration Receipt) emergencies. Both the Final Exam and the Final Paper remain with me for future reference in revising and improving the course. They can be picked up at my office immediately after Politics 327 is offered again. Portions of the *Catalogue* on adding and dropping courses and portions of the *Compass* on dishonesty in academic work are incorporated here by reference. A discount of 5% will be applied to the grades of late papers, except for documented emergencies.

GRADING SCALE: A = 1750-2000, A- = 1650-1749, B+ = 1550-1649, B = 1450-1549, B- = 1350-1449, C+ = 1250-1349, C = 1150-1249, C- = 1050-1149, D+ = 950-1049, D = 850-949, D- = 750-849, F = 000-749.

The number of points possible on any given exam or paper is the product of 20 points times the importance measured in percent of the final course grade. For letter grade equivalents, multiply the percentage times: 18 = A, 17 = A-, 16 = B+, 15 = B, 14 = B-, 13 = C+, 12 = C, 11 = C-, 10 = D+, 9 = D, 8 = D-.

SYNOPSIS:

I. [REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT](#)--Ancient (Aristotle, Locke, Am. Rev.) vs. Modern (Rousseau, French Rev., Marx & his legacy)

II. MARX--Revolutionary Impulse and the General Cure of Human Misery by Science & Revolution

A. Misery & its cure in *On the Jewish Question*

B. Science & the glory of violent action in *The Communist Manifesto*

C. Castro and globalization

III. Wisdom of Experience in Balancing Conservation & Change

- A. Burke on the American Revolution
- B. Burke on the French Revolution

IV. *Multitude*: Marx for the 21st Century?

ASSIGNMENTS--To be done before class on the day indicated:

Day

Week I: Day 2-- 9:30: Marx, [*On the Jewish Question*](#); 1:30:Marx, [*The Communist Manifesto*](#)

Week I: Day 3--9:30: Castro, Speeches on World Health & Revolution, Revolution in the Countryside, U.S.& "the system,"

4--9:30: Castro, Speeches on Neo-liberal Globalization#1, #2, the Press, Democracy, & the "Empire;" "[The Barbaric World Order...](#)" "[Cuba's Achievement and America's Wars](#)"[President Bush at West Point; World Under the rule of Nazi Concepts & Methods](#)

5-- 9:30:Burke, *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*

Week II: Day 6-- 9:30: Burke, *Speech on Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies*

7-- 9:30:Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, pp. 85-187

8--9:30: Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, pp.187-340, 361-365

9 - **NOON: MID-TERM EXAMINATION: Essay Question Due**

10: --9:30: **In Class MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

Week III--Day 11: *Multitude*, pp. xi-35

12---9:30: *Multitude*, pp. 35-95

13-- 9:30: *Multitude*, pp. 99-157

14-- 9:30: *Multitude*, pp. 158-227

15--9:30: *Multitude*, pp. 231-306

Week IV: Day 16: *Multitude*, pp. 306-358

Day 17: 5- 8:00 **In Class FINAL EXAMINATION**

Day 18: **Noon: Essay Due**

STUDY QUESTIONS ON *THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO*

1. What is the class struggle & how is it related to revolutions in the means of production?
2. What is the bourgeoisie, its personality, culture, & the contradictions leading to its demise?
3. What is the proletariat, its stages, struggles, & its vanguard?
4. What does Marx think about: communism, freedom, bourgeois individuality, bourgeois families, historicism & democracy, differing kinds of socialism & the place of communism in the political struggle?

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CASTRO

1. How, in the May 14th speech (Folder 1), does Castro update the revolutionary impulse by applying it to Cuban experience and then expanding it to world concerns?
2. How, in the June 3rd speech (Folder 2), was the Revolution accomplished and what achievements of the Revolution does Castro stress? To what extent is tourism a challenge to socialism and how does it evoke a revolutionary emphasis on science? How does Castro address terrorism?
3. How, in the June 20th speech (Folder 3), does Castro's discussion of education set up his attack on the

- "system?" Write a paragraph characterizing Castro's use of the term.
4. How, in the July 3rd speech (Folder 4), does Castro link the "system" to "neo-liberal globalization?" What alternative globalization does Castro propose? How does he link it to Christianity? Why does Castro initially compare globalized imperialism to the Bay of Pigs and Vietnam but then use very different terms to explain it in a larger Caribbean context?
 5. What, in the August 21st speech (Folder 5), does Castro mean when he says that "an artificial economy has turned the world into a large casino"
 6. How, in the November 12th speech (Folder 6) , are press and the state related under socialism and capitalism? How does Castro enlist "communication" and "communicator" against the "empire." What will be the "empire's" fate and how will it be brought about? How does Castro respond to those worried about democracy in Cuba?
 7. What features establish the barbarism of the current world order, according to Castro? (Folder 7)
 8. What evidence supports the cataclysmic end of such an order? How will Cuba fare in the aftermath? (Folder 7)
 9. What purpose is served by the first half of Castro's 2003 speech and, according to Castro, why is Cuba's revolutionary destiny a result. (Folder 7)
 10. What qualities of U.S. leadership and policy make it neo-fascist? What concern does it provoke about future U.S. policy towards Cuba and other socialist countries? (Folder 7)
 11. What disconnection does Castro see between the American people and the American presidency? How are the American people excused from responsibility for the fascist foreign policy of their president? How did President George W. Bush gain, keep and exercise fascist powers? (Folder 7)
 12. What is the "great new calling" of the U.S., according to President Bush, and how is it to be fulfilled?
 13. What is the the threat faced by the U.S. and why are past national strategies inadequate in meeting it? What strategy does President Bush offer for the future?
 14. What does President Bush's speech mean for Cuba, according to President Castro? How does he respond to its challenge?

STUDY QUESTIONS ON BURKE

Assignment I

Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents (1770)

1. What distinguishes common or general complaint from the distemper and discontent which Burke addresses?
2. What is the Grenville government's response? Why has the "great object of policy" for that government gone unnoticed?
3. What were the desires of the king and a faction of the court? By what methods does the faction seek to prevail as a cabal?
4. How does a system of favoritism differ from a mixed government with discretionary power? How does such a system differ from a free commonwealth in which Parliament acts as it should?
5. What objection to the importance of popular support does Burke cite and how does he reply to it? What is the "grand principle" for the plan of favoritism? Does it serve the interest which it claims to advance?
6. What is the purpose of the House of Commons and what two symptoms indicates its corruption? What reformation does Burke seek and how is it to be accomplished?

Assignment II

Speech on Conciliation with the American Colonies (March 1775)

1. What stages does Burke's interest in America go through (identify at least four) and to what purpose does he finally dedicate himself?
2. What three considerations help to determine whether Parliament ought to concede? What six sources are especially relevant to the third?
3. What three ways of proceeding does Parliament confront? Which will not work and why?
4. What is left and what six propositions are likely to accomplish it?

Assignment III

Reflections on the French Revolution, I

1. How important is the term "regulated liberty," used by Burke in the third paragraph? Explain in a well-developed statement Burke's distinction between such liberty and the "simple view" of liberty?. What is its relationship to liberty and power?
2. What is Burke's initial estimate of how important the French Revolution is? Who is Dr. Price and what does Burke think of his use of the pulpit?
3. What three claims do Dr. Price and the Revolutionary Society advance?
4. What considerations provide a key to Burke's reply to each?
5. How does Burke defend the right to property, especially large accumulations of it?
6. How does Burke contrast his understanding of human "rights" to those who defend the French Revolutionaries?
7. What is "the worst of the politics of revolution"? What "natural feelings" or "sentiments" is Burke especially concerned to recognize or defend and how does he do so?
8. Briefly describe the philosophy based on "moral imagination" and contrast it to what Burke calls "barbarous philosophy."
9. What does Burke mean when he says that "religion is the basis of civil society, . . ." (185) What is the principle of "consecration" and why is a "perfect democracy . . . the most shameless thing in the world." (189) Why is consecration important for English political life generally, for jurisprudence, for understanding society as a contract.

Assignment IV

Reflections on the Revolution, II

1. What instruction and consolations does Burke expect to be drawn from consecration? Why are they important in responding to Marx on human misery? How does Burke distinguish between the confiscators and the reformers?
2. What harm, both direct & indirect, does Burke see done by the Revolutionary policy on church property in France?
3. What groups are the strongest supporters of the policy and what is their basic purpose? What considerations lead Burke to advocate reform of the nobility and clergy as a better policy?
4. What are the "causes" of "storms" in public life, what are the pretexts? How is history perverted, especially by intellectuals and writers? What is the real reformation they seek?
5. What is unique about French attempts to reform its Church?
6. What is Burke's main concern about Church property, esp. monasteries & other public institutions?
7. Why does Burke hold the Revolutionary National Assembly in such contempt?
8. Do the executive and judiciary receive any more respect from Burke?
9. Why does Burke consider the army to be so important?

10. How does rhetorical liberty differ from the effort to form a free government?

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