

Manfred Henningsen

Polsc.611: Fall 2014

The Tradition of Political Philosophy

I. Description:

The turmoil of German political culture in the 20th century has left behind enormous traumas. Yet the experiences of turmoil and the resulting traumas engendered an extraordinary record of intellectual responses. We will begin with texts by the legal scholar Carl Schmitt (*The Concept of the Political*) and the philosopher Martin Heidegger (*The Question Concerning Technology*) who got both implicated in the intellectual legitimation of the Nazi regime. Both are still creating tremendous controversies decades after their death. Despite their involvement in the Third Reich their impact on political thinking in the West and other parts of the world has not become diminished. We will contrast their influence with the legacy of the intellectual exile of the political philosophers from Nazi Germany, namely Leo Strauss (*Persecution and the Art of Writing*), Eric Voegelin (*The New Science of Politics*) and Hannah Arendt (*Responsibility and Judgment*) who taught generations of American students to think outside the perimeters of U.S. political culture. The role of the exiled members of the Frankfurt School and their most prominent members, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*) will be an additional major part of the course that will finally culminate in the discussion of Jürgen Habermas (*The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*) and the foundational place he still occupies in the contemporary German and European public sphere.

II. Requirements:

Since the class will be conducted in seminar style, students have to read the required books that are scheduled for the weekly discussions. Members of the class will be asked to introduce books they can choose from the list. A major research paper of 15 pages on one or more of the authors and their works is required.

III. Literature:

Jan-Werner Mueller, *A Dangerous Mind. Carl Schmitt in Post-War Europe*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003.

Andreas Kalyas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary. Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Why Arendt Matters*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2006.

Daniel Tanguay, *Leo Strauss: An Intellectual Biography*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007.

Richard Velkley, *Heidegger, Strauss and the Premises of Philosophy: On Original Forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2004.

Eugene Sheppard, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of Exile. The Making of a Political Philosopher*. Waltham: Brandeis University Press 2006.

Eric Voegelin, *The Drama of Humanity and other Miscellaneous Papers, 1939-1985*. Ed. By W. Petropolous and G. Weiss. Columbia/London: University of Missouri Press, 2004. (=Vol. 33 of his Collected Works).

Eric Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint*. Ed. M. Henningsen. Columbia/London: University of Missouri Press, 2000.

Manfred Henningsen, "Eric Voegelin's Deconstruction of Race in 1933", in: *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* (New York), Vol. 35, No. 1+2, 2014.

Juergen Habermas et al, *An Awareness of What is Missing. Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age*. Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press, 2010.

Juergen Habermas, *The Divided West*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2008.

IV. Calendar of the Class:

8/28 General Introduction to the Class.

9/4 Carl Schmitt and the Crisis of Liberalism.

9/11 C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*.

9/18 Leo Strauss' Reading of Schmitt.

9/25 Martin Heidegger's challenge of modernity;
the affinity to German Fascism (the new Heidegger debate in 2014).

10/2 Heidegger's essay on "The Question of Technology".

10/9 Eric Voegelin's view of modernity; *The New Science of Politics*.

10/16 Voegelin's Reading of Race.

10/23 The Frankfurt School's understanding of 'enlightenment' in their *Dialectics of Enlightenment*.

10/30 Habermas' critique of Horkheimer and Adorno's text.

11/6 Hannah Arendt's attempt at recovering the notion of politics (*Responsibility and Judgment*).

11/13 Arendt's "Eichmann". The trial documentary, *The Specialist*.

11/20 Leo Strauss' defense of the encoding of meaning (*Persecution and the Art of Writing*).

12/4 Juergen Habermas' agnostic spirituality (the discussion with Judith Butler, Charles Taylor, and Cornel West),
The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.

12/11 Concluding session.

