

Manfred Henningsen

Polsc.611: Fall 2014

## *The Tradition of Political Philosophy*

### I. Description:

The turmoil of German political culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 sessions, 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:

### IV. Calendar of the Class:

8/28 General Introduction to the Class.

9/4

9/11

9/18

9/25

10/2

10/9

10/16

10/23

10/30

11/6

11/13

11/20

12/4

12/11