

Advanced Topics in
Political and Legal Thinking
PS 380
Spring 2010
Arendt Seminar Room

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Office Hours: Tues. 1-3. And by appointment

A Seminar

This class is an advanced seminar. You are required and expected to attend every class meeting and to be prepared. Reading the texts is only the bare minimum preparation, and is, on its own, not sufficient. For the main text, *The Letter on Humanism*, you are expected to read it in its entirety at least twice during the first two weeks of the semester. You are then to re-read it as we go through it. There will be other texts to read during the semester. You need to allot a substantial amount of time to read these texts. This is essential. The seminar format requires that you not only read, but also engage with these texts *before* you come to class.

Lateness

As a matter of respect for your fellow participants, you are to arrive on time.

Assignments

The principal writing exercise in this class will be a final assignment of between 10-15 pages. You have a choice of either writing a paper or doing a detailed sentence by sentence analysis of about one-two pages of the text. This paper is due on the final day of classes.

In addition to the final paper, you are required to hand in a written assignment every week. You can take 2 free passes on these assignments, but every assignment missed after that will impact your final evaluation. Either I will assign a topic or you will pick one quotation from the assigned text and, in 250 words or less, briefly state its relevance, importance, and interest to the author's work and the themes of our seminar. These are not informal response papers, but short and thoughtful explorative essays. These weekly papers are to be e-mailed to me in Word .rtf format by 9 pm on Sunday evening the day before our seminar. They will serve as a spur to class discussion.

Week One, Jan 25

Introduction: An Outline of the Letter on Humanism
Comments on Karl Jasper's Psychology of Worldviews.
Letter on Humanism

Week Two, Feb. 1

Action and Thinking
How Can we restore sense to the word humanism?
Being and Time, §26-35.
George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*
(http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit)
Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (Introduction)

Week Three, Feb 8

In What Does Humanism Consist?
Humanism is Metaphysics.
What is Metaphysics?
Postscript to What is Metaphysics.

Week Four, Feb 17—Wednesday 5:30-7:30

Dasein and Existence
Being and Time, §9-10; 39-42

Week Five, Feb. 22

Existence and Existentialism
Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*
Being and Time §43, *Being and Time* §44

Week Six, March 1

Es gibt Sein
On the Essence of Truth

Week Seven, March 8

Homelessness: Idealism and Materialism
Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (Excerpts)
Plato's Doctrine of Truth.

Week Eight, March 15

The Question Concerning Technik

Week Nine, March 31 –Passover cancelled

Week Ten, April 5

A Humanism that Shatters Humans.

Does such a thinking and speaking offer a free space for Dasein?

How Can Humanism be Restored? Ought it to be restored?

Week Eleven, April 12

Transcendence, God, and *Ein-ständigkeit*

Being and Time, Introduction.

On the Essence of Ground.

Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, excerpts.

Week Twelve, April 19

Ethics and Law

Philippe Nonet, *Antigone's Law*. (Reserve web)

Week Thirteen, April 26—Advising Days?

The Healing and Evil. The Strife of Sein.

The Question of Being.

May 3 is Boards Week

Week Thirteen, May 10

Man Belongs to Being

Thinking Brings Being to Language

Week Fourteen, May 17

Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins

Der Weg zur Sprache

Supplementary Reading:

Introductory on Heidegger

William J. Richardson, *Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought*.

Mark Wrathall, *How to Read Heidegger*.

Philippe Nonet, *Time and Law* (Theoretical Inquires in Law, v. 8)

Ereignis, a website: <http://www.webcom.com/paf/ereignis.html>

Letter on Humanism

Peter Sloterdijk. Rules for the Human Zoo : a response to the Letter on Humanism.

From *Nicht gerettet: Versuche nach Heidegger* (Suhrkamp, 2001) pp 302 ^ 333;

Translated by Mary Varney Rorty.

Roberto Henri Cousineau, *Humanism and Ethics: An Introduction to Heidegger's Letter on Humanism*.

Ernesto Grassi, *Heidegger & Renaissance Humanism*

Heidegger and Nazism

Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, Heidegger and Modernity

Tom Rockmore, "The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics."

Victor Farias, Heidegger and Nazism

Heidegger and Translation

John Sallis, *On Translation*

Francois Vezin, Translation as Phenomenological Labor (Heidegger Studien, v.3/4 123-137).