“A social science that cannot speak of tyranny with the same confidence with which medicine speaks, for example, of cancer, cannot understand social phenomena as what they are. It is therefore not scientific. Present day social science finds itself in this condition. If it is true that present-day social science is the inevitable result of modern social science and of modern philosophy, one is forced to think of the restoration of classical social science.”

—Leo Strauss, “Restatement on Xenophon’s Hiero”

Political Science 7991
Seminar: Tyranny, Nationalism, and Totalitarianism
Fall 2019

Tyranny and totalitarianism are the great enemies of constitutional government, the former since the ancient world, the latter specifically in modern times. Nationalism, by contrast, has been interpreted sometimes as a political evil, sometimes as the basis of constitutional government itself. This course will explore what political theorists, classical and contemporary, have to say about tyranny, nationalism, and totalitarianism, with the aim of understanding more clearly the relation of one-man or one-party rule to political evil and political good.

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(225) 578-2538 [office] or (504) 232-4399 [cell]

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00-11:00 am;
Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 pm; and by appointment

Books available for purchase:
- Leo Strauss, On Tyranny, ed. Gourevitch & Roth (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226030135]
- Aristotle, Politics, tr. Lord, 2d ed. (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226921846]
- Xenophon, The Education of Cyrus, tr. Ambler (Cornell) [ISBN 9780801487507]
- Aquinas, On Kingship (Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies) [ISBN 9780888442512]
- Dante, Monarchy, tr. Shaw (Cambridge) [ISBN 9780521567817]
- Hegel, Philosophy of History, tr. Sibree (Dover) [ISBN 9780486437552]
- Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich) [ISBN 9780156701532]
- Voegelin, Hitler and the Germans (Missouri) [ISBN 9780826214669]
- Manent, Metamorphoses of the City (Harvard) [ISBN 9780674072947]
- Hazony, The Virtue of Nationalism (Basic) [ISBN 9781541645370]
Course requirements:
- Attendance at all class sessions and participation in discussions [absence penalized]
- Five 500-word papers on the assigned reading, due before class (& read aloud), as follows: 9/11 or 18; 9/25 or 10/2; 10/9 or 16; 10/23 or 30; and 11/6 or 13 [40%]
- Presentation of research (11/20, 11/27, or 12/4) [10%]
- Research paper, 15-18 pages, on an approved topic (topic due 11/8; paper due 12/12) [50%]

Grading scale: A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%), etc.

SYLLABUS:

I. The Problem of Tyranny in the Modern World

Wed., 8/28 Xenophon, Hiero, in Leo Strauss, On Tyranny, pp. 3-21
Leo Strauss, On Tyranny, ch. 1-3, pp. 22-65

Wed., 9/4 Leo Strauss, On Tyranny, ch. 4-7, pp. 66-105
Alexander Kojève, “Tyranny and Wisdom,” in On Tyranny, pp. 135-176
Eric Voegelin, review of On Tyranny, Review of Politics, 11 (1949): 241-244
Leo Strauss, “Restatement on Xenophon’s Hiero,” in On Tyranny, pp. 177-212

II. Monarchy in Classical Political Philosophy

Wed., 9/11 Aristotle, Politics, I.1-7, II.7, III.4-8, 14-18, V
Xenophon, The Education of Cyrus, I-II, VII-VIII

Wed., 9/18 Thomas Aquinas, On Kingship
Dante Aligheri, On Monarchy

III. Monarchy, Democracy, and the Nation in Modern Political Philosophy


Wed., 10/16 G.W.F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, pp. 1-115, 223-224, 278-282, 341-346; and an additional section of the text as chosen
IV. The Political Science of Monarchy and Democracy


Wed., 10/30  Eric Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*

Wed., 11/6   Pierre Manent, *Metamorphoses of the City*, ch. 1, 3-4, 7-9

Wed., 11/13  Yoram Hazony, *The Virtue of Nationalism*

V. Workshop: Presentation of Research

Wed., 11/20  Presenting:

Wed., 11/27  Presenting:

Wed., 12/4   Presenting:

Thurs., 12/12  PAPERS DUE