

Schmitt, Strauss, Arendt

Government 6586 (Spring 2017)
Cornell University
White Hall 104
T 4:30-6:30

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Office Hours: W 2-4



Course Description

This is an advanced graduate seminar exploring the work of three important twentieth-century political theorists: Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and Hannah Arendt. We will engage their work chronologically and contextually, examining how each responded, first, to the central political problems of their time, including the crisis of liberalism and parliamentary democracy, the rise of totalitarianism, statelessness, and moral and legal relativism; second, their responses to such central theoretical problems as the meaning of the political, political theology, sovereignty, and the distinctiveness of political theory as a form of political inquiry; and, third, their critical encounters, implicit and explicit, with each other's work.

Course Requirements

This is a political theory graduate seminar. Grades will be based on a research paper (20-25 pages) due at the semester's end (65% of the total), a short (7-8 page) written response to one week's reading (15%), a 15-minute oral discussion of another student's written response (10%), and general seminar participation (10%). Students must attend and participate in seminar meetings. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Students will also be asked to submit three questions regarding each week's reading. These questions will be assembled weekly and distributed to all seminar participants. Student questions and the written responses must be submitted to me by email NO LATER than 5:00 pm on the Sunday before the seminar meets. The written responses should provide a close and critical account of the week's reading, focusing on one or two central arguments. Written responses are meant to provoke seminar discussion, so please avoid summary and feel free to be (thoughtfully) contentious. These papers must include direct citation (with footnotes) and engage some of the recommended literature. Each seminar will begin with another student's 15-minute discussion *of the written*

response. These oral presentations should also avoid summary and instead pose a series of textually critical questions that can facilitate seminar discussion. A sign-up sheet for both written responses and oral discussions will be available the first week of class, and then posted on Blackboard.

Books to Purchase

Available at Cornell Bookstore:

Required:

Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*
Hannah Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic*
Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*
Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*
Carl Schmitt, *Dictatorship*
Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*
Carl Schmitt, *The Partisan*
Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*
Carl Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*
Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*
Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*

Recommended:

Ellen Kennedy, *Constitutional Failure: Carl Schmitt in Weimar*
Elizabeth Young-Bruhl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*

Weekly Readings

* Available on blackboard

Week 1 (January 31): Science and Politics

Max Weber, *Vocations Lectures* (1919)*

Week 2 (February 7): Law, Sovereignty, Dictatorship

Carl Schmitt, *Dictatorship: From the Origin of the Modern Concept of Sovereignty to Proletarian Class Struggle* (1921), xxxvii-33, 80-179
Carl Schmitt, *Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (1923) (selection)*
Cal Schmitt, *Political Romanticism* (1919) (selection)*

Recommended:

Andreas Kalyvas, "The Tyranny of Dictatorship: When the Greek Tyrant Met the Roman Dictator," *Political Theory* (August 2007)

Duncan Kelly, "Carl Schmitt's Political Theory of Dictatorship," in *Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt**

John McCormick, "The Dilemmas of Dictatorship: Carl Schmitt and Constitutional Emergency Powers," in David Dyzenhaus, ed., *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 217-251

Week 3 (February 14): Political Theology

Hannah Arendt, "Religion and Politics" (1953)*

Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (1922)

Carl Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (1923), vii-60

Leo Strauss, "Preface to the English Translation of *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*" (1965)*

Recommended:

Nathan Van Camp, "Hannah Arendt and Political Theology: A Displaced Encounter"*

Peter Eli Gordon, "The Concept of the Apolitical: German Jewish Thought and Weimar Political Theology," *Social Research* (Fall 2007)*

Duncan Kelly, "Carl Schmitt's Theory of Representation," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (January 2004)

Heinrich Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem**

Samuel Moyn, "Hannah Arendt and the Secular," *New German Critique* (2008)*

Miguel Vatter, "The Political Theology of Carl Schmitt," in *Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt**

Week 4 (February 21): NO CLASS

Week 5 (February 28): Constitutionalism and Constituent Power

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963), 141-214*

Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory* (1928), 125-145, 253-303*

Carl Schmitt, *Dictatorship*, 112-147 (re-read)

Recommended:

Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, "The Concept of the Political: A Key to Understanding Carl Schmitt's Constitutional Theory," in David Dyzenhaus, ed., *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 37-55

Renato Cristi, "Carl Schmitt on Sovereignty and Constituent Power," in David Dyzenhaus, ed., *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 179-95.

Jason Frank, "Revolution and Reiteration: Hannah Arendt's Critique of Constituent Power," in *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America*, 41-66

Andreas Kalyvas, "Carl Schmitt and the Three Moments of Democracy," *Cardozo Law Review* 21 (2000)

Andreas Kalyvas, "Popular Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Constituent Power," *Constellations* 12:2 (2005)

William Scheuerman, "Revolutions and Constitutions: Hannah Arendt's Challenge to Carl Schmitt," in David Dyzenhaus, ed., *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 252-280

Week 6 (March 7): The Political and the "Horizon of Liberalism"

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (1932)

Carl Schmitt, *State, Movement, People* (1933)*

Leo Strauss, "Notes on the Concept of the Political" (1932)

Leo Strauss, *Three Letters* (1933)*

Recommended:

Robert Howse, "From Legitimacy to Dictatorship—and Back Again: Leo Strauss's Critique of the Anti-Liberalism of Carl Schmitt," in David Dyzenhaus, ed., *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 56-91.

Robert Howse, *Leo Strauss: Man of Peace*, 25-50

Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue*

Samuel Moyn, "Concepts of the Political in Twentieth-Century European Thought," in *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt**

Week 7 (March 14): Totalitarianism and Understanding

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), vii-xl, 305-482

Hannah Arendt, "Understanding and Politics" (1954)*

Recommended:

Peter Baer, *Hannah Arendt, Totalitarianism, and the Social Sciences*

Seyla Benhabib, "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative," *Social Research* (Spring 1999)

Margaret Canovan, "Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism: A Reassessment," in *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, 25-43

Roy Tsao, "The Three Phases of Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism," *Social Research* (Summer 2002)

Week 8 (March 21): Philosophy and Politics

Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics" (1954)*

Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952), 7-37

Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy?" (1957)*

Recommended:

Ronald Beiner, "Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: The Uncommenced Dialogue," *Political Theory* (May 1990)

Liisi Keedus, *The Crisis of German Historicism: The Early Political Thought of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss*

Dana Villa, "The Philosopher Versus the Citizen: Arendt, Strauss, and Socrates," *Political Theory* (April 1998)

Week 9 (March 28): Modernity, Historicism, Relativism

Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (1953)

Recommended:

Ryan Balot, "Leo Strauss' *Natural Right in History*"*

Week 10 (April 4): SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (April 11): Modernity and World Alienation

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958)

Recommended:

Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*

Patchen Markell, "The Rule of the People: Arendt Archê, and Democracy," *American Political Science Review* (February 2006)

Jennifer Ring, "On Needing Both Marx and Arendt: Alienation and the Flight from Inwardness," *Political Theory* (August 1989)

Dana Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*

Dana Villa, "Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche, and the Aestheticization of Political Action," *Political Theory* (May 1992)

Week 12 (April 18): The Banality of Evil

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1965)

Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics" (1967)

Recommended:

Steven Aschheim, Ed. *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem*

Seyla Benhabib, "Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*," in *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, 65-85

Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Trauma in the Twentieth Century*, 106-130

Lida Maxwell, "Comedy and/of Justice? Law, Politics, and Public Opinion in Arendt's Writings on the Eichmann Trial," in *Public Trials: Burke, Zola, Arendt and the Politics of Lost Causes*

Corey Robin, "The Trials of Hannah Arendt," *The Nation* (May 12, 2015)

Week 13 (April 25):

Hannah Arendt, "On Violence" (1970)

Franz Fanon, "Concerning Violence" (1961)

Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (1963)

Recommended:

Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, "Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon," *Contemporary Political Theory* (February 2008)

Patricia Owens, *Between War and Politics: International Relations and the Thought of Hannah Arendt*

Tarik Kochi, "The Partisan: Carl Schmitt and Terrorism," *Law and Critique* 17:3

Week 14 (May 2):

Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (1968)

Week 15 (May 9):

Hannah Arendt, *The Crisis of the Republic* (1972)

Hannah Arendt, "Home to Roost" (1975)*

Recommended:

Peg Birmingham, "A Lying World Order: Political Deception and the Threat of Totalitarianism," in *Thinking in Dark Times*, 73-79

Jason Stanley, "Beyond Lying: Donald Trump's Authoritarian Reality," *New York Times* (November 4, 2016)

Zoe Williams, "Totalitarianism in the Age of Trump: Lessons From Hannah Arendt," *The Guardian* (February 1, 2017)