

*University of Southern California*  
*Department of Political Science*

**POSC 371: European Thought II**

M/W 5-6:20—SOS B44

Spring 2016

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**Required Reading:**

*What is Enlightenment*, Immanuel Kant

<http://theliterarylink.com/kant.html>

*Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky

*The Grand Inquisitor*, (excerpt) Dostoevsky

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/grand.htm>

*Catechism of a Revolutionist*, Sergei Nechaev

(<http://www.uoregon.edu/~kimball/Nqv.catechism.thm.htm>)

*The Marx/Engels Reader*

*Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche

*Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Eric Hobsbawm

*Civilization and its Discontent*, Sigmund Freud

*Politics as a Vocation*, Max Weber

(<http://www2.southeastern.edu/Academics/Faculty/jbell/weber.pdf>)

*The Second Sex (selections)*, Simone de Beauvoir

(<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/index.htm>)

*Basic Writings*, Jean-Paul Sartre

*The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka

*The Stranger*, Albert Camus

**Course Description:**

This course picks-up where European Thought I left off, and covers some of the big ideas in European thought from approximately the time of the French Revolution to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. There is a heavy emphasis on human consciousness, ethics, political (or anti-political) action, and the rise and role of the modern State. We will be reading a mix of formal theoretical treatises, literature, and history; this is to offer you a multi-dimensional and nuanced representation of a period of time marked by great upheavals, innovations, and recurring political strife. Over the course of the semester we will cover the progress and limitations of human reason, the human impulses toward

revolt and destruction, doctrines of radical individualism, terror, revolution, nationalism, identity, and the dilemmas associated with human freedom—both societal and existential. In the end, it is my hope that the question in the title of our first reading haunts all of our discussions and guides your thinking to the very end of our class. In a sense, finding an answer to that question—for yourself—is the goal of the course.

### **Assignments and Grading:**

#### *Readings:*

There is a reading assignment due for nearly every day of the course. Please see the course schedule (below); the reading assignment is listed on the day that it is due.

#### *Participation:*

Participation includes showing up for class, and contributing to the discussion of the readings. This will be taken very seriously; your participation helps me gauge your progress over the course of the semester and everyone benefits from thoughtful questions and lively debate. These aspects of the course count for 10% of your overall grade.

#### *Papers and Quizzes:*

You will have five opportunities to write two papers (see section breaks in schedule of readings below). Each paper is to be approximately 5-7 pages in length, answering an assigned question (given in advance), and turned in by the stated due date. The first paper is worth 20% of your course grade; the second paper is worth 30% of your course grade. This is done to accommodate the learning curve that occurs over the course of the semester—as you progress, your knowledge of the material and of what is expected of you will increase. Thus, your later paper will count for more, since it will benefit from comments and critiques associated with your first efforts.

There will be six *unannounced quizzes* worth 10% each—your lowest two grades will be dropped; in total four of the six quizzes will count toward your course grade (in all, 40%).

Papers: 50%                      Quizzes: 40%  
Participation: 10%

\*\*\*Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered to me (or to the TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Phone number for DSP is 213/740-0776.

## Course Schedule

January 11<sup>th</sup>: Opening Comments, Review of Syllabus

### Section I

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13<sup>th</sup>: *What is Enlightenment*, Kant

18<sup>th</sup>: **OFF**

20<sup>th</sup>: *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky; Part I

25<sup>th</sup>: *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky; Part II

27<sup>th</sup>: Kafka excerpt; The Grand Inquisitor (Dostoevsky excerpt)

February 1<sup>st</sup>: *Catechism of a Revolutionist*, Nechaev

### Section II

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3<sup>rd</sup>: *Marx/Engels Reader*, pp. 3-25, 53-65

8<sup>th</sup>: *Marx/Engels Reader*, pp. 66-125

10<sup>th</sup>: *Marx/Engels Reader*, pp.143-200

15<sup>th</sup>: **OFF**

17<sup>th</sup>: *Marx/Engels Reader*, pp.203-223, 294-302, 469-500 [\*\*\*Highly recommended but not required: pp. 319-329, 521-541, 594-652\*\*\*]

22<sup>nd</sup>: Friedrich Nietzsche; Handout

24<sup>th</sup>: *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche; Preface through What is Religious

29<sup>th</sup>: *BGE*, Epigrams through We Scholars

March 2<sup>nd</sup>: *BGE*, Our Virtues though end

### Section III

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7<sup>th</sup>: *Nations and Nationalism*, Preface & Ch. 1

9<sup>th</sup>: *Nations and Nationalism*, Ch. 2, 3, 4

14<sup>th</sup>: **SPRING BREAK**

16<sup>th</sup>: **SPRING BREAK**

21<sup>st</sup>: *Nations and Nationalism*, Ch. 5, 6

23<sup>rd</sup>: *Civilization and its Discontent*, Freud; Through p. 52

28<sup>th</sup>: *Civ*, Freud; All

### Section IV

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30<sup>th</sup>: *Politics as a Vocation*, Weber; All

April 4<sup>th</sup>: *Sartre's Basic Writings*, Ch. 1, 2

6<sup>th</sup>: *Sartre's Basic Writings*, Ch. 5, 6

11<sup>th</sup>: *Sartre's Basic Writings*, Ch. 7, 9, 10

13<sup>th</sup>: *Sartre's Basic Writings*, Ch. 11, 12

18<sup>th</sup>: de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, "Introduction" and "History"

20<sup>th</sup>: de Beauvoir, "On the Master-Slave Relation" and "Conclusion"

*Section V*

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25<sup>th</sup>: *The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka

27<sup>th</sup>: *The Stranger* (ALL)

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*Essay Questions for POSC 371 (Spring 2016)*

1. Which of the authors or characters exemplify enlightenment? Why?  
[Due 8 Feb]
2. Marx calls for revolution, Nietzsche calls for revaluation—who offers the best radical critique of society (and why)? Would you undertake such a radical project? Explain. [Due 7 March]
3. Both Hobsbawm and Freud explain the origins of modern society—though they do so from quite different perspectives. Who is right, and why?  
[Due 4 April]
4. Weber, Sartre, and de Beauvoir all have something to say about a person's ethical orientation vis-à-vis political and social power. Who offers the best understanding of the power/ethics dynamic? Explain in “practical, real world” terms why the one you chose is better than the others. [Due 25 April]
5. Why was it necessary for Gregor and Meursault to be condemned and extirpated from society? [Due 2 May]