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Office Hours: Th. 3–5 or by appointment

THEORIES OF AGENCY: HANNAH ARENDT

Political Science 346, Spring 2003
Fridays, 9-11:50 am, Pick 506

This seminar is the first of an anticipated series of courses dealing with the concept of agency. This course will be devoted mainly to a close reading of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, with a focus on her phenomenology of human activity. This text will be supplemented by some of her other work (especially from the period during which she was writing *The Human Condition*); by excerpts from some of her own theoretical sources and interlocutors; by the writings of contemporary theorists who have drawn on her conception of action; and by some selection from the secondary literature.

TEXTS: Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958) and Alan Keenan, *The Democratic Question* (Stanford, 2003) will be available for purchase at the Coop. Most other readings will be on electronic and paper reserve at Regenstein. Two items—the articles by Pitkin and Canovan—are most easily accessible via JSTOR; the PDF version of this syllabus contains direct links.

PAPER: Those taking the course for credit must write a 15–20 page paper, due Monday, June 9.

WEEKLY MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

April 4. Introduction: no reading

April 11. 1. Arendt, *HC*, 1–21 (“Prologue” & “The Human Condition”)
2. Arendt, “Understanding and Politics,” in *Essays in Understanding*
3. Arendt, “Philosophy and Politics,” *Social Research* (1990)

April 18. 1. Arendt, *HC*, 22–78 (“Public and Private”)
2. Aristotle, *Politics*, book 1 (Lord trans.)
3. Arendt, “Reflections on Little Rock”; “A Reply to My Critics,” *Dissent* (1959)
4. Allen, “Law’s Necessary Forcefulness,” *Oklahoma City U. Law Rev.* (2001)
5. Elshtain, “Political Children,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*

April 25. 1. Arendt, *HC*, 79–135 (“Labor”)
2. Arendt, “Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought,” *Social Research* (2002)
3. Tsao, “Arendt’s Marx” (MS)

- May 2.** 1. Arendt, *HC*, 137–74 (“Work”)
 2. Aristotle, selections from *Nicomachean Ethics* book 6 (Ostwald) and *Metaphysics* book 9 (Ross)
 3. Arendt, “The Crisis in Culture,” in *Between Past and Future*
 4. Marx, *Capital* (Fowkes trans.), vol. 1, ch. 1, “The Commodity”
- May 9.** 1. Arendt, *HC*, 175–207 (“Action,” I)
 2. Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times,” in *Men in Dark Times*
 3. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* book 1, esp. ch. 10 (Ostwald).
 4. Tsao, “Arendt Against Athens,” *Political Theory* (2002)
 5. Speight, “Arendt, Hegel, and the Tragic Nature of Action,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (2002)
- May 16.** 1. Arendt, *HC*, 207–47 (“Action,” II)
 2. Arendt, “Epilogue: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution,” in *Origins of Totalitarianism* (2nd ed. only)
 3. Orlie, “A Political Ethos of Conscience,” *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, ch. 7.
 4. Gottlieb, “Arendt’s Messianism” (ch. 3) and “Conclusion,” in *Regions of Sorrow*.
- May 23.** 1. Arendt, *HC*, 248–325 (“The *Vita Activa* and the Modern Age”)
- May 30.** 1. Benhabib, “Feminist Theory and Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Public Space,” *History of the Human Sciences* (1993)
 2. Honig, “Toward an Agonistic Feminism,” in *Feminists Theorize the Political*
 3. Keenan, *Democracy in Question*, introduction and chs. 1, 3, 4.
 4. Habermas, “Hannah Arendt,” in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*
 5. (JSTOR) [Canovan](#), “A Case of Distorted Communication,” *Political Theory* (1983)
- June 6.** 1. Wolin, “Hannah Arendt: Democracy and the Political,” in *The Realm of Humanitas*
 2. (JSTOR) [Pitkin](#), “Justice: On Relating Private and Public,” *Political Theory* (1981)
 3. Dietz, “The Woman Question in Arendt” and “The Arendt Question in Feminism,” chs. 5 and 6 in *Turning Operations*.
 4. Zerilli, “The Arendtian Body,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*
 5. Connolly, “A Critique of Pure Politics,” ch. 7 in *Why I Am Not a Secularist*.