Human Nature from the Feminine Perspective
Political Science 306

Spring, 2020
Syllabus

Read this syllabus carefully before you decide to remain in this course. It contains important information about the course schedule for which you are responsible.

Abinta and Faraaz, R.I.P.

Failure to submit assignments on time will result in failure in the course, no matter what your class average may be.

Some remarks about the assignments and about the course are in order. First, you will notice that you are required to read a few pages in The Bible, but you are not required to purchase a copy. If you do not own a copy, a number of readings are available in the library and others are available from both your instructor and from the Wider Academy. Second, we will need to do some research about that reading. Any less effort than this will not be acceptable in this course.

The Honor Code is in force and will be strictly followed in this course.
POLITICAL SCIENCE 306
Spring, 2020
SYLLABUS

This is a course in political philosophy; in other words, it is a course in which we systematically study what some of the greatest minds have concluded about justice in an attempt to arrive at what it is. To discover justice would be to discover the truth about political life or the best way for people to live together. In order to determine this superior way of life political philosophers have attempted to find “human nature.” The notion was that discovering this would allow one to construct a regime appropriate for or complementary to that nature, and that this would be the most just political order. However, most of the time the search for human nature has meant the search for a generic nature, ignoring the issue of whether or not there is a distinctively male nature and a distinctively female nature. The assumption was that male and female natures, respectively, were decisively the same. This course will take that “assumption” to be a question. We will consider “human nature” from this perspective; we will study what some of the greatest minds have concluded about the natures of men and women and how that affects the search for justice.

Failure to hand in any assignment on time will result in failure in the course, no matter what your class average may be.

Some remarks about the assignments and about the course are in order. First, you will notice that you are required to read a few pages in The Bible, but you are not required to purchase a copy. If you do not own a copy, a number of editions are available in the library and others are available in the bookstore or online. Alternatively, I will provide you with a specific translation of the reading. Second, you will be expected to have read the entire assignment on the first day that we begin to discuss it. If you are unable to meet this requirement, do not take this course. The course is difficult and requires a good deal of reading and thought about that reading. Any less effort than this will surely result in a poor grade.

Books to be purchased:
5. Elective Affinities, by Goethe.
7. A Room of One’s Own, by Woolf, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
9. The Diary of Rachel Varnhagen, by Arendt. *

*This book is out of print. You may try to secure it from a library, from an out-of-print service, or you may get a copy from me. There will be a $50.00 deposit required, which you will get back if and when you return the book to me. Of course, this presupposes it is returned in the same condition it was in when you procured it from me.

Schedule of Classes


Feb. 18-March 5: Paper on “Discourses” due, March 5.


March 6: Review of The Second Sex due, March 6.


March 26: Discussion of whether men and women are different by nature.

March 31-April 2: Paper on “Hedda Gabler” due, April 2.

April 7-14: Paper on A Room of One’s Own due, April 14.
April 21-23: Paper on The Diary of Rahel Varnhagen due, April 23.

April 9, 16: No classes (Passover)

The Honor Code

You must do your own work, though I encourage you to discuss the readings among yourselves. However, do not write papers together and do not read each other’s papers until they have been graded and handed back. Avoid discussing works with students you know have not read them, and report to me about students who are trying to find out what the works are about without having read them. Use of summaries like Cliff Notes, SparkNotes, and Answers.com is plagiarism. **The Honor Code is always in force and I will enforce it vigorously.**