

Philosophy 254: Law, Politics, and Morality Ed Langerak

Fall, 1998 H601C

Office hours: M,W, 11-12; T,Th, 2:50-3:30 3494: 645-8321

and by appointment. <langerak>

We will use Langdon Gilkey's prison camp experiences to ask what is necessary and sufficient for a group of individuals to join together in a community and for a group of communities to join together in a stable, well-governed society. Then we will focus on some of the most important issues that arise for a pluralistic society that has deep and abiding differences in morality and religion: What are the reasons for and limits on toleration? What is the proper relationship between the values of the majority and the coercive power of the state? What legitimates that coercive power and what are the limits on its use? What is political liberalism and why do so many of its critics think it has reached a dead-end while its defenders think it is the only hope for peaceful diversity? Is church-state separation the best way for the state to be religiously neutral? Is it possible for political decisions--say, on abortion or mercy-killing--to be independent of controversial religious and moral outlooks? Are there objective values that give us insight into these issues, or are our deepest convictions merely cultural constructs? During our quest we will compare a number of normative perspectives, including utilitarianism, Kantianism, and a Christian covenantal outlook.

Student contributions: Regular attendance and quantity and quality of participation (10%). Careful reading of assignments and response to possible surprise quizzes (5%). Weekly paragraphs on the readings for the day (10%). One or two formal papers (dialectical inquiries) adding up to approximately 10 pages or 2500 words (30%). A midterm exam(20%). (5) A final exam (25%).

Texts: Langdon Gilkey's Shantung Compound, Locke's Letter on Toleration, Mill's On Liberty, and two course packets (\$10) Everyone should have and use an English writing handbook.

Sept. 10: Introduction; Nussbaum's Cultivating Humanity.

15: Gilkey ix-34; Mill handout; Langerak "Covenantal Fidelity" handout 1-9.

17: Gilkey 35-96; Pojman handout.

22: Gilkey 96-116; Kant handout; Langerak "Covenantal Fidelity" handout 9-15.

24: Gilkey 117-162. Langerak in Chapel, 11am; Nussbaum lecture in H501, 7:30pm.

29: Gilkey 163-193; Aristotle handout.

Oct. 1: Gilkey 193-242.

6: Langerak "Duties to Others" handout (rec. "Covenantal Fidelity," 16-28); Berry "Gift

of Good Land" handout. Belgum Lectures by Jean Bethke Elshstain, H501, 3:30 and evening.

8: Locke 1-16, 21-58.

13: Mill 1-52; Westacott handout.

15: Mill 53-113; Devlin handout. First of two papers due.

20: Catch-up and review.

22: Midterm exam.

Fall Break

29: Mill and the transition to Political Liberalism: selections from Nozick's Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Rawls' Theory of Justice, Rawls' Political Liberalism (through 18).

Nov. 3: Rawls' Political Liberalism (rest of selection).

5: Religion in the Public Square: Selections from Greenawalt's Private Consciences and Public Reasons, Wolterstorff's "The Role of Religion in Political Issues", Solum's "Law and Religion."

10: A Conservative Critique: Selection from Kekes' Against Liberalism.

12: Feminist Critiques: Okin's review of Rawls, Nussbaum's "Feminist Critique of Liberalism."

17: Theological Critiques: Jackson's "Liberalism and Agape," Esposito's Islam: The Straight Path (selection), Siddiqui's "Muslim's Must Avoid Western Influences," Pipes' "Muslims Cannot Avoid Westernization."

19: Pluralistic Critiques: Nagel's "Fragmentation of Values," Kekes' Morality of Pluralism (selection)

24: Censorship: handout.

Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 1: Censorship: handout.

3: Relativism: Rorty's "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids" and "Priority of Democracy to Philosophy" and "Private Irony and Liberal Hope"; Himmelfarb's "Revolution in the Library," Bok's Common Values (selection). Single paper due.

8: Pluralism, commitment, and disagreement: Midgley's "Trying Out One's New Sword," Hanvey's "Attainable Global Perspective," Perry's Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years (selection); Langerak's "Toleration, Cooperation, and Respect."

10: Catch-up and review. Second of two papers due.

Dec. 14, 2:30-4:30: Final exam.

