

POLITICS AND MORALITY

*University of Bayreuth
Winter Semester 2012/13
Wednesday, 10.00-12.00*

For BA students, 3rd, 5th, 7th semester

Course overview

The course aims to explore a – surprisingly - less discussed dimension of politics: its connection to morality. Politics is a vocation; the question the course focuses on is whether, like other vocations and professions, politics also has its own system of values and if it does, how this system relates to other systems of values. In particular, the course will ask the question: how does politics relate to morality? Does politics have a moral dimension? Does morality constrain the actions of politicians (broadly understood, to include civil servants and so on)? Or is politics, unlike others spheres of our lives, immune from the demands of morality?

The course will be built around two starkly contrasting approaches to the connection between politics and morality: the instrumentalist/realist idea according to which politics has its own system of values, which are not constrained by morality; and the moralist position, according to which the opposite of this is the case. In examining the pros and cons of these two approaches, the course will, among other things, discuss the idea that politicians are tragic heroes, the problem of dirty hands, the connection between moral dilemmas and politics. Along the way, case studies will be used to illustrate the problems and theoretical positions under discussion.

Course requirements and evaluation

The course can be taken either for 2 ungraded credits, or for 6 graded credits. In the former case, students will be required to give a presentation that will be based on a short position paper (2-3 pages long, 12 points, Times New Roman, double spaced, default margins). In the latter case, in addition to the presentation and the position paper, students will be required to submit a final paper for the course (10-20 pages long, formal requirements as above). In each case, attendance as well as active participation in seminars are required. The final grade will be composed of three parts: seminar participation and attendance (15%), seminar presentation and position paper (25%), final paper (60%).

Registration and course materials

Registration for the course will be done using Google Forms.

COURSE SCHEDULE: *POLITICS AND MORALITY*

(Note: the list below indicates the order of discussion and the material to be discussed. The exact seminar structure might, however, change, in the course of the semester.)

1. Realism I

Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, sections 2-3, 5-8

2. Realism II

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapters VI, VIII, XV-XXIV

3. Realism III

Lukacs, "Tactics and Politics", in. (eds.) *Political Writings*

4. The politician as a tragic hero

Weber, "The Profession and Vocation of Politics", in. Lassman and Speirs (eds.), *Political Writings*, pp. 345-369

5. Dirty hands I

Sartre, "Dirty Hands", in. *No Exit*, Acts V-VII

6. Dirty hands II

Walzer, "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands", in. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*

7. A systematic discussion I

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 3

8. A systematic discussion II

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 4

9. A systematic discussion III

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 5

10. A systematic discussion IV

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 6

11. A systematic discussion V

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 7

12. A systematic discussion VI

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 8

13. A systematic discussion VII

Kis, *Politics as a Moral Problem*, Chapter 9

14. "Living in truth"

Havel, "The Power of the Powerless", in. Keane (ed.), *The Power of the Powerless*