Political Science 480

Contemporary Political Theory

Spring, 2012

Professor Dumm

This year we will focus on the idea of biopolitics in 20th and 21st century Western political theory, its relationship to the state, governmentality, race, the idea of the human, and animal life.

Readings: Because this is a text driven seminar, there will be copies of all our volumes placed on reserve in Frost. (I may occasionally be providing handouts.) Nonetheless, I urge you to purchase as many of the following volumes as you can.

You will be required to write a substantial term paper on an area of problems touching on the bio-political upon during the course of the semester. Also, starting in week three, you will be required to write a presentation of the weekly reading material at least once, and to respond to another student’s presentation at least once. Each student responsible for presenting in a given week will be required to distribute his or her paper by Saturday noon the weekend before seminar. The respondent or respondents to the presentation will present a critical response to the presentation at the beginning of our seminar meeting. Your initial presentation and your initial response will constitute 10% each of your final grade. The term paper, a draft of which will be due by the eighth week of classes, will constitute the remaining 80% of your grade. Should there be an opportunity, I will permit extra presentations to be made for extra course credit or consideration.

The following books will be for sale at Amherst Books in downtown Amherst. I list them in the order that they will be on the syllabus of the course.

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Michael Foucault, *“Society Must Be Defended”*

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth*

Roberto Esposito, *Bios*

William Connolly, *A World of Becoming*

George Kateb, *Human Dignity*

Cary Wolfe, Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, et al., *Philosophy and Animal Life*

Calendar:

Week One, Arendt, Introduction, and Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”

Week Two, Arendt, Parts One and Two

Week Three, Arendt, remainder

Week Four, Foucault, First Half

Week Five, Foucault, Second Half

Week Six, Agamben, All

Week Seven, Hardt and Negri, first half

Week Eight, Hardt and Negri, second half

Week Nine, Esposito, first half

Week Ten, Esposito, second half

Week Eleven, Connolly, All

Week Twelve, Kateb, All

Week Thirteen, Wolfe, et al. All