PUBLIC REASON, DELIBERATION, AND JUSTIFICATION:

NEW MODELS OF LEGITIMACY

POL 460/2006
TR 24

Professor Simone Chambers
schamber@chass.utoronto.ca

Sidney Smith Hall 3023
Tel: 978-8493
Office hours: Wednesday 1-3, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How should citizens and politicians be talking to each other in the public sphere about public issues? Why is this question important indeed more important than how citizens and politicians vote? These are the core questions we will investigate in this course. We will begin with the philosophical answers to these questions and end with some practical challenges faced by all democratic publics. The work of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas will serve as our philosophical starting point. From these two theorists we will reconstruct an ideal of public justification and democratic legitimacy that gives primacy to reason and reason giving. We will then move through some concrete cases, in particular we will investigate the appropriate place of religion, passion, rhetoric and the media in public debate as well as post colonial challenges to the idea of reason embedded in theories of public justification and deliberation.

CLASS FORMAT

Students will post questions on the readings on our blackboard site. Each week I will assign a certain number of students this task. Every student will be responsible for at least 4 weeks. These postings will not be graded but will contribute to a student’s participation grade. I will begin each session with a short 30-35 minute lecture. We will then have a general seminar discussion about the material. The last 30-35 minutes we go over the questions and see if there any that we have not answered.
REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduates:
Participation 15%
Review essay 1,500 words (March 7) 25%
Term paper 5,000 words 60%

Graduate students
Participation 15%
Research paper 7,500-8,000 words 85%

READING

COURSE OUTLINE


PART I: PUBLIC REASON

2. January 20 Public Use of Reason
   • Kant, "What is Enlightenment,"
   • Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, "The Discipline of Pure Reason in Respect to its Polemical Employment," A738/B766 – A757/B785.

3. January 27 Reasonable/Rational and the Problem of Pluralism

4. February 3 Rawls on Public Reason
5. February 10: Freestanding versus Post-metaphysical

- “A Genealogical Analysis of the Cognitive Content of Morality” In *The Inclusion of the Other*, pp. 3-48
- “‘Reasonable’ versus ‘true,’ or Morality of Worldviews,” in *The Inclusion of the Other*, pp. 75-105.

6. February 17: Public Reason as Discourse or Deliberation

- “Public Space and Political Public Sphere – The Biographical roots to two Motifs in my thought.” *Between Naturalism and Religion*, pp. 11-23.

**FEBRUARY 21-25: READING WEEK**


March 10: Religion

- “Pre-political Foundations of the Constitutional State?” In *Between Naturalism and Religion*
- “Religion and the Public Sphere: Cognitive Presuppositions for the ‘Public Use of Reason’” in *Between Naturalism and Religion*


March 17 No Class

March 23: Religion continued


• Stephen Macedo, “Why Public Reason? Citizens’ Reasons and the Constitution of the Public Sphere” MS

• Benjamin Hertzberg, Chapter I: “Religious Liberty and Democratic Citizenship. John Rawls, His critiques and Political Liberals.” MS

• Benjamin Hertzberg, Chapter II: “Varieties of Religious citizenship: Religious Integrity and Justification of Political Liberalism” MS

• Symposium in Good Society on Secularism


March 31: Passion/Rhetoric


• Chambers S., “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere: Has deliberative democracy abandoned mass democracy?” *Political Theory* 37:6 (2009).