



Universiteit Leiden

The Studium Generale Universiteit Leiden and Home Academy organise:

Political Philosophy

A course on Western Political Theory

Prof. Grahame Lock

Tuesday evening 21, 28 November and 12 December 2006

Professor Grahame Lock studied philosophy at the universities of London and Cambridge and at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. He is Professor of Political Science at Queens College, Oxford and at Leiden University and Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

INTRODUCTION

Professor Grahame Lock examines the major periods in the history of Western political thought and questions the political and social order. He will consider the ways in which thinkers have responded to the political problems of their time, and how they contributed to the dialogue about human goods and needs, justice, democracy, and the proper relationship between individual and state. The main objective will be to understand the strengths and weaknesses of various regimes and philosophical approaches in order to gain a critical perspective on our own. Thinkers will include Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and Tocqueville.

PROGRAMME

21 November 2006

Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas

It has been said that all philosophy is a footnote to Plato. Ludwig Wittgenstein asked why: was Plato so very clever? Or is there another reason for the immense influence of the classical world on all subsequent European thought? What is the effect, in this connection, of St Augustine's new, Christian doctrine of politics as a necessary evil? St Thomas, the maestro of scholastic ideas, has been interpreted as both backward-looking - he is a mediaeval Aristotelian - and forward-looking - he remakes Christian thought in an explicitly rational spirit. Why, and what, can we still learn from him?

Next page

28 November 2006

Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau

Machiavelli the Florentine is a provocateur of Realpolitik, who argues for the subordination of Christian morality to the effective if unwritten rules of the political game. Thomas Hobbes takes yet another step toward pure realism: man, he says, wants only to survive, to minimise pain and maximise pleasure. That is why he needs the security which only an all-powerful Leviathan can offer. John Locke, in contrast, makes a plea for a social contract that will establish a constitutional regime best capable of defending life, liberty and private property. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in stark contrast, argues that the rich, defending their possessions, tricked the poor into agreeing to the wrong contract. We need a social contract of a completely new type.

12 December 2006

Tocqueville, Marx, Freud, the Present Day

Alexis de Tocqueville visited America in the 19th century and was shocked by its democratic tendencies, which he thought would destroy civilisation-as-we-know it - and yet were unstoppable. Marx produced his well-known account of the rise and coming fall of the capitalist class: not so much a moral condemnation as a historical forecast. Was he right? Freud, in his writings on social philosophy, exposed truths about the unconscious motivations of "mass man" and his irrational tendencies, lessons which are arguably more relevant than ever in our world of propaganda, spin, celebrity politics and perpetual war. Finally, we look at present-day currents in political philosophy. Are there any new ideas in the world?

ADMISSION FREE, ENGLISH SPOKEN

TIME: 07.00 - 09.15 p.m. including a short interval

LOCATION: room 005, Lipsiusgebouw (1175), Cleveringaplaats 1, Leiden

INFORMATION & ORGANISATION:

Studium Generale Universiteit Leiden, Postbus 9500, 2300 RA Leiden

071 5277295/7296/7283

E-Mail: JE.Molenaar@ics.Leidenuniv.nl

www.studiumgenerale.leidenuniv.nl

NB. The lectures will be recorded by Home Academy Publishers for the production of an audio-box.

More information about Home Academy Publishers: www.home-academy.nl



Studium Generale