

PST Political and Social Thought—Core Seminar II

PST 487—Spring Term 2006

Tuesdays, 3:30–5:45 pm, Pavilion III

Professor Michael Joseph Smith (mjsmith@virginia.edu)

Office Hours: Mondays 2:00–4:30 pm in Cabell 251 (other times by appointment)

Except when noted below, written responses of 500–800 words are due each week in class. “Double responses” of 1600–2000 words on two weeks of reading are possible when listed or when negotiated in advance. Please submit essays on time. This term, students will partner to prepare discussion questions in advance and to take some responsibility for leading the class discussion based on their questions. This work will substitute for the response essay normally due that week.



Outline of Readings and Classes

I. The “Age of Catastrophe” and Responses to Dilemmas *in extremis*

January 24: Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World 1919-1991*, Front Matter, chapters 1-4. (No essay this week.)

January 31: Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, and Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, chapters 5-7.

February 7: Louis Begley, *Wartime Lies*; and Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World*.

February 14: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*.

II. Competing Concepts of Social Justice and Ethics

(I encourage you to write a double response on two of the following three weeks' reading.)

February 21: Robert McAfee Brown, ed. *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr*, chapters 1, 7-9, 10, 12-16, epilogue.

February 28: Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and other selections from *Why We Can't Wait*.

Orlando Patterson, *The Ordeal of Integration*, entire, but you may omit chapter 4.

☞ Spring Break, no class on March 7, read Ellison! ☞

March 14 : Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*.

March 21: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: A Brief Restatement*.

March 28: Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family*.

III. New Voices, New Issues

April 4: Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World 1919-1999*, chapter 9-13; 15-18.

April 11: Tzvetan Todorov, *The Morals of History*, Introduction, chapters 1-5, 7, 9-14, Conclusion.

April 18: Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horsemen*.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*.

April 25: Albert O. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction*.

May 2: Retrospect and Conclusion