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SYLLABUS

Winter 2011 - LTCO 287 & POLI 213

The Public Sphere : Politics, Economy, & Culture

1st Session: General Introduction. Today's Crisis of the Public Sphere.

- Signs of the crisis; ex. a. privatization and the domination of finance in education; b. the Wikileaks phenomenon and unrestricted information.
- The 4 fundamental dimensions of the public sphere: 1. Space exposed to the public gaze vs. private space. 2. Transparency and information vs. secrecy; 3. Deliberation and democracy vs. tyranny ; 4/ The common good vs. private interests.
- The idea of the public good. What does belong to everyone ?
- The idea of the state. The crisis of the state. The new media and virtual public space.

2nd Session: The Genesis of Social Institutions and Kinship Systems

- The public realm as a fundamental dimension of all human societies.
- The obligation of exogamy as an expression of that dimension and as the explanation for the universal prohibition of incest. - Lévi-Strauss's analyses in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*.
- Nature and culture. - Human bond as convention - The idea of institution. -
- Public space in societies without a central state – Malinowski: *Crime and Customs*. Pierre Clastres: *Society against the State*.

3rd Session: The Birth of Public Space in Ancient Greece City- States

- Ethnic groups, lineages and aristocratic culture in ancient Greece.
- The Hoplitic reform and the warriors' circle: the center--*meson*—as the space assigned for booty and speech. - Democracy as debate; that which should concern everyone.
- Justice among groups. - Vengeance and the birth of the court of law.
- M. Detienne, *The Masters of Truth* ; J.P. Vernant. *Space and political organization in Ancient Greece*.

4th Session: Public Sphere and Private Sphere according to Arendt

- Arendt: *The Human Condition*: labor, work, and action. *Agora* and *oikos*.
- Definition of the public and private realms. - The realms of action and labor.
- Definition of the city vs. the family. Aristotle: *Politics*.

5th Session: The Formation of the Public Sphere according to Habermas

- The central concepts; public opinion and the public exercise of reason - Kant: *What is Enlightenment?* The Enlightenment project. – The bourgeois civil sphere. Public opinion and the means of information.
- Readings: Habermas: *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*; Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*.

6th Session: the Ideas of Law and the State – and Democracy

- The idea of public realm in the formation of the modern state. The idea of the state.
- Hobbes and the concepts of contract and Commonwealth. – Readings: *Leviathan* and *On the Citizen*.
- Rousseau: The *Social Contract*. - The idea of the state: Hegel: *Philosophy of Right*
- Republicanism: Tocqueville and the American model. - Ph. Pettit: *Republicanism*.

7th Session: Public Sphere and Economic Activities: Politics and Private Interests

- Plato – Aristotle : *Polis* and *oikonomia*. Underestimating the role of the economy.
- The question of property. Hobbes - Locke – Rousseau.
- The birth of economic theory in the 18th century. Reading: Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*
- The political sphere and the economy. - The market. - Private interests
- Economic justice and democracy: Amartya Sen: excerpts from *The Idea of Justice*.

8th Session: Public Space and Public Culture

- Art and community in traditional societies.
- Art and society in classical Europe. - Urban public space and political public space.
- Politics and theatricality: the requirement of visibility; the stage of power -Emotions – Symbols.
- Religion and public space: rituals. – Greece – The Renaissance – Secularization.
- Urbanism- Architecture - Public spaces. Cultural differences: The West, The Middle East China.
- Readings: Sigfried Giedeon: *Space, Time & Architecture* - Jane Jacobs: *Death & Life of Great American Cities* - Kevin Lynch: *The Image of the City*. - Rem Koolhaas: *Delirious New York*; Mike Davis: *City of Quartz*.

9th Session: Education : Knowledge as a Public Good

- Education and society. - Traditional societies: initiation and social competence.
- The Greek *paideia*. Education and the aristocracy. – The Church and monasteries as means of access to elite culture. – European universities since the Middle Age. - Social access to education.
- The current crisis of the university in the USA.. – Privatization. – For-profit schools.
- Reading Chris Newfield *Unmaking the Public University*

10th Session: Networks as Public Spaces - Virtual Space – The New Democracy

- The network: a very long history. - Proximity and distance. Information and dissemination networks in the 18th century. The mail. - The post office. - Gazettes. – Newspapers.
- The revolution in communications: the telephone. – The radio. – Television. – The Internet.
- The Internet revolution. Unrestricted information ? – Social networks [Face book ;Twitter...] - Blogs. - Public sphere and intimate sphere. A new democracy ?
- Manuel Castells: *The Rise of the Network Society*.