Syllabus of the course
"Moral Foundations of Politics"

(3 ECTS)

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Meeting Minute # _____ dated _____20____

I.   COURSE DESCRIPTION

a) Moral Foundations of Politics. This is a blended course. The online part is a massive open online course (MOOC) offered by Yale University and available on the platform Coursera: https://www.coursera.org/learn/moral-politics/home/welcome

b) The following courses are the prerequisites for learning this discipline: "Political Science in the Context of Contemporary Humanities", research seminar "Methodology and Methods of Research in Political Linguistics"

c) When do governments deserve our allegiance, and when should they be denied it? This compulsory course explores the main answers that have been given to this question in the modern West. We start with a survey of the major political theories of the Enlightenment: Utilitarianism, Marxism, and the social contract tradition. In each case, we begin with a look at classical formulations, locating them in historical context, but then shift to the contemporary debates as they relate to politics today. Next, we turn to the rejection of Enlightenment political thinking, again exploring both classical and contemporary formulations. The last part of the course deals with the nature of, and justifications for, democratic politics, and their relations to Enlightenment and Anti-Enlightenment political thinking. In addition to exploring theoretical differences among the various authors discussed, considerable attention is devoted to the practical implications of their competing arguments. To this end, we discuss a variety of concrete problems, including debates about economic inequality, affirmative action and the distribution of health care, the limits of state power in the regulation of speech and religion, and difficulties raised by the emerging threat of global environmental decay.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objective of the course is to provide an overview of the main classical and contemporary concepts and approaches towards the interrelationship between politics and morality through the prism of the problem of the legitimacy of power.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of learning the discipline a student is expected to:

- **Know:** the main theoretical approaches towards the definition of the legitimacy of power, which is in the centre of the relationship between morality and politics;
- **Be able to:** autonomously enhance their knowledge, learn new theoretical approaches and concepts, reflect on their relevance for solving contemporary political problems;
- **Master:** critical thinking skills, the ability to clearly formulate one's own point of view, carry out comparative analysis of approaches and concepts;

4. COURSE PLAN

Topic 1. Welcome to Moral Foundations of Politics. Welcome to the course. Meet your instructor and learn about the structure of the course and what makes it distinctive.

Topic 2. Enlightenment Political Theory. This module explores what makes a government legitimate. More specifically, was the Third Reich illegitimate and was Eichmann breaking some kind of higher law here?

Topic 3. Utilitarianism: Classical and Neoclassical. Classical and neoclassical utilitarianism are examined in this module starting with the historical context. Professor Shapiro then shifts to the contemporary debates as they relate to politics today.

Topic 4. Marxism, Its Failures and Its Legacy. This module on Marx's Enlightenment theory focuses on the foundations of capitalism theory and its major weaknesses.

Topic 5. The Social Contract Tradition I. This module looks at classical formulations of the Social Contract Tradition, locating them in historical context, but then shifts to the contemporary debates as they relate to politics today.

Topic 6. The Social Contract Tradition II. This module looks at classical formulations of the Social Contract Tradition, locating them in historical context, but then shifts to the contemporary debates as they relate to politics today.

Topic 7. Anti-Enlightenment Politics. This module explores the rejection of Enlightenment political thinking, again exploring both classical and contemporary formulations.

Topic 8. Democracy. This module deals with the nature of, and justifications for, democratic politics, and their relations to Enlightenment and Anti-Enlightenment political thinking.

5. READING LIST (provided by Coursera)

a) **Required readings:**

1. Arendt, H. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.* London: Penguin Classics.
2. Locke, J. (2016). *Two Treatises of Government.* Ed. Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. GRADING SYSTEM

The resulting grade for interim control in the form of the exam is set by the following formula, where O_{exam} – grade for the oral exam; $0,6 \cdot O_{self\text{-}study}$ – grade for self-study in the form of the online part of the course:

$$O_{final} = 0,4 \cdot O_{exam} + 0,6 \cdot O_{self\text{-}study}$$

Guidelines for interim assessment:

The highest grade (10 points) is awarded in case of a correct and complete answer at the exam and extensive knowledge of all the topics together with a 100% grade for the online part of the course.

The student receives 8-9 points for giving a full and correct answer at the exam and extensive knowledge of all the topics together with a 80-90% grade for the online part of the course.

The student receives 6-7 points for extensive knowledge of only one exam question and for getting a 70-79% for the online part of the course.

The student receives 5 points for only partial knowledge of the exam question and for getting a 65-69% grade for the online part of the course.

The student receives 44 points for only superficial knowledge of the subject and for getting a 65% grade for the online part of the course.

The students receives 3 points for significant gaps in the knowledge of the subject and for getting a less than 65% grade for the online part of the course.

2 points are awarded in case of a complete lack of knowledge.

7. EXAMINATION TYPE

Knowledge assessment will be organized in the form of an oral exam. Students will be asked to answer one of the following questions:

1. The Eichmann case and the problem of illegal, but legitimate action. Sources of the legitimacy of power in the framework of the political philosophy of the Enlightenment (utilitarianism, Marxism and the theory of social contract).

2. The central tenets of the political philosophy of the Enlightenment and their inherent contradictions. The concept of scientific knowledge in early Enlightenment. Knowledge of the social world and the natural world in the philosophy of J. Locke and T. Hobbes.

3. The natural law sources of the Enlightenment philosophy: what is the essence of the idea of a person as a mini-God by J. Locke? What is the political meaning of these views? Sources of individual rights in the philosophy of J. Locke. Natural-legal restrictions of human activity.

4. The origins of classical utilitarianism: "sovereign masters" of human life in the philosophy of J. Bentham. The main features of classical utilitarianism (determinism, naturalism, etc.). The principle of "greatest happiness of as many people as possible" and its problematic nature. The need for government in terms of utilitarianism. Sources of individual rights.

5. The main provisions of J. S. Mill's neoclassical utilitarianism. Mill's two-step "algorithm" for resolving moral and political issues. The synthesis of rights (freedom) and utility in Mill's philosophy. The role of freedom of speech in achieving the truth.

6. Karl Marx as a thinker of the Enlightenment: the scientific concept of history and the free development of the individual. Labor theory of value. The concept of labor and surplus value. The secular version of J. Locke's idea of people as mini-Gods in Marx. The concept of capitalist exploitation in Marx. Calculation of the degree of exploitation. Prerequisites for the emergence of exploitation and its strengthening under capitalism.

7. 5 reasons for the crisis of the capitalist economy and the inevitability of the socialist revolution. Communism as an attempt to overcome the limitations of socialism. General provisions of Marxist theory that turned out to be wrong. Problems with the macro-theory of the economic crisis of Marx. Problems with micro-theory (labor theory of value).

8. The basis of government legitimacy in the theory of social contract. The concepts of "natural state" and "social contract" in the political philosophy of T. Hobbes. The concepts of "natural state" and "social contract" in the political philosophy of J. Locke. Conditions under which the contract may be violated: differences between Hobbes and Locke.

9. Problems with the classical theory of social contract. An attempt to overcome them: the categorical imperative of I. Kant, the hypothetical imperative of J. Rawls. Modern theories of social contract: innovations of J. Rawls. "The curtain of ignorance".

10. J. Rawls' Theory of justice: the concept of primary goods and the principles of their equitable distribution. The first principle of justice. The second principle of justice. What is the essence of the principle of "politics, not metaphysics", characterizing the views of the late Rawls? What is overlapping consensus?

8. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

-   Online lectures
-   Self-study
-   Online assignments

9. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE SUPPORT

№ п/п	Name	Conditions of Access
1.	Microsoft Windows 7 Professional RUS	*Internal university network (Public contract №21, dated 14.12.2009)*
2.	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010	*Internal university network (Licensing agreement № 8.1.6.19- 16/07, dated 25.05.2015)*

Classrooms for self-study are equipped with personal computers with Internet access and access to the educational information system of the Higher School of Economics.