

The Body Politic as Social Imaginary

Political Science (PLSC) 24602

Location/Time

Classics 111

Instructor

Sarita Zaffini

Email

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Office Location

Booth Business School
(Atrium)

Office Hours

Wednesdays 1:30-3pm,
or by appointment

Course Overview

There is no other social metaphor that is employed more consistently in pre-modern discourse than that of the 'body politic.' From ancient times to the Middle Ages to the early-modern period, philosophers and scholars described society in terms of a living, human organism. This analogy suggested certain presuppositions about social/political relationships: regarding their origin, the degree of their cohesion, the relative importance of diversity or uniformity, the arrangement of roles and classes, the extent of freedom and mobility within those divisions, the locus of order and harmony among them, and the level of authority required to maintain them in that equilibrium.

The 'body politic' analogy is not used as frequently now, and many scholars claim that the body politic metaphor is inappropriate as an image for modern, liberal society, with its individualistic ethos and contract-based structure. This course investigates whether or not this is so: first, by reviewing ancient, medieval, and early-modern understandings of the concept, and secondly, by weighing the analysis of two sociologists (Tönnies and Durkheim) who disagree about the relevance of the 'body' motif for modern society.

Required Texts

Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society* (Cambridge)

Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Free Press)

**All other required texts are electronically available on Canvas **

Written Assignments

- Three papers, between 1500-1700 words: the first, on the primary sources (due by midnight, October 26th), the second, Tönnies (due November 12th), the third, Durkheim (due December 7th).
- Brief response (2/2/2: quotes/insights/questions) for each reading, uploaded to Canvas by 9am before class.

Grade Distribution

75% - Three papers (25% each)

25% - 2/2/2s

Attendance and Participation

Classroom attendance and participation is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will result in a 1/3- letter-grade penalty. Please show up on time, and be prepared for thoughtful engagement with the text and your peers.

Course Schedule

	October 1 st , Tuesday:	Introduction, no reading
Plato/Aristotle/ Cicero	October 3 rd , Thursday:	<i>Republic; The Politics; The Republic, The Offices</i>
Paul/Salisbury	October 8 th , Tuesday:	Excerpts from Paul's epistles; <i>Policraticus</i>
Aquinas/Christine	October 10 th , Thursday:	<i>On Kingship, Summo Contra Gentiles; Book of the Body Politic</i>
Early England/ Hobbes	October 15 th , Tuesday:	Excerpts from various speeches and tracts; <i>De Homine, Human Nature, De Corpore Politico</i>
Hobbes	October 17 th , Thursday:	<i>Leviathan</i>
Rousseau/Marx	October 22 nd , Tuesday:	<i>Political Economy, Social Contract; The Jewish Question</i>
Kelsen	October 24 th , Thursday:	<i>Law and State</i>
Tönnies	October 29 th , Tuesday:	<i>Community and Civil Society, Argument, Book 1: Section 1</i>
	October 31 st , Thursday:	Book 1: Section 2 (par.1-29, 38-39)
	November 5 th , Tuesday:	Book 2: Sections 1 (par.1-3, 9-18) and 2
	November 7 th , Thursday:	Book 3: Section 1
	November 12 th , Tuesday:	Book 3: Sections 2-3
Durkheim	November 14 th , Thursday:	<i>Division of Labor</i> , Introduction, Part I: Chapter 1
	November 19 th , Tuesday:	Part I: Chapters 2 (pp.8184), 3, 5 (pp.116-121), 6
	November 21 st , Thursday:	Part I: Chapter 7 and Part II: Chapter 1
	November 26 th , Tuesday:	Part II: Chapters 2-3, 5
	November 28 th , Thursday:	THANKSGIVING, no class
	December 3 rd , Tuesday:	Part III (entire)
	December 5 th , Thursday:	READING PERIOD, no class