The Idea of Statesmanship

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Monday: 1:30-3:20  
PLSC 295/HUMNS 355  
Autumn, 2014

Course Description:

Who is a statesman and what are the ideal qualities required for the office? This remains one of the enduring questions of political philosophy. This course will examine the art of statesmanship in modern political thought. We will consider the role of statesmanship in the founding of “new modes and orders” (Machiavelli), as the art of political reform, and as the task of preserving and maintaining existing laws and institutions. In particular we will examine the statesman’s role under a constitutional government bound by laws and limited by the separation of powers and, finally, we will look at the limitations of statecraft as imposed by historical circumstance, culture, and economic interest.

Requirements:

The class will be conducted as a seminar so attendance and participation are key. Students will have a choice between writing two papers (10-12 pages each) or one long research paper (approx. 25 pages) if the class is being taken to fulfill a senior essay requirement. The two short papers will be due on Friday after the seventh week of term and on Friday after the last week.

Texts:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*  
Bacon, *The New Atlantis*  
Hume, *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*  
Burke, *Pre-Revolutionary Writings*  
Madison, Hamilton, Jay, *The Federalist Papers*

Readings from other sources (Halifax, Bolingbroke, Macaulay, et. al will be available either on line or as an attachment I will send to the class).
Course Outline:

Week One:
Introduction

I: Statesmanship and Political Founding

Week Two:
Machiavelli: *The Prince*

II: The Statesman as “Trimmer”

Week Three:
Bacon: *New Atlantis*
Halifax: “The Character of a Trimmer”

III: Statesmanship and Party Government

Week Four:
Bolingbroke: “On the Spirit of Patriotism” and “The Idea of a Patriot King”

Week Five:
Burke: “Address to the Electors at Bristol” and “Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents”

IV: Statecraft and Constitutional Government

Week Six

Week Seven:

V: Statesmanship and the American Experience

Week Eight:

Federalist Papers: Numbers, 1, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 28, 31

Week Nine:

Federalist Papers: Numbers, 35, 37, 38, 39, 47, 51, 57, 60, 63, 68, 70, 72 75, 76, 78, 84, 85

VI: Statesmanship and the Limits of Reform

T. B. Macaulay, “Mill on Government”

VII: Statesmanship: Theory and Practice

Week Eleven:

Lincoln: “On the Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions,” “Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act,” “Cooper Institute Speech”

Woodrow Wilson, “Abraham Lincoln: Man of the People”
Theodore Roosevelt, “The Heirs of Abraham Lincoln”

Week Twelve:

De Gaulle: The Edge of the Sword

George Lichtheim: “De Gaulle – A Summing Up”
Pierre Manent, “De Gaulle as Hero”

Week Thirteen:

Isaiah Berlin: “Winston Churchill in 1940: