

## Proposal for a Department of Political Theory

This is a statement explaining the reasons for proposing a new Department of Political Theory. At the present time, Political Theory is one of the fields within the existing Department of Political Science. Most Departments of Political Science in the United States are a loose collection of fields held together by little more than name. It has not been uncommon, therefore, for some of these fields to separate from the parent department: at some institutions, it has been International Relations which has gone its own way, or Public Affairs. At Berkeley, for example, Criminology and Social Welfare have broken away from Political Science, and Public Administration is in the process of trying. These precedents reinforce the point that, typically, Political Science departments have been confederations rather than unitary entities; hence, a proposal for separation is neither invidious, nor would its effect be to impair the organic wholeness of a discipline that is truly integrated.

Having noted the eclectic quality of Political Science, it is necessary to point out that this situation at Berkeley and at other institutions, notably Northwestern and Indiana, is being altered. A concerted effort is under way to unify Political Science by instituting a common methodology which is to serve as the basis for undergraduate and graduate instruction. The new methodology is quantitative and behavioral; it leads to a kind of training for students which emphasizes statistics, social psychology, survey analysis and design, computer programming, and data processing. In addition, the attempt to unify the discipline has invariably led to another result, as the experience at the above-mentioned institutions and at Rochester and Minnesota illustrates. The traditional field of Political Theory has been allowed to languish; or has been drastically redefined; or has been eliminated altogether.

These general considerations form a background to the two main reasons for the present proposal. First, it is our belief that, under the present arrangement, those who teach and conduct research in Political Theory are being prevented from making their full contribution to the educational program of the University and from meeting certain manifest educational needs of undergraduate and graduate students. Second, we believe that a separation of Political Theory will facilitate the Political Science Department in its efforts to establish a more uniform program of instruction and training. All of those who would join the new department have given a considerable part of their lifetimes to the Department of Political Science and would wish it well in the future; furthermore,

they believe that a separation will result in easier and more fruitful relationships between Political Theory and Political Science. As the accompanying curricular proposals demonstrate, undergraduates and graduates in the new department would be encouraged to take course work in Political Science, and Political Science students would of course be welcome in the new department's classes. In short, we believe that a new Department of Political Theory gives promise of benefitting both the University and the Department of Political Science.

## II

The present proposal does not involve the kind of risk which usually attends a proposal for developing a new field of knowledge or a new technique. Of all of the forms of inquiry in Western history, Political Theory is one of the oldest and most continuous. It began with Socrates and Plato and has endured ever since. Its vitality is a consequence of the fact that men of genius have contributed numerous masterpieces of theoretical analysis which have retained their original relevance and freshness; and to the fact that many of the problems with which political theory deals are perennial and never closed. Where historical changes have brought new problems, the resources of a long tradition of theorizing have afforded later theorists a preliminary vantage point for making sense of the new problems.

Political Theory forms a tradition of reflective inquiry and discourse concerned with a continuous reevaluation of the political problems inherent in organized society. Broadly speaking, these problems center around (a) certain relationships arising out of the political organization of the society, e.g., relationships between authority and members, (b) the ways in which societies distribute various goods (material and immaterial) and "place" individuals, groups, and classes: these give rise to questions concerning equality and inequality, justice as a distributive principle, various claims connected with certain social contributions, and the like.

Over the centuries, political theorists have developed a fairly stable set of concepts for handling their problems. These include: order, authority, community, citizenship, participation, action, justice, and obligation. Although the conceptual vocabulary of political theory has been stable, it has not been unchanging. Important political and cultural changes have been registered in

Political Theory and have left their mark, e.g., the concept of the voluntary association owes much to the Protestant Reformation and to Puritanism in particular, just as the concept of "equilibrium" was largely inspired by Newtonian physics and the contemporary notion of a political "system" by cybernetics. It should be emphasized, however, that political theorists are not primarily interested in the general problems of, say, justice or authority, but in their political significance. It is, so to speak, the public side of human life which constitutes the focal point of theoretical inquiry. Distinctive relationships of right, obligation, and power, for example, are assumed when the individual is a "member" of a political society. Similarly, human action is exposed to different influences and expectations when it takes place on a public stage than when it occurs in private life. Political Theory might be briefly characterized as inquiry into the public context of human relationships and problems.

In attempting to specify the kinds of questions which Political Theory seeks to explore, the fundamental consideration is the peculiar blend of knowledge which is required in defining the questions and in seeking to resolve them. For example, political theorists have been perennially occupied with such questions as, what is the proper constitution of political authority? what are the main values which political participation ought to realize? what are the appropriate relationships between voluntary groups and public authority? to what extent do the claims of conscience constitute valid grounds for refusing to obey the commands of public authority? In order to come to grips with these questions, theorists have typically employed a variety of methods. They have relied on conceptual clarification and elucidation in order to understand the nature of "authority", "justice", etc. At the same time, many theoretical questions require considerable empirical knowledge: in order to discuss voluntary associations, for example, the theorist might have to acquaint himself with the history of sectarianism, fraternal order, or trade unions. Finally, and perhaps most intricate of all, a political theory aims simultaneously to provide a statement of possibilities along with a statement which tries to explain or account for events and developments in actual political life. Examples of this procedure can be found in Tocqueville's classic explanation of democracy, which also contains specific proposals for remedying democracy's defects; or Hobbes' account of what causes the breakdown of political authority and his prescription for the conditions necessary to sustain authority. Political Theory has

always been a speculative inquiry into the human possibilities of political life, but it has also been a form of speculation deeply respectful of the importance of logical reasoning and factual investigation. The first systematic political theorist, Plato, may have been the first utopian, but he was also the first to found a research institution.

These considerations may be summarized by saying that Political Theory fulfills commonly accepted criteria applicable to any academic subject. First, it possesses a well-defined corpus of theoretical literature which has withstood the test of time. (1) Second, surrounding that literature is an impressive tradition of scholarly interpretation, commentary, and appraisal. At the present time there are not only books and professional journals devoted to Political Theory, but there are also professional associations dedicated to furthering the field. (2) Third, there are central questions and problems which are accepted by those who practice the discipline. (3) Fourth, the field exhibits continuing vitality: its practitioners are constantly adapting and reformulating older questions in the light of historical changes and devising new ones in the light of new knowledge. (4)

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1. The basic texts are drawn from older writers, such as Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Marsilius, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Hume, Jefferson, The Federalists, Kant, Hegel, Bentham, Mill, Tocqueville, and Marx. More recent examples would be: Durkheim, Weber, Sorel, Mosca, Pareto, Michels, Camus, Sartre, Arendt, and Oakeshott. For further examples see the attached syllabi from Political Theory 118 A, 118 B, 118 C, 113, and 213.
  2. The scholarly literature is represented, for example, by McIlwain, Barker, Cassirer, Morrow, Cochrane, Allen, Polin, Halévy, etc. Again, we refer to the attached syllabi. Journals devoted to Political Theory are: Nomos; History and Theory; and Politica. There are, of course, many journals in which articles on Political Theory are a continuing feature, e.g., The Journal of the History of Ideas, Political Studies, etc. In the United States the main professional association is the Society for Political and Legal Philosophy.
  3. See the attached syllabi for Political Theory 213.
  4. See the attached syllabi for Political Theory 218 A, 218 B, 218 C.

Moreover, a large and growing number of students bear witness to the continuing vitality of Political Theory. At Berkeley, for example, there has been a steady, even spectacular, rise in interest in Political Theory. Graduate students have come from other institutions for the express purpose of studying Theory. Many undergraduates, particularly those in the Honors Program in Theory, have gone on to do graduate work at institutions such as Harvard, Chicago, and Oxford. Over the years, undergraduate enrollments have been very large, and it has been necessary to use numerous teaching assistants for the discussion sections and in many cases to restrict enrollment.(1) The undergraduate Honors course in Theory has consistently attracted a large number of applicants for the very few places available. For example, in the Spring of 1967, there were twice as many student applications for the Theory Honors Program than for any other field.

At the graduate level, interest in Political Theory is also strong, despite the comparative lack of special fellowships and other forms of subsidization. As the accompanying tables indicate, Political Theory has ranked consistently near the top in terms of graduate majors, despite a highly unfavorable student-teacher ratio.(2) During the past academic year, 1966-67, about half of the first-year graduate students chose to write their M.A. essay in Theory. Over the years, there have been numerous doctoral dissertations in the field, and many former students are now teaching Theory at major institutions. No difficulties have been encountered in placing our graduates, and every year brings numerous inquiries about possible candidates for positions at other institutions.

### III

Although the present proposal necessitates a separation from Political Science, it is important to bear in mind that during the past several years the Berkeley Department of Political Science has, in fact, been in a process of reorganization which makes separation, in some form, inevitable. In the Spring of 1966, for example, serious efforts were made to establish relatively independent fields within the Department. A few years previously, some members of the Department

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1. For course enrollments in undergraduate Theory courses, see Appendix.
  2. See Appendix.

had also explored the possibility of uniting with members from another Social Science department to form a new department. These movements have petered out for the reason suggested earlier: the Department has now largely settled on a specific direction, which is to bend its energies and resources towards establishing a scientific basis for the study of politics.

This decision means many things and implies many consequences. First and foremost, it means that what shall qualify as worthwhile questions, as significant research, and as proper methods will be interpreted in a certain way. By the same token, it means that certain questions, types of research, and methods are ruled out or not encouraged. Further, it means a different temporal outlook, one which is primarily concerned with current practices of inquiry and with what can be known by them. This outlook does not find it congenial or rewarding to inquire how current practices come to be known, what is surrendered by adopting them; much less is it concerned with keeping an important intellectual inheritance intact and vital, with continuously seeking to recover important things which have been lost, and with trying to draw from all of our intellectual resources, some of which lie outside the natural sciences, whatever may contribute to illuminating man's political condition.

The decision to concentrate on the scientific study of politics carries with it a different notion of theory. This is most clearly illustrated by the changes in the status of Political Theory during the past decade. Ten years ago, Political Theory was a required field on the graduate preliminary examinations for all students; at one point it was the sole required field. A few years later, this was altered so that the requirement might be satisfied by courses taken as an undergraduate or by two courses as a graduate student. At the present time, the Department is about to be presented with a proposal to abolish the Theory requirement altogether. These developments have been complemented by certain curricular changes which suggest the new definition of Theory that is to be implemented. Beginning in the Fall, 1967, the only required upper-division course for undergraduate majors will be a three-quarter course treating scientific methods in political inquiry, together with an examination of current research techniques. It is also anticipated that there will be an analogue to this course at the graduate level and that it will be required of all students.

These developments have been mentioned, not for the purpose of criticizing them, but to emphasize the clear redefinition of Political Science which is taking place. Political Science should be free to pursue that redefinition, but the older tradition of inquiry that defines Political Theory should be pursued as well. Without a separation into two departments, that would not be possible, since Political Theory and the new Political Science have increasingly different requirements on almost every academic question: criteria for the hiring of personnel, for the selection and advancement of students, for the shaping of graduate and undergraduate curricula, and so on. At present, we are trying to carry on two very different enterprises in a single department; though both may be worthwhile, the result is bound to be continuing and debilitating conflict.

Among the most important consequences, which have not been mentioned as yet, are those affecting the education of undergraduates and graduates, the composition of the curriculum, and the recruitment of personnel. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the requirements for degrees have come increasingly to emphasize the centrality of quantitative and behavioral methods. Students who are primarily interested in the theoretical, moral, and historical questions tend to be discouraged and to find themselves disadvantaged by the current system of rewards, particularly at the graduate level. The excessive enrollments in Political Theory courses over the years are some indication that a large student population, sufficiently qualified to gain admission by current standards, which are especially restrictive at the graduate level, is drawn to the study of politics by the hope of being able to investigate different, but equally legitimate, sorts of questions than those defined by the current direction of the Department.

Those who teach Political Theory have been severely hampered by the present arrangements. Their efforts to attract new personnel have been repeatedly rebuffed because the Department wishes to develop one kind of theory and discourage another. At the same time, the Theory contingent is hard-pressed to meet its obligations in the elementary courses and in the various specialized undergraduate programs established by the Department. For example, in the coming academic year 1967-68, no regular member of the Department is available to teach the lower division introductory course in Political Theory (Political Science 33). Similarly, at the present time, no personnel are available to teach in the final quarter of the undergraduate Honors Program in Theory. The shortage of personnel has made it practically impossible to develop new and diversified courses in Theory.

IV

The most obvious question raised by this proposal is, why separate Political Theory from the study of politics? The answer is that we are not proposing to divorce the two, but to establish conditions which will allow the study of politics to be carried on by asking different questions and by employing different academic skills. The study of politics, it should be noted, is not currently the recognized monopoly of the Political Science Department. It is being studied in numerous courses and from different points of view in the Departments of History, Sociology, and Anthropology.

As the earlier pages suggest, the present proposal seeks to create a new blend of skills, one which will encourage students to undertake work in fields other than those currently favored by Political Science. They will be expected to take considerable work in History and Philosophy primarily; but they will also be urged to acquaint themselves with the forms of theory being developed in Sociology and Anthropology. In this respect, we believe that a new and exciting venture can be launched at Berkeley, one which should have a considerable impact on education elsewhere. What this proposal comes down to is an effort to enlist a variety of theoretical perspectives and intellectual resources in the cause of inquiring into the human significance of politics.



## UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Political Theory is concerned with the understanding of human political and social life, ways of conceiving and thinking broadly and systematically about man in relation to his political association or community. The study of Political Theory entails mastery of a tradition of discourse: a body of literature, a set of continuing concerns, some traditional modes of addressing them. It also entails the ability to relate these abstract concepts and theories to the realities of human political life, and this tradition to the contemporary world.

The Department of Political Theory's undergraduate course offerings center on a three-quarter, upper-division course sequence on the History of Political Thought, from Ancient Greece through the Nineteenth Century. This course is based on reading in primary source materials, includes both lectures and discussion sections, and makes use of teaching assistants. Students majoring in Political Theory are required to take this course in their Junior year, but it is also open to non-majors of upper-division standing.

The Department does not offer a general, introductory lower-division course. Prospective majors are required, in the second or third quarter of their Sophomore year, to take a one-quarter, four-unit Introduction to Political Theory. This course is open only to prospective majors. It is taught in small sections on a seminar basis, by Departmental faculty and some advanced graduate students. Concentrating on some one significant work of political theory, the course is designed to prepare prospective majors for the kind of abstract, theoretical reading, discussion and writing that will be required of them in subsequent courses in the Department. It is the Department's only lower-division course offering. Prospective majors are expected to acquire, during their Freshman and Sophomore years, a grounding in related fields: history, philosophy, or political or social science. A year of European history is required.

In addition to the Sophomore Introduction for majors and the core History of Political Theory, the Department offers a variety of more advanced one-and-two-quarter courses, of two basic kinds. The first are intensive historical courses, treating the political thought of some period or country in greater detail (for instance, American Political Thought), and using secondary commentaries in addition to primary sources. The second kind of courses focus on a substantive problem, concept or issue, such as Pluralism, The Technological Society, The Role of Concepts in Political Theory, or Politics and Education. A student majoring in Political Theory will take at least two quarters of work in historical courses, and at least two quarters

of work in substantive courses. He will begin the substantive courses no earlier than the last quarter of his Junior year, which is to say, after he has completed at least two quarters of History of Political Thought.

The Department also offers a two-quarter Senior Honors Course, which includes the writing of a senior honors thesis.

In addition to the required course-work in the Department, students majoring in Political Theory will consult with a Departmental advisor to work out a program of study in several related fields, designed to provide a thorough grounding in factual, empirical knowledge about some particular country or period--its politics, society, history and culture.

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN POLITICAL THEORY - DRAFT

I. INTENTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS.

The graduate program is designed to achieve a number of goals. The student must gain a general command of the entire subject matter and methods of political theory. He should acquire an extensive knowledge of the history of political theories so that he can appreciate what it means to say that there is a tradition of theory, and so that he can see how theories change and grow in response both to the demands of the tradition and to the demands of political reality. He must learn what a theory is - the elements of theory, how these elements are put together, the intentions of theory. He must learn how to appraise theories by the light of various criteria, and he must gain an excellent command of the central vocabulary and the enduring problems around which political theory grows. He must learn what political theorists have meant by explanation and understanding, and how theory's ways of understanding and explaining compare and contrast with other ways. He must learn how political theory relates to other disciplines and to political life. In summary, the student must gain a command of the history of theory and of the theory of theory.

In addition, the student should become a master of selected, specialized aspects or branches of theory. These will be described below. He must also learn how to teach political theory and how to do professional scholarly work in the field. The ultimate goal, then, has an unchallengable command of certain branches of the field, who can teach, and who can both make his own scholarly contributions and judge the contributions of others. *Some things missing*

Formal course requirements will be few. In principle, the Ph.D. degree will be understood as a reading - conversation - examination - dissertation degree. There must be great flexibility in individual programs. Instead of numerous course requirements, there will be close faculty collaboration with students in small seminars, in tutorials, and in the designing and supervising of individual projects. Hence, the student-faculty ratio must be kept low, perhaps around 6 to 1. There will be no separate M.A. program as such, though, as described below, it will be possible for students to complete the requirements for an M.A., and to go no farther. But we are not too eager to offer the M.A. as a consolation prize for those who cannot complete the Ph.D.

## II. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION.

Applicants should have a good liberal arts - social science background. the more history, philosophy, literature, and social science, the better. The student should major in one of the social sciences, preferably political science, or in philosophy or history. Undergraduate work should include substantial work in political and social theory. Backgrounds other than these do not disqualify the person, but these are the best. The grade record must meet Graduate Division standards, and the letters must indicate that the student is very good, and that he has a capacity for theory.

## III. CURRICULUM.

Students should be able to complete all work for the Ph.D. in four to five years. The comprehensive examination should be taken no later than the end of the third year. We hope that often it will be taken earlier than that.

There will be no specific M.A. program. though there will be a fairly sharp distinction between the first year and the following years, and the work of the first year will be so designed that the student could complete formal requirements for the M.A. within a fairly short time after the first year, if the faculty decides that that is what the student should do.

First Year. The student's main task is to develop a sound, general knowledge of the history of political theories, and a sense of the range and variety of theory. This, then, is a preliminary year, in one sense almost a preparation year. Students will be strengthening their knowledge of the history of theory, filling in deficiencies in their backgrounds, and getting a sense of what they want to specialize in. Each student's program will be worked out in consultation with at least one adviser, and hopefully two. The student will be advised to take such historical courses as are indicated to be necessary for him. He will also take each quarter one tutorial or very small group reading - discussion course in the historical and country materials. These proseminars will meet **each** week, and each student will present a few short papers each quarter. The student will take his proseminar with a different faculty member each quarter.

Each year the faculty will set a brief list of books (3 or 4) which all first year students will try to master, and which will provide the foundation for an oral examination. In preparation for the oral, the student will propose, in writing, the topics or problems that he thinks are most important in those books. This paper will stand as the "agenda" for the oral examination. The oral will run about 1 1/2 hours and at least two faculty members will attend. The object of the oral is not to test the student's mastery of a few books, but to see how he copes with theoretical subjects, and to get a sense of his intellectual style and ability.

After that, the student's entire record will be evaluated by the department, and a judgement made concerning his general quality and ability to do graduate work.

Second and Third Years. During these years the student will work on a curriculum developed in close consultation with his advisers. Each student must meet the following requirements:

1. The student will develop two Major Theory Fields. One of these will be historical, or will be theory in some country or region, also studied in developmental sequence. (e.g. classical political theory; political theory in the 17th century; 19th century; recent and contemporary theory; American political theory; political theory in England; Asian political theory). The other Major Theory Field will center around a Problem or Topic. Here the student may either do an important substantive topic (e.g., theory of constitutionalism, or of democracy, or of marxism, or of revolution, or of action, or of liberty, or of participation, etc.), or he may prepare a field around the relations between political theory and some other discipline or subject matter (e.g., political theory and ethics, or psychology, or language, or epistemology, or phenomenology, or literature, etc.). Each student must take at least one two-quarter tutorial each of his Major Theory Fields, and he must prepare at least one substantial paper in each Field. He will, in addition, read systematically, and take such additional seminars and courses as he and his advisers see fit. His preparation might include field work and travel.

2. The student will also prepare an Empirical Field designed in relation to one or both of his Major Theory Fields. For example, if American theory is one of his fields, he will here study American history and literature, economics and politics, etc. Or if Constitutionalism is one of his fields, he will study the origins and developments of legal systems, legislative assemblies, bills of rights and powers, administrative rulemaking, etc.). Here too the student's program might include field work.

3. Each student will also develop an Outside Theory Field. We want each student to become competent in some form or mode of theory other than political theory. Some examples: philosophy of science, empirical political theory, philosophy of history, theory of economic development, game theory, etc. The specific definition of the Outside Field will be made by the student and his advisers.

#### IV. TEACHING

Every student should have some teaching experience as part of his degree work. First year graduate students will not teach. Second year students will serve, under supervision, as tutors in the introductory undergraduate course for majors described in the Undergraduate Program. Second and third year students will work as Teaching Assistants in various undergraduate courses. Each third year student will also give

two public lectures, either in his Major Theory Fields, or on his dissertation subject. These lectures will be presented in a non-credit course, they will be publicly announced, and the faculty will consider it a duty to attend them.

#### V. COLLOQUIM.

The department hopes to have each year a Theory Colloquim for advanced students in which many members of the faculty would also participate. In some years this Colloquim would be conducted by a distinguished visitor. Sometimes it would be conducted by a member of another department along with members of the theory department. Sometimes it would be organized as a forum for the presentation and criticism of faculty and student research.

#### VI. FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

We hope to make foreign language training an integral part of the student's Major Theory Fields work. Obviously, a student would choose his foreign language by reference to his major interests in theory. But, more than that, we hope to make language training go right along with substantive work. We are exploring the possibility of having our students take reading courses in theory materials in the language of composition with members of foreign language departments. Members of the theory department will be able to offer this kind of work in certain languages (e.g., French, German, Latin, Spanish).

#### VII. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION.

The comprehensive exam will take place ordinarily at the end of the third year. The exam will be oral, and will cover both the student's Major Fields and his Outside Field. At least one member of the examining committee must be from outside the Department.