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DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

**Project Title:** The Political Theory of Hannah Arendt: The Problem of Evil and the Origins of Totalitarianism

**Institution:** San Diego State University

**Project Director:** Kathleen Jones

**Grant Program:** Summer Seminars and Institutes for School Teachers

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# **The Political Theory of Hannah Arendt: The Problem of Evil and the Origins of Totalitarianism**

Proposal for Five Week 2014 Summer Seminar for Secondary School Teachers

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Seminar Location: Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson

## **PROPOSED TEXTS:**

Arendt, Hannah, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Penguin, 1963)

Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ((1951) new edition, Schocken Books, 2004).

Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago, 1958)

Arendt, Hannah. Selected Supplemental Readings, including “Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship,” “The Crisis in Education,” and “Reflections on Little Rock.”

Young-Bruehl, Elizabeth, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (second edition, Yale University Press, 2004) (Note: Recommended Reading)

## **Intellectual Rationale**

During this five-week seminar we will study intensively several key works by the political theorist, Hannah Arendt. These works shed light on the problem of evil and the use of terror in the contemporary age, and provide a philosophical perspective on current debates about the use of violence to settle political conflicts, and about the conditions of democracy and the scope and importance of human rights. Based on the success of my six previous seminars on Arendt with schoolteachers, who responded powerfully to the relevance of Arendt to their own thinking and teaching, I propose to repeat the seminar in 2014 with a few modifications, elaborated below.

A brilliant political philosopher, who refused to call herself a philosopher, a woman who never considered her sex an obstacle in her life, a Jew who was called anti-Semitic for her controversial portrait of Adolf Eichmann as a “thoughtless,” “terrifyingly normal” person, a rigorous thinker who wrote passionately about hatred and love, Hannah Arendt tackled some of the thorniest moral and political questions of modern times. Her controversial positions on violence, politics, moral judgment and the role of forgiveness and love in human affairs made

her as well known in literary and political circles for her brave, powerful prose, as she was among academicians for her philosophical argumentation. In her friendship circle were some of the leading literary and cultural lights of the twentieth century, including Mary McCarthy, Martin Heidegger (who was her lover when she was his student), Karl Jaspers, J. Glenn Gray, Alfred Kazin, Robert Lowell, and W.H.Auden.

Called the “most original and profound...political theoretician of our times” for her work on totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt, perhaps more than any other modern thinker, helps us understand the politics of terror and confront the awful reality that ordinary people can commit atrocities against one another. In the post-9/11 world, Arendt’s wisdom seems more germane than ever. The proposed seminar will take timely advantage of the most recent scholarship on Arendt, situating it and our reading of several of her key texts within the context of the extensive renewed scholarly and popular interest in her work.

As the words “evil” and “terror” continue to circulate in popular discourse about current events, references to Hannah Arendt in the media and in scholarly venues have increased substantially. In the last few years, the *New York Times* reported on several academic studies about the conditions leading some people to torture others, citing a Stanford University study of human behavior which used Arendt’s phrase “banality of evil” to explain psychologists’ disturbing findings that under conditions simulating a prison, ordinary students could be turned into sadistic guards within a matter of days. During 2006, the centennial of her birth, conferences around the world, including at Bard College, celebrated her work, underscoring the continued significance of this controversial thinker. In March 2007, reviewing the most recent Arendt scholarship, Jeremy Waldron wrote a major essay in the *New York Review of Books* on Arendt’s continuing relevance. In 2012, there were four major panels on Arendt’s work at the annual

meeting of the American Political Science Association and three at the MLA meetings. In addition, 2013 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, an event that will be commemorated with a major essay on Arendt in the *American Scholar* by Daniel Maier-Katkin, whom I have invited as a guest speaker for my 2014 seminar. Finally, the now annual Bard College conference on Arendt draws hundreds of people from around the country, including area schools, to a major symposium discussing the continued relevance of Arendt's work.

Seminar colleagues will benefit intellectually from reading Arendt in historical context, examining what motivated her exploration of salient political and moral issues, such as the problem of evil, the meaning of human plurality and diversity, and the use of terror and violence by both state and non-state actors. Yet her work transcends its own historical boundaries and resonates today as these same issues emerge in discussions in history, social studies, and literature classes in schools. And teachers also observe them operating in the social dynamics of insider/outsider evident in informal interactions among students, and between students and staff, on many contemporary school campuses. As I found in my previous seminars, studying Arendt with a group of colleagues from different school backgrounds can provide a controlled environment for thoughtful consideration of how to encourage critical thinking before acting on complex issues. Each year I have directed these seminars, participants have noted how our conversations became Arendtean experiments in the joys and pitfalls of attempting dialogue under what Hannah Arendt called "the human condition of plurality". I continue to correspond extensively with past summer scholars about the seminar's continued relevance to their pedagogical and moral reflections. For instance, one of the participants from 2006 became inspired by Arendt concept of "plurality" to develop an anti-bullying campaign, which he has

been presenting at various schools in the New York City area. Another participant from 2008, currently on sabbatical, is writing an article for publication based on her research from that year.

Each of the three central texts chosen for this seminar represents distinct, yet interwoven, aspects of Arendt's reflections on what she called the "human condition of plurality." Each explores the philosophical implications of different crises generated by social conflicts in the twentieth century. Read together they repay the patient twenty-first century reader of these difficult works with the rewards of being challenged to examine the complex historical roots of totalitarianism in the West and the persistence of tensions between freedom and equality even in democratic societies.

Most of my previous participants had little background in political theory or philosophy. Yet, they dove into these texts energetically and were rewarded with a deep understanding of the complexity of Arendt's ideas. Major Arendt scholars, who have given guest presentations, commented on the sophistication these schoolteachers evidenced both in the questions they raised and levels of discussion achieved, noting that dialogue often exceeded even their best graduate seminars. I credit their assessment to the seriousness with which participants approached the subject. Summer scholars commented especially favorably on having had the benefit of many weeks to immerse themselves in the material.

Published more than fifty years ago, *The Origins of Totalitarianism (OT)* is a dense book in which Arendt sought to "discover the hidden mechanics by which all the traditional elements of our political and spiritual world [had been] dissolved." In a lecture she gave after the book's publication she explained she had not intended to provide an elaboration of historical causes but rather to identify the peculiar "fixed and definite forms" into which various elements of western political theories and practices had crystallized in the "event" of totalitarianism. An historical

event, Arendt contended, “illuminates its own past, but it can never be deduced from it.” To argue that history could be reduced to a set of effects following automatically from definite causes would imply that the past could not have been avoided; Arendt maintained consistently that the creation of the death camps was an “event that should never have been allowed to happen.” If the death camps themselves were frightening, the insights Arendt drew from her study of them were equally chilling—she claimed they were neither the result of circumstances beyond human control, nor of history’s inexorable march, but happened because of the concerted failure of ordinary people to act to stop them.

Totalitarianism represented what she called the “crystallization” of elements of racism and conquest, which were present in European thought as early as the eighteenth century, but were exacerbated by the disintegration of the nation-state system following World War I. In *OT*, Arendt painted an enormous canvas of the political and social history of modern Europe in broad, bold strokes to bring into relief patterns of interaction among those elements. She showed how racism and imperialism combined to erode further the principles of a common humanity--or, more precisely, to expose the nationalistic underpinnings of theories of human rights--through the creation of “laws of exception” or separate sets of rights for stateless peoples, which were codified in the post-WW I peace treaties known as the Minority Treaties. She identified the emergence of mass movements as forms of “negative solidarity” developing out of what she termed the “breakdown of the class system,” a system in which the unbridled private accumulation of wealth already had supplanted political action, and contended that such movements rested on the foundation of totalitarianism in majority consensus.

That Arendt refused to see totalitarianism as the necessary outcome of the dissolution of traditional social systems and located its rise to power in the agreement or support of the masses

was among the more troubling features of her philosophy. Careful consideration of the logic of her argument and the important, though provocative, perspective it sheds on present political dilemmas and theories of history will be the focus of our discussions of this complicated book.

Arendt connected the atrophy of human rights and the emergence of “the masses” to the creation of entirely new political institutions and instruments. Through terror, which annihilated positive law, and manipulation of the “recipes of ideology,” which detached thinking from experience, Arendt argued that totalitarian governments had invented unprecedented ways to bind people together so tightly with a “band of iron . . . that it is as though their plurality had disappeared into One Man of gigantic dimensions.” Terror eliminates “the very source of freedom which is given with the fact of the birth of man and resides in his capacity to make a new beginning. In the iron band of terror, which destroys the plurality of men and makes out of many the One who unfailingly will act as though he himself were part of the course of nature or history a device has been found not only to liberate the historical and natural forces, but to accelerate them to a speed they would never reach if left to themselves.”

What is especially instructive for the contemporary reader of *OT* is the fact that Arendt located the origins of terror and ideology within Western, democratic societies. She urged reading the record of what she then called the “truly radical nature of Evil” in totalitarianism as a cautionary tale about the “subterranean stream of *Western* history” (emphasis added). Arendt’s story of the hidden underbelly of western history provides a controversial counterpoint for critical thinking about the apparently prevalent contemporary identification of terrorism with non-western societies. And, as I discovered in my previous Arendt seminars, her identification of the holocaust as a unique and unprecedented event is a particularly thorny dimension of her thinking. What she means by this, in light of both the history of slavery in the world and earlier

experiences with mass extermination, requires careful consideration. Previously, participants became involved both in heated discussion and extensive research about parallels between slavery and the Holocaust.

Arendt identified the fact of our birth as the source of our freedom and was unique among modern philosophers for contending that “natality,” not mortality, was the origin of politics. Every birth signaled the chance that something new had come into being, and offered all of us already here the opportunity to live with the new and the strange. She called this opportunity the human condition of “plurality”--the fact that every human born is equally human, but in a unique way. In *The Human Condition (HC)* she explored “natality” and “plurality.” Arendt considered plurality to be a political opportunity to learn how to live as “a distinct and unique being among equals.” Under current conditions of globalization, on what foundation can we secure the “human condition of plurality”? Both *OT* and *HC* can provide the basis for stimulating discussion about, for example, how to imagine political solutions to the problem of displaced peoples and the intertwined problems of racial and gender inequalities.

*HC* is the text in which Arendt attempted a philosophy of “the political” and distinguished the activities of politics (action), from the activities of both labor (survival) and work (fabrication). She considered each of these activities essentially human ways to engage with “the things of this world” or partake in what she called the *vita activa*, but warned about what might happen if politics came to be modeled exclusively either on the activity of labor (the realm of necessity, consumption; activity of *animal laborans*) or work (the realm of instrumentality, fabrication; activity of *homo faber*).

*HC* is a commentary on the human condition “from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears.” In this book, Arendt proposed to “think what we are

doing.” Responding to what she called the modern reversal of the high regard with which thought, or the *vita contemplativa*, had been held by the ancients, she reflected on the consequences of the assertion of life itself “as the ultimate point of reference in the modern age” and issued a warning about what happened when living, or the activity of *animal laborans*, overshadowed all other forms of human activity. “It is quite conceivable” she wrote, “that the modern age—which began with an unprecedented and promising outburst of human activity—may end in the deadliest, most sterile passivity history has ever known.”

At once a critique of mass or consumer society and of utilitarianism as an ethical principle, HC provides a rich, though complicated, theory of politics as “action in concert with others” in the face of the uncertainty, frailty, pain, and complexity of human affairs. Can politics solve our most pressing social problems? Arendt’s answers are equivocal at best. Yet, read in the context of some current efforts to retreat from politics into a more predictable and reliable system of social control—whether technological, organizational, or religious—Arendt’s theories remain provocatively salient. Her discussions of the political implications of forgiveness and promises as modes of trust- and respect-building are examples of the unusual reach of her philosophy.

*Eichmann in Jerusalem (EiJ)* is perhaps the most disconcerting of the three Arendt texts we will examine. A haunting book originally commissioned as a series of articles written for *The New Yorker*, *EiJ* became a meditation on morality. Arendt wrote it while she reflected on attending the Israeli trial of Nazi deportation coordinator Adolf Eichmann. In it she reached disturbing conclusions about who bore responsibility for the Final Solution.

Sitting in that Jerusalem courtroom, Arendt said she was struck by an odd and disturbing thought---that the evil reflected in Eichmann’s crimes, the atrocities against humanity he

committed, was the product neither of a madman nor a wicked man nor a monster, but an ordinary, normal human who had acted *without thought*. To Arendt, Eichmann was terrifying because he was “thoughtless.” The real trouble, she said, was there were so many like him, terrifying normal people who made evil banal. She judged even members of the Jewish Council unfavorably because they had cooperated by giving names of Jews to the Nazis.

The banality of evil? Jews guilty? She may be Jewish, her critics said, but she sounds anti-Semitic. The controversy surrounding the 1963 publication of *EiJ* raged for many years and the wisdom of Arendt’s tone and conclusions continue to be debated. Yet, the importance of what she wrote about the problem of evil warrants consideration, especially in light of the ease with which different groups target others for vilification today. A 2009 essay in *The New Yorker* about the relevance of Arendt’s thinking to today’s discussions of evil quoted Croatian novelist Slavenka Drakulić’s book, *They Would Never Hurt a Fly* (titled after a phrase of Arendt’s): “The more you realize that war criminals might be ordinary people, the more afraid you become.”

In *EiJ*, Arendt painted a compelling portrait of what horrors can happen when we lose the ability to think. Without thinking, she said, we become quite literally homeless because we imagine both the strangers sitting next to us and even our kin to have become unbearably threatening. These “others,” may become as much afraid of us as we are of them. And when that happens, it becomes possible for any one of us to do awful things. But, Arendt said, it is also possible for anyone to act courageously to prevent harm to others and *EiJ* presents examples of groups and individuals who did so. The book is especially pertinent to educators who want to address what processes lead to ostracism and intolerance within and outside the classroom, and explore its embedded question about any individual’s ability and responsibility to act to prevent violations of rights.

Throughout Arendt's writing, but especially given the reception she experienced publishing *EiJ*, the courage of her conviction is evident. Hannah Arendt took great risks to speak what she considered to be truths. She lost friends and made enemies. Studying her works is an educational and intellectual adventure as much because of the process of thought displayed as because of the literal substance of the conclusions.

### **Project Content and Implementation**

The seminar will meet for five weeks, five days per week. Each session will last three or four hours (afternoons). In all years, participants commented favorably on the importance of the extended study experience and emphasized how it repaid them in many ways, both personally and professionally. Their continued correspondence with me, and submission of materials for my web site, has demonstrated how valuable the seminar has been and makes me eager to direct again in 2014.

Seminar meetings will be designed to facilitate discussion among colleagues about the primary texts, and a few selected secondary readings on related topics, in light of central questions raised by the readings. Participants will be expected to read the core texts carefully, and to explore critically the issues addressed in the seminar within a setting that encourages the exchange of ideas among peers respectful of one another's differences of background, style, and interest. The only exception to this format will be the introductory and first few substantive meetings, and the occasions when invited guest scholars will lead more formal discussions.

To facilitate discussions, I will begin each day by providing a quote or a few quotes for the group to write on in fixed time and use these writings to lead into expanded dialogue. Establishing dialogue with a text through daily writing keeps the conversation going. Previous participants responded positively to this method of organization and focus. Nonetheless, in

recognition of the difficulty that some participants have had grasping the organization of Arendt's argument, her unusual approach to historical analysis in *OT*, and her unconventional use of certain concepts in *HC*, I intend to provide an overview of key methods and concepts at the outset of our engagement with each of the three key texts.

In the past, I assigned summer scholars by lottery to small sub-groups whose task was to lead the seminar discussion of assigned readings for one day. This has proved too difficult a task for the summer scholars to undertake while also trying to keep up with the heavy reading schedule and planning a required presentation on their own research (see below). Following the suggestion of one of the summer scholars, I revised my approach and now assign the sub-groups the narrower task of crafting several questions about the reading, either for further explanation or for clarification, and connect these to a current event to which the group might apply Arendt's ideas. I may also invite summer scholars to "guest blog" on my expanded web site at least once during the summer on topics related to discussions as an additional way to keep everyone engaged with the material itself.

Experience has taught me the importance of an early emphasis on close reading, accompanied by focused discussions on the texts themselves are the best ways to create and encourage an atmosphere of collegiality. In previous years, this proved an appropriate pedagogical strategy, especially as tensions arose regarding alternative interpretations of the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust, the nature of contemporary inequality, and patterns of privilege. Participants commented that our dialogue, though heated, remained intellectually stimulating and collegial.

Having had the experience four times (other than the six on Arendt) of directing seminars for secondary school teachers on different political theory texts (NEH SST seminars on Hobbes,

Locke, Rousseau and Wollstonecraft in 1988, 1989, 1992, and 1994), I am well aware of the challenge to connect our close reading of Arendt's works to participants' intellectual and professional development. Yet, I have found that a well-organized seminar encouraging dialogue on common texts leads teachers naturally to reflect on both the personal and professional implications of such study. In each of the Arendt seminars I have directed, participants have produced unique curricular, pedagogical and scholarly/creative works, including a video on Japanese internment camps, a wiki space for Arendt-relevant resources, an artistic exhibition, memoirs and personal essays, a unit on bullying for use in sixth grade curriculum, a curriculum unit on immigration and statelessness, a web site on Holocaust studies, a play on "Thinking" in the life and work of Arendt, a collaborative presentation on the historical reception of Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and much more. Based on my past experience with this topic, teachers engaged naturally with this kind of curricular/pedagogical/scholarly creativity, translating Arendt's works into topics on responsibility and judgment, on the interpretation of history, and on the significance of the Holocaust into either curricular or research projects they used subsequently in their classrooms.

Correspondence with them over the years about their continued development of these materials convinces me that although the material might be considered "graduate level", teachers are starved for this kind of rigorous intellectual activity and assist one another with finding ways to make it relevant to their professional development. The workshop on Writing and Thinking, which Celia Bland will again direct (described below) gives the scholars additional pedagogical tools that they have found useful. Roger Berkowitz's presentation in particular takes them through a strategy for close reading of *The Human Condition* which many scholars last year singled out for its usefulness as an exercise they could undertake in their classrooms. In fact, at

this writing, I am planning a Skype-facilitated dialogue with seniors from the classroom of one of my 2011 participants, who assigned students in his IB European History class excerpts from the Arendt texts we studied as part of the curriculum he developed for teaching about totalitarianism.

After an introduction to seminar process, I will outline details about Arendt's life and her contemporary relevance. (In my Dear Colleague letter, I will recommend that participants read Elizabeth Young-Bruehl's biography of Arendt as preparation for our work). Turning to the primary texts, we will begin with *Eichmann*, move to *OT* and end with *HC*. My approach to the material is to start with the most controversial, yet most accessible of HA's works, engaging participants in a way most likely to facilitate discussion regardless of familiarity with history or philosophy. Next we will take up *OT*, the most historical and dense of the three books, finishing with *HC*, the most "philosophical." During the seminar, I will include occasional secondary and additional primary readings to amplify key points.

In the Appendix, I have provided a detailed outline of the topics to guide our reading and discussions. Each text will be taken up as an opportunity to explore its central arguments within the historical context and chronology of Arendt's body of work, considering ways that it complements or contradicts her central claims about the problem of evil, the uses of terror and the origins of totalitarianism. *Eichmann* sets the stage for consideration of Arendt's understanding of evil. Who commits atrocities and how shall we judge them? What happens when the harm crimes caused victims becomes the focus of a trial instead of the crimes themselves? Does this turn a trial into a show or political trial? Under what conditions and in what ways can people respond to oppression? These are some of the questions we will take up and they will lead us backward to Arendt's earlier work, *OT*. How does Arendt understand

history and how does this connect to her understanding of politics? What role does she think racism played in the evolution of the nation-state system in modern Europe? What is the “right to have rights”? How are terror and ideology used in the development of totalitarian systems? What does Arendt mean by the totalitarian reduction of human life to a natural process controlled by the state? We will use these guiding questions to move through *OT* and into *HC*, a book in which, as Mary Dietz argued in *Turning Operations*, the Holocaust acts as palpable, yet unspoken background. As we move into *HC*, we will explore Arendt’s political theory most explicitly and consider what she means by the idea of politics as the human condition of plurality and our capacity to be spontaneous and to act in concert with others.

In addition, this year I am again requesting an amount to cover the cost of one workshop led by Bard faculty Celia Bland, who is affiliated with Bard’s MAT teacher-training program, and who developed excellent workshops for my 2011 summer scholars. Based on existing Bard programs called *Writing to Learn* and *Writing to Read*, Ms. Bland designs a text-specific workshop in which the genre and problems addressed by the Arendt texts suggest the most useful writing practices and generates a discussion about how to develop close reading skills through writing. Participants utilize excerpts from *EiJ* to explore inventive writing strategies that can help their students gain a better understanding of complex ideas and literary texts. Last year we offered two workshops outside regular seminar meetings, but the summer scholars found that too demanding a schedule, given other seminar obligations.

To engage participants in close reading and critical discussion useful to their professional development, I will invite them to produce a critical essay on some contemporary issue, or to plan a presentation on a project that explores an issue, using methods and materials from several disciplines. For instance, debates, dramatic presentations, film, literature and other sources

exploring the topics covered in the seminar can be used to create a multi-disciplinary scholarly exploration of the relevance of Arendt to contemporary issues. Group projects will be encouraged.

In order to facilitate collegiality, I will meet with each participant at least once early in the seminar to discuss general interests in the seminar topics, and provide any personal assistance with seminar matters that may be needed. In addition, I will be available every day for consultation with individual colleagues. Several optional group activities will be planned outside seminar meetings so that participants may get to know one another better. Nonetheless, the seminar's purpose and emphasis is on our scholarly work.

### **Project faculty and Staff**

The proposed seminar, and my preparation for it, relates directly to my ongoing research and teaching interests. My previous experience with the SSST program, as well as my continued communication with participants from those summers, from the earliest seminars I directed in the 80s and 90s until now, and the inspiring effect these seminars have had on my own scholarship contributes to my motivation to offer this seminar again.

Most of my scholarly research and publications have focused on modern political theory. I taught about the history and discourse of political theory for more than thirty years, including the works of Hannah Arendt at the graduate and undergraduate levels in both general survey courses and special seminars at both SDSU and as a visiting professor at UCSD.

My publications on Arendt have a long trajectory. I explored the meaning of fundamental political concepts such as authority, democracy and citizenship, using the "woman question" to focus this inquiry, in *Compassionate Authority: Democracy and the Representation of Women*. In one chapter of that book I analyzed the contributions of Hannah Arendt to the study of

authority and published a separate chapter on its themes, “What is Authority’s Gender?” in *Revisioning the Political*, edited by Hirschmann and DiStefano. In *Living Between Danger and Love: The Limits of Choice*, a memoir I wrote about the impact the murder of one of my students and her boyfriend’s conviction for that crime had on my thinking about responsibility, I used *Eichmann* to explore how questions of violence and evil came up in my own life. Since then, my new book, *Diving for Pearls: A Thinking Journey with Hannah Arendt*, inspired by Arendt, has been submitted to several publication venues. Deliberately departing from Arendt’s resistance to introspective, autobiographical writing, this book charts a course through themes from Arendt’s life and work of Hannah Arendt into my own, exploring questions of responsibility and forgiveness. While writing this new book, I researched primary sources in the Arendt archives at the Library of Congress, in the Ettinger archives at the Schlesinger Library (Harvard), in the Young-Bruehl archives at Wesleyan University, and also explored the extensive secondary scholarly literature on her. Finally, I am working on a documentary on the life and work of Hannah Arendt with the award-winning filmmaker, Lilly Rivlin. Although Margarethe von Trotta’s feature-length film, *Hannah Arendt*, premiered in 2012, our documentary will take a more expansive, non-fictional look at Arendt’s life and work.

Planning for 2014, I have invited two prominent scholars to be guest lecturers at the summer seminar, which will provide very different perspectives on Arendt. Professor Daniel Maier-Katkin (Florida State University), author of the most recent intellectual biography on Arendt, *Stranger from Abroad*, will lecture on the reception of Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Professor Roger Berkowitz, Bard faculty member and academic director of the Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and the Humanities at Bard, will present on themes in Arendt’s *The Human Condition*.

Dr. Simone Arias, who has administered the Arendt seminars since 2008, will assist me, providing clerical and administrative supports, including responding to inquiries from prospective participants, and processing applications for review, working with Bard staff to arrange Visiting Scholar status and library privileges for participants, and to provide information on local activities while she is in residence at Bard during the summer. A San Diego teacher and former participant (2006), Dr. Arias brings much more than administrative talent to the position. As an experienced teacher, she attended various professional meetings and generated considerable enthusiasm among teachers, which has been repaid in inquiries about the seminar in years past.

### **Participant Selection**

To select participants I will invite one of my former participants to join a colleague and me on a committee. We will each read all applications and prepare rankings, discussing them in a special selection committee meeting. Since I live now in the UK, and find it preferable to discuss applications in a face-to-face meeting, I have requested a small amount in the budget to finance travel in late March from my home to the committee meeting on the east coast. I will also visit Bard on that occasion to insure that all aspects of seminar preparation, especially housing, are in order.

No special background beyond an interest in the subject is required for participation in the seminar, but I will be interested in balancing regional representation, years of educational experience, and educational background in the composition of the seminar. My aim will be to match the diversity of participants' backgrounds I have achieved in previous seminars.

### **Professional Development**

In the past, my seminar participants received a document from me acknowledging the

graduate credit equivalent of their work in the seminar and were able to receive 5 units of credit at a low cost via SDSU. I will again offer this option.

This year, I again request funding for dissemination, which I have previously received in my NEH grants, allowing several participants selected by a peer review committee to present their research at a professional meeting (TBD) and showcase NEH projects. For example, my 2009 grant enabled several participants to attend NCTE and NCTG meetings where they presented their research and served as ambassadors for NEH programs. In 2011, funds allowed four participants and myself to attend the NAME conference in Chicago and present on their seminar projects. In 2012, two participants attended two different professional meetings—the ISSS meetings in Orlando and a regional social studies conference in Florida. Although I know many previous participants have continued to collaborate informally on lesson plans and share research, I believe this budget item (under Services) for 2014 participants will provide an excellent opportunity for further professional development for participants and for marketing and dissemination of NEH work.

### **Institutional Context**

I chose to locate this seminar again at Bard College, home to the Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and the Humanities, an increasingly important destination for scholars and writers interested in Arendt. In conjunction with Bard's Stevenson Library, the Center holds critical resources for Arendt scholars, notably the entire collection of Arendt's personal library, which she bequeathed to Bard. (Both Hannah Arendt and her husband, Heinrich Blucher, who taught at Bard for many years, are buried on the Bard grounds. Each year, on the occasion of Blucher's death until hers, Arendt visited the Bard cemetery to honor his memory, sitting on a bench, still there, that she had placed near the plot). Jeffrey Katz, Executive Director of the Center and Dean

of Information Services at Bard, will orient participants to the collection, to which they will have access as Visiting Scholars. He has proposed a demonstration of marginalia in key works Arendt used while writing the texts seminar participants will be studying, enabling seminar members to explore the workings of Arendt's mind. In addition, Bard's relative proximity to the New School for Social Research allows summer scholars who take the train into New York City access to the complete Library of Congress digital files of Arendt's collected papers, otherwise available only in abbreviated form. As in the past, Prof. Roger Berkowitz, Academic Director of the Arendt Center at Bard, will help liaise between Bard and me during the grant's planning and implementation. He also will give a lecture to the seminar on his work on Arendt. These resources, along with the presence of other fellows at the Center, make Bard an ideal location for the Arendt seminar.

In 2011, the first time I held the seminar at Bard we ran into difficulties with housing. I forwarded all complaints from participants' evaluations to Bard's Housing Services and they addressed the concerns in 2012 by hiring a new maintenance service and providing heightened scrutiny of the facilities. We had no complaints about housing in 2012 and I feel confident about securing satisfactory housing for summer scholars in 2014.

I have been assured of the availability of adequate Bard housing for participants at reasonable rates (about \$350 per week). The dorms, though Spartan, have Internet capacity, a laundry, an equipped kitchen, and other amenities. For a small supplement, participants can choose a flexible meal plan. We also will have access to a full kitchen in the Mary McCarthy House, where the Arendt Center is housed, and can use those facilities for group dinners and social gatherings. If participants require it, we can also locate apartments and houses for rental. I will ensure that prospective off-campus rental units are personally inspected and advise

participants. Nonetheless, I plan to encourage participants to choose the more collegial option of on-campus housing, which all participants (except two who came with families) chose in 2012.

I am confident my colleagues will find their visit to Bard productive and enriching in many ways. The continued collaboration with Bard's MAT program and Institute for Writing and Thinking, described earlier, enabled 2012 participants to feel a part of the academic life of the campus in ways extending beyond our seminar's meetings. In addition, replete with a wide variety of on-campus events ranging from extensive live theater, dance and musical concerts and recitals, Bard College is a veritable cornucopia of cultural events during the summer. In 2014, its renowned "Summerscape" will be organized in conjunction with the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Bard Music Festival. In addition, we may organize other social activities for the group or parts of the group during after-seminar hours, including hikes in the surrounding mountains, a trip to the Roosevelt home and museum at Hyde Park or a visit to the Culinary Institute of America. As in previous seminars, such diversions will be explored only to balance the intensity of our discussions.

## APPENDIX

### Outline of Seminar Topics: June 22, 2013-July 25, 2014

Bard College

- 6/22 Welcome Dinner at Seminar Director's campus residence (Sunday)
- 6/23 Introduction to Seminar Topics and Materials; The Biography of Hannah Arendt, Presentation by Seminar Director.
- 6/24 *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Political Trial?*
- 6/25 Eichmann's Thoughtlessness and the Final Solution.
- 6/26 *Eichmann* and the Question of Responsibility.  
(Afternoon Workshop with Celia Bland, MAT)
- 6/27 Guest Lecture: Daniel Maier-Katkin

#### WEEK II

- 6/30 The Jewish Question, Racism, and Development of European Nationalism, *OT*, pp. ix-74
- 7/1 The "Perversion of Political into Social Equality": Pariah and Parvenu, *OT*, 75-155.
- 7/2, 3 Imperialism, the Disintegration of the Nation-State and Rise of Racism, *OT*, pp. 167-286.

#### WEEK III

- 7/7 The End of the Rights of Man, *OT*, pp. 341-384.
- 7/8 Mass Society and the Social Foundations of Totalitarianism, *OT*, pp. 407-449.
- 7/9 Ideology and Propaganda: Psychological Foundations, *OT*, pp. 450-506.

- 7/10 Totalitarian Power, Terror and the Possibility of Politics, *OT*, pp. 507-616.
- 7/11 Guest Lecture: Roger Berkowitz.

#### WEEK IV

- 7/14 Natality, Plurality and Politics, *HC*, pp. 1-78.
- 7/15 *Animal Laborans* and Labor: Freedom from Necessity? *HC*, pp. 79-135.
- 7/16 “Being at Home in the World,” *Homo Faber* and Work, *HC*, pp. 136-174.
- 7/17 Plurality, Action and Speech: The Unworldliness of the Fabric of Human Relationships and the Work of *Homo Faber*, *HC*: 175-247.
- 7/18 *Vita Contemplativa* and *Vita Activa* in the Modern Age, *HC*: 248-325.

#### WEEK V

- 7/21, 22 Action in Concert with Others; Being at Home in the World; Forgiveness and Promise-Making, *HC*: 248-325.
- 7/23 Seminar Presentations
- 7/24 Seminar Presentations
- 7/25 Reflections on the Seminar. Closing Dinner.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to the works cited in the proposal which all members of the seminar will read in common, this bibliography is provided as a guide for those wishing to delve further into primary and secondary sources. I have asterisked (\*) those works I strongly recommend as additional reading.

### SELECTED ADDITIONAL WORKS BY ARENDT

\**Between Past and Future.*

*Men in Dark Times*

*On Revolution*

*On Violence*

*Essays on Understanding*

### GENERAL WORKS ON/RELATED TO ARENDT

Benhabib, Seyla. 2003 (new edition). *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt.* Rowman and Littlefield.

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### **Secondary Related to *Eichmann***

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Bernstein, Richard. 1996. *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*. Cambridge University Press.

La Capra, Dominick. 1994. *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*. Cornell University Press.

### **Secondary Related to *OT***

\*Benhabib, Seyla. 2002 "Political Geographies in a Global World: Arendtian Reflections." *Social Research*, 69: 539-566.

Jeffrey Isaac. 1998. *Democracy in Dark Times*. Cornell University Press.

\*\_\_\_\_\_. 2002. "Hannah Arendt on Human Rights and the Limits of Exposure." *Social Research*, 69: 505-537.

\*Young-Bruehl, Elizabeth. 2002. "On the Origins of a New Totalitarianism." *Social Research* 69: 567-578.

### **Secondary Related to *HC***

Biskowski, Lawrence J. 1993. "Practical Foundations for Political Judgment: Arendt on Action and World." *Journal of Politics* 55: 867-887.

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