

NEWS

The Evergreen State College
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for further information
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The nature of humanity as illustrated by the political theories and organizations through which humans govern themselves will be explored in the sixth of the Spring Quarter lectures May 4 at The Evergreen State College.

Evergreen Faculty Political Scientist Jeanne Hahn will share her views of human nature in a free public talk beginning at 7:30 p.m. in Lecture Hall Three.

"All theories of politics are based on assumptions about the nature of man," Hahn believes. "Those assumptions are then used to form the basis for theories of governance -- and are further used as justification for creating widely different kinds of governmental institutions."

Hahn will explore some of the major political theories which have shaped western government. She'll focus on the works of Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Karl Marx, and she'll analyze how their theories of governance reflect their views of human nature.

"Hobbes, a seventeenth century English theorist, viewed man as aggressive and competitive by nature," she says. "He, therefore, believed the best kind of government for humans was an absolute monarchy.

"The framers of the United States Constitution viewed human nature somewhat differently, thus their governmental structure is different," she observes.

"The constitutional framers believed humans were capable of self government -- but only if an adequate system of checks and balances was established to control man's baser tendencies," she says.

Hahn will discuss their views as expressed in the Federalist Papers and best exemplified by James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.

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She quotes Madison from the Fifty-first Federalist Paper as an example.

"Ambition must be made to counter ambition," Madison wrote. "It may be a reflection on human nature that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary."

Hahn brings years of study in political theory and constitutional law to her Wednesday evening address. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in political science from the University of Oregon and her master's degree in the same field from the University of Chicago. This summer she hopes to complete her doctorate with a concentration on political theory and constitutional law. She joined Evergreen's faculty in 1972, after having taught two years at Oberlin College in Ohio.

Her May 4 address will be followed on May 11 with a discussion on human nature from a literary perspective offered by Evergreen Faculty Member Dr. S. Rudolph Martin. All of the Spring Quarter lectures are free and open to the public.