

**The University of Pennsylvania**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**PSCI 181, Modern Political Thought, Spring 2003**

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231 Stiteler Hall, x85656  
Wed. 2-4 and by appt.

This course will provide an overview of major figures and themes of modern political thought. Instead of providing a comprehensive survey (a smattering of all possible figures) the course will instead provide a more detailed study of 8 major figures in the modern canon from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, reading significant selections from several of their most important works. In the process, we will explore more general themes and questions pertinent to political theory in the modern era, particularly focusing on the relationship of the individual to community, society, and state. Although the emergence of the individual as a central moral, political, and conceptual category arguably began in earlier eras, it is in the seventeenth century that it takes firm hold in defining the state, political institutions, moral thinking, and social relations. The centrality of "the individual" has created difficulties, even paradoxes, for community and social relations, and political theorists have struggled to reconcile those throughout the modern era. We will consider the political forms that emerged out of those struggles, as well as the changed and distinctly "modern" conceptualizations of political theory concepts such as freedom, responsibility, justice, rights and obligation, as central categories for organizing moral and political life.

**Requirements:**

- Lectures: Students are expected to attend all lectures and to have completed the reading assigned for that day before class. Lectures will incorporate Socratic method at times, and students are expected to be able to participate in such colloquies conducted by the professor.
- Two Take-Home Essay Exams: due March 3 and April 7. I will distribute questions in class on Feb. 24 and March 31, respectively. Each essay will be about 5 pages in length, typewritten, and will draw on the readings. There will be penalties for late papers, and extensions will be granted only in documented cases of illness or family emergency. Each accounts for 25% of final grade.
- Final exam: Held during final exam period on date assigned by the University. The final will consist of identification of terms and concepts introduced throughout the course, one essay on the last section of the course, and one cumulative essay. (A possible alternative is two cumulative essay questions and no identification of terms: decision will be announced well before the end of the semester). Final exam counts for 30% of final grade.

- Recitations: Students are expected to attend all of their recitation or section meetings. Performance in sections or recitations will constitute 20% of your final grade. Each TA will be responsible for articulating his or her standards, but in general, regular attendance and participation in class discussion, plus **several short (2-page) written assignments** your TA will ask for, will be the foundation for section grade. I have listed **approximate** target due dates for the first two of these essays, just to help you plan; but your TA will decide on the precise due dates for your section. She or he will also assign at least one other short 2-page essay later in the semester at dates to be announced by her or him. Because of the large size of lecture, section meetings provide an important opportunity to ask questions and exchange views on the readings, so be sure to take full advantage of these section meetings.

Readings: All of the readings in the syllabus are available for purchase in the Penn Bookstore, with the exception of the two Hume essays for March 3, which are on electronic reserve. **Please bring texts to class, because I will make reference to specific passages in many of my lectures.** Although other editions of the works I have ordered are available, I prefer that you use the editions I have ordered so that passages referred to can be easily located. If you do use other editions, you must make special arrangements with me and your TA concerning citations in your written essays.

- Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan
  - Locke, John Two Treatises of Government
  - Jean Jacques Rousseau, Social Contract and Discourses
  - David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature
  - Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals
  - Mill, John Stuart On Liberty and Other Essays
  - Karl Marx, The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. R. Tucker
- Blackboard: Students are expected to regularly check the Blackboard site for this course for occasional additions or changes to the reading assignments and other announcements.
  - Ask questions: if you don't understand something, ASK! Your TAs will announce office hours, mine are posted above. Take advantage of them. I am also willing to make individual appointments to meet with students who cannot make my posted office hours (within reason). In addition, I am often free for lunch on Wednesdays; if there is sufficient student interest, perhaps we could organize an irregular political theory lunch gathering.

## Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Jan 13 Introduction: What is Modern Political Theory?

## **I. The Social Contract Tradition**

Jan 15 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, “The Introduction” (pp. 81-83), ch 11, 13-15 (nature)

Jan 20, Martin Luther King Day (observed), no class

Jan 22, Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, chaps. 17-21 (social contract)

Jan 27, Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Chaps. 26, 29-30, “Review and Conclusion” (pp 717-29) (conditions of commonwealth)

### **First 2-page essay due in section around this time**

Jan 29, John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, paragraphs 4-23, 57, 61, 63, 87 (state of nature, freedom and equality)

Feb 3 John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, paragraphs 25-50 (property)

Feb 5, John Locke, Second Treatise of Government 52-54, 65, 72-75, 80-86 (Family), 95-99, 119-131 (consent)

Feb 10, John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, paragraphs 175-82 (conquest), 199, 202, 212, 219-222, 225, 240, 242-3 (rebellion)

### **Second 2-page essay due in section around this time**

Feb 12, Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Origin of Inequality (in The Social Contract and Discourses, ed. G.D.H. Cole)

Feb 17 Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract Bk. I (contract)

Feb 19, Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract Bk. II, ch. 1-7, 11 (general will)

Feb 24, Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract Bk III, ch 1, 8, 13, 15-16, 18, Bk. IV, ch. 1-3 (government)

### **First Take Home Essay Questions Distributed**

Feb 26, Catch up class, review

Mar 3 **First Take Home Essays Due at beginning of class**

## **II. Situating Individuality and Choice**

Mar 3 David Hume, “Of the Original Contract,” “Of the Origin of Government” on electronic reserve

David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature Book III, Part II, section 8

Mar 5 David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature Bk II, Part I, section 7, 10, 11; Bk II, Part II. Sections 5, 7; Book III, Part I, Sections 1, 2; Book III, Part II, sections 1, 2 (sympathy, morality)

Mar 10, 12, **Spring Break, no class**

Mar 17, David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Book III, Part II, sections 5, 6, 7, 10; Book III, Part III, Sections 1, 2 (society, justice)

Mar 19, Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Preface, First Section, Second Section through paragraph 421

Mar 24, Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Second Section, starting at paragraph 421 (to review it), Third Section, Supplement (“On the Supposed Right to Lie”)

Mar 26 John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, ch. 1, 2, 3

**John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, ch. 4, 5 to be discussed in section**

Mar 31 John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, ch. 2

Apr 2 John Stuart Mill, On Representative Government, ch. 3, 7, 8, 10  
**Second Take Home Essay Questions Distributed**

Apr 7 Catch up class, review

Apr 9 **Second Take Home Essays Due at beginning of class**

### **III. The End of Modernity?**

Apr 9 Karl Marx Capital, “The Two Factors of a Commodity” (302-08) “The Relative Form of Value” (314-17), “The Fetishism of Commodities” (319-29) “The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power” (336-43), “The Production of Surplus Value” (351-61); Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, “Estranged Labor,” “Private Property and Communism” (pp. 70-93), all in Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader

Apr 14 Karl Marx “The German Ideology” (pp. 149-63, 172-75, 186-88, 193-200), “The Communist Manifesto” (pp. 469-500), in Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader

Apr 16 Friedrich Nietzsche, reading TBA

Apr 21 Friedrich Nietzsche, reading TBA

Apr 23 Review and Conclusion