

Modern Political Thought
Political Science 302
Winter 2007, University of Michigan
Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-1:00
Room 2306, Mason Hall

Instructor: Anne Manuel
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Office Hours: Thursday 5:45-6:45 p.m. or by appt. (email me to set a time)
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Course Overview

What does it mean to be “modern”? When does modernity begin? (For the sake of this course, we will assume it begins in 1600). Many of the central concepts of political theory (the polis, the citizen, the theorist) were created in Classical antiquity, in Athens and Rome; in part, to be a modern political theorist means to be an actor out of time, forced to invent and maintain new structures of individual, collective and public identity. The theorists in this class are acting in crisis, theorizing a “modern” world even as they struggle to live in it. Studying modern political theory this semester will require that we do the same. Along the way, we will be forced to respond to some of the foundational questions of modern political life: What constitutes authority in modern politics? What is the relationship between political membership and other aspects of our lives? Is there a modern definition of “human nature”? Finally, we must consider: What does it mean to be “modern” or identify a person or theory as “modern”?

It would be impossible to cover all of modern Western political thought in one college term, so we will be investigating these specific questions through the analysis of particular theorists. I will lecture on the readings and their historical context, but students will be required to participate in the analysis of our readings. Exams will require attention to concepts presented in lecture, reflection on group work assignments, and original engagement with the assigned course readings.

Course Requirements

Required Texts

Seven required texts are available at the Shaman Drum bookstore on State St. Be sure you have the assigned edition. Always bring the appropriate assigned readings to class.

If you would like to order text online use the publisher name and ISBN numbers below to make sure you get the correct edition.

Some of the course reading (portions of Locke, Marx, Nietzsche, and The Federalist Papers will be available online via CTOOLS)

1. Rousseau Basic Political Writings Hackett 0872200477	0553214640
2. Hobbes Leviathan Hackett 0872201775	5. Wollstonecraft Vindication of the Rights of Woman Penguin 0140433821
3. Locke Second Treatise on Civil Government Hackett 0915144867	6. Montesquieu Persian Letters Penguin 0140442812
4. Tocqueville Democracy in America Bantam	7. Mill On Liberty and Other Essays John gray editor Oxford University Press 0192833847

Assignments and Grading

Three In-Class Exams

- Dates noted on the syllabus – make-ups MUST be set up prior to exam, no exceptions, and will only be granted in *extreme* emergencies.
- Format: (1) Key concept ID's. (2) 2 page explication of quote of your choice (select one NOT discussed in lecture). This portion is take-home, prepared before the exam and submitted with the exam. (3) Two short essay questions. Format will be further clarified in lecture.
- bring blue books
- first two exams are 25% of final grade, last exam is 30%
- exams will mainly focus on material covered in the four weeks prior to the exam, but exams #2 and #3 will reach back to earlier material as well.
- Best way to prepare for the exams? Read carefully and outline the reading.

In Class Group Work-- Analysis Groups

These groups will meet during the last twenty minutes of class to debate and respond to a specific question I will pose about the readings and lecture. In these groups, you will begin producing the kind of analysis and argument you will use to write the short essays in the exams. The ideas you explore in your group are to be recorded, and one write-up for the whole group will be handed in at the end of each class or emailed to me by 8 p.m. that day. Roll will be taken via the group write-up.

Grading group work

Analysis groups --10% of final grade
(5%) based on my assessment of daily, collective group write-ups.

(5%) based on your peers' evaluation of your contribution (preparedness, engagement, quality of participation). Peer assessment collected via email at the end of the semester and will be confidential.

Overall Participation Grade – 10% of final grade. This will be based on my assessment of your contribution to class discussions and group work. Note, attendance counts, failure to attend class hurts your participation grade and will hurt your group grade, and chronic lateness is also a problem.

Attendance policy: you may take three “personal days” for illness, job interview, etc. during the semester. More than three missed classes will lower your final grade.

A note on required reading: Some of this reading is difficult and some of the assignments are long. Keep in mind that you may need a *dictionary* by your side as you go through the texts. Political theory is mastered by reading and re-reading, and re-reading again. The first thing I will be looking for when I grade exams is a good knowledge of the texts. Also, in order to participate in and benefit from group work, you need to come to class having finished the reading assignments. In other words, do the reading.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

WEEK ONE

1/4 Introduction

WEEK TWO

1/9 Hobbes, part 1, chapters 1-9

1/11 Hobbes, part 1, chapters 10-16

WEEK THREE

1/16 Hobbes, part 2, chapters 17-23

1/18 Hobbes, part 2, chapters 24-31

WEEK FOUR

1/23 Locke, Letter Concerning Toleration

1/25 Locke, Second Treatise, 1-6

WEEK FIVE

1/30 Locke, Second Treatise, 7-13

2/1 Locke, Second Treatise, 14-19

WEEK SIX

2/6 IN-CLASS EXAM #1

2/8 Montesquieu

Letters 1-3, 7, 9-15, 24-26, 38, 59-63

WEEK SEVEN

2/13 Montesquieu
Letters 80, 85, 147-161

2/15 Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality

WEEK EIGHT

2/20 Rousseau, Social Contract, books 1-2

2/22 Rousseau, Social Contract, books 3-4

Winter Break

WEEK NINE

3/6 Wollstonecraft, chapters 1-3

3/8 Wollstonecraft, chapters 12,13

WEEK TEN

3/13 Federalist Papers – 9, 39, 51

3/15 IN-CLASS EXAM #2

WEEK ELEVEN

3/20 de Tocqueville

3/22 de Tocqueville

WEEK TWELVE

3/27 de Tocqueville

3/29 Mill, On Liberty, Chapters 1-2

WEEK THIRTEEN

4/3 Mill, On Liberty, Chapters 3-5

4/5 Mill, Subjection of Women

WEEK FOURTEEN

4/10 Nietzsche, selections from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

4/12 Film on Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844

WEEK FIFTEEN

4/17 Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

EXAM PERIOD

4/23 *Monday* IN-CLASS EXAM #3 1:30-3:30 p.m. (same classroom)