

PS111B: EARLY MODERN & ENLIGHTENMENT POLITICAL THOUGHT

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The early modern era was a time of enormous social, cultural and political transformation. Widespread religious conflict, an era of rapid scientific innovation, massive demographic changes brought on by increased international trade and the growth of urban populations, and the aggressive consolidation and expansion of governmental powers in the west demanded new ways of thinking about politics. If classical and medieval political thought was centrally concerned with how to create the most excellent, the most virtuous, or the most devout citizens (and, therefore, the most excellent, the most virtuous, the most devout political communities), the early modern era is characterized by a new set of questions. What is the proper relationship between the individual and the state? What *is* 'the state,' how is it formed, and what powers may it legitimately exercise over its subjects? If all persons are created by God, or by nature, with the same capacities and moral worth, on what grounds can you justify the exercise of coercive political power, and especially the exercise of power by some over others? What does it mean to live a truly free life—and which people are allowed to live it?

It will be our task this quarter to look at these questions, and the varied responses to them from the very end of the Renaissance through the beginning of the 19th C. We will consider a survey of primary texts, starting with John Calvin and Martin Luther, extending through the English Civil Wars with John Milton, Mary Astell, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke; onto the Enlightenment thinkers Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau French Revolution with Edmund Burke, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Thomas Paine. While the textual focus of this class will be on Western European thinkers, we will consider how these texts make sense of a world that is constantly confronted with dissent, diversity, and change; and increasingly invested in the dual, often contradictory goals of political liberation at home and colonial conquest abroad. Our work is to understand how these authors were reacting to the specific political challenges of their own times, as political actors, advisors, and radical dissidents. But also how these theorists spoke with (and sometimes against) each other as part of an ongoing dialogue, one that may continue in surprising ways to speak to us today.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance at all lectures is mandatory. Attendance means attention, showing up prepared to work and think about the readings with your fellow students. Class begins on the hour—be respectful of your classmates and show up on time, with **cell phones turned off and put away**, and yourselves mentally prepared to discuss the assigned material. Class runs for two hours; most days, however, I will not lecture the full time. The last half hour or so of class time most days will be set aside for an *optional* discussion section; but you should keep that time on your schedules open.

Do the readings, in full, before class. Readings should be completed by the day they are listed as due. I have tried to keep the overall reading around 60 pages per class, or 120 pages per week (less, if the work is particularly dense). The texts are the heart and soul of this class, and draw from some of the most famous plays and philosophical works in western thought. There is no way to make the works that we will study in this course “easy,” and I do not expect you to show up in class understanding every line. You *should* come into class with your questions, and having already completed the reading. **You should also bring your texts with you to class.** In lecture we will take on some of the more confusing parts of the readings, and discuss the foundation and contexts of these theories in detail. Come prepared to work.

Respect: It is imperative in this class that you treat yourselves and others in this course with respect. The early modern period has given us some beautiful, astounding, and inspiring ideas that still inform the ways we think about individual freedom, political power, and human dignity. But this period also yielded many brutal and repugnant ideas, including justifications for slavery and colonial domination. The texts we study in this course may contain explicitly sexual and violent content, often in difficult prose which is by modern standards appallingly sexist, or racist, or both. Our task this quarter is to understand these texts, their assumptions, limits, and conclusions, and to see how different ways of thinking about politics (good and bad) conceptually work. “Understanding,” however, does *not* mean that you have to agree with these texts, in part or in whole; in fact, you are encouraged to think about their shortcomings and limits alongside their strengths. Nor does “understanding” mean that you can’t disagree with other people (including me) about what texts mean, or what is significant about their conclusions for us today. In political theory, disagreement is often a sign of respect—it means you have said something worth engaging—but *rudeness never is*. These are difficult texts containing difficult ideas: you are expected to treat others with decency and generosity.

If you are uncomfortable with some element of this course, the readings, or unsure what standards “respect” implies, please come talk to me about it in my office hours.

GRADING: Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

Quizzes (25%) will focus on the readings. They will be available to take online, from your home computer or at the library, within a 48-hour window through moodle. Of the six quizzes total, you may drop the lowest grade. As you take these quizzes at home, they will be open book.

However: *once you start the quiz, you will have only 30 minutes to complete it.* Your answers and work should be entirely your own.

Inevitably moodle has personality crises at inconvenient moments. If moodle crashes during a quiz, you can e-mail your answers to me in word or another text program—but I *must* receive them within the 48 hours the quiz is “live.” If you miss the window, don’t panic. You get to drop your lowest grade.

Midterm Paper (5-6 pages, 35%); and a Final Paper (6 pages, 40%). I will cover the format of these papers in more detail in class, however these papers should have a clear thesis that explicitly answers the question presented by one of the essay prompts assigned; and they should build an argument using textual analysis based on the primary works studied in this class. A

good way to prepare for these essays is to take reading notes, highlighting passages that seem particularly interesting or provocative as you go. Even better, form a reading group with friends and then argue about what is important or interesting in those passages. This will save you time when you need to write papers and gather evidence for your work, and will help you get a sense of what points of an argument are weak or strong. Papers are due both in class in hard copy format, as well as online through turnitin.com. I will give more specific submission instructions closer to the due-date.

Late papers are penalized at a rate of a full grade if turned in within the first 24 hours after a deadline has passed, then a half-grade a day for every 24 hours after that. The *maximum* grade a paper turned in within 24 hours after the due-date can receive, for instance, is a 90 (A-); after 48 hours, an 85 (B); 72 hours, an 80 (B-), etc.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

In keeping with UCLA's honor code and standards for personal behavior and integrity, I take academic honesty very seriously. *Anyone found to be cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise in breach of UCLA's standards for academic integrity will fail the relevant assignment, and all instances of cheating will be reported to the dean. No exceptions.* If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, you may familiarize yourself with the UCLA guide on the subject here: <http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/students/integrity/>. You should also feel free to ask me if you have questions.

Special Academic Accommodations:

If you have special circumstances or need any special accommodations for your assignments, please come and see me *as early as possible*, so that we can take them into consideration. You can learn more about these through UCLA's Center for Accessible Education (CEA) and the resources they offer at their website, <http://www.cae.ucla.edu/>

TEXTS AND ASSIGNED READINGS:

Below is a list of required and optional texts for this class. All required texts have been ordered into the bookstore but I encourage you to shop around for the best price. I do ask that you get the editions I've listed here. There are many (some, terrible) translations of these works to choose from on the market. Since we will frequently be working with these texts in class—and because these texts will be the basis for reading quizzes and your papers—it will make your life significantly easier if you have the same translation and page numbers as everyone else.

I have listed the books below by ISBN for ease of online search. You can paste this number into your favorite online bookseller directly.

Required Texts:

Hopfl (ed), *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority* (Cambridge, 1991) ISBN 0521349869
John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, 1980) ISBN 0915144867

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin, 1982) ISBN 0140431950
Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace & Other Essays* (Hackett, 1983) ISBN 0915145472
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Penguin, 1968) ISBN: 0140442014
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality* (Penguin, 1985) ISBN 0140444394

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COURSE OVERVIEW & WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Introduction to Course

April 4th: Introduction to Course
April 6th: Martin Luther, "On Secular Authority" p. 3-43

Week 2: Religion and the State

April 11th: John Calvin, "On Civil Government" p. 47-86
April 13th: **No Class: Professor Barringer in Vancouver**
First Quiz Online at 6:00 PM

Week 3: Skepticism and (Political) Science

April 18th: Montaigne, *Essays*, PDF Online
April 20th: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk 1. Ch. 1-9, p. 81-149

Week 4: From Nature to Leviathan State

April 25th: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk 1, ch. 13-18; p. 183-239
April 27th: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk 2, ch18-22; 29-30 p. 239-288; 363-394
Second Quiz Online at 6:00PM

First Paper Topics Circulated

Week 5: Rational Government and Political Freedom

May 2nd: John Milton, *Areopagetica*, (Online)
May 4th: Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 3-51
Third Quiz Online at 6:00 PM

Week 6: Public and Private Liberty

May 9th: Locke, *Second Treatise*, p. 52-124
May 11th: Mary Astell, "Some Reflections Concerning Marriage" (Online)

FIRST PAPER DUE THIS WEEK.

Week 7—May 16th & 17th Enlightenment Optimism

May 16th: Voltaire—*Letters on England & Philosophical Dictionary* (Selection Online)
May 17th: Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" and "Perpetual Peace"
Fourth Quiz Online at 6:00 PM

Week 8—May 23rd & 25th Enlightenment Pessimism

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse on Inequality*, entire.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau *Social Contract*, Book 1 & 2 p. 49-100

Week 9—May 30th & June 1st Contract and Civil Religion

May 30th: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book 3, p. 101-148

June 1st: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book 4, 149-187

Fifth Quiz Online at 6:00 PM

Week 10—June 6th & June 8th Revolution (From Reader—ONLINE)

June 6th: Burke, Observations on the French Revolution (Selection online)

June 8th: Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Selection online)

Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (selection online)

Sixth Quiz online at 6:00 PM

EXAM WEEK: FINAL PAPER DUE THIS WEEK.