

Modern Political Philosophy Gov 2210 Spring 2020

Professor: Michael Hawley

Office: 209C Hubbard Hall

Office Hours: Mon 4:30-5:30, Tu 1:30-3:30 PM, or by apt.

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Course Description:

This course is a survey of modern political philosophy beginning with Machiavelli, running through the social contract tradition as elaborated by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, and concluding with the idealist and progressive philosophy of Kant. Among the topics we will be considering are: the overthrow of the classical horizon, the movement of human will or freedom to the center of political thought, the foundations of liberalism, the origin and meaning of rights, the relationship between freedom and equality, the role of democracy, the rise of history, and the belief in human progress.

Course Aims:

The primary aims of this class are those that go into determining your grade for the course. Most basically, you will gain an understanding of the questions and problems that surround modern political thought. You will hone your skills at reading difficult texts carefully and evaluating arguments. You will also improve your abilities in constructing your own written arguments, demonstrating your analytical skills, and expressing your ideas clearly and persuasively.

But there is another kind of aim for this course, one that will not be reflected in your grade. The thinkers we read in this class wrote not merely for their own contemporaries but for all time. They are, in a sense, addressed to you. They make claims about human nature, freedom, rights, and the possibilities of politics. It is my hope for this class that our encounters with the authors we read will help you to think more deeply about these questions and to become more reflective citizens.

Course Books:

The following books are required reading and are available for purchase or rent through Bowdoin's textbook partner or online. You may of course purchase books from other sources, provided you use the same editions and translations. It truly is important to get the same editions and translations; it helps keep all of us on the same page (literally) as we discuss the readings and when it comes time to write papers. All other texts will be posted on the Blackboard site.

1. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

2. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996
3. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Edited by John Scott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.
5. Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*. Edited by Hans Reiss. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Course Requirements:

You will be required to write four papers (5-6 pages, double-spaced) on assigned topics. These are not research papers. The only texts you will need to write them will be what we read for this course. I will discuss the expectations and requirements for these papers at greater length in class. There is also a participation component to your grade—which is composed *both* of in-class contributions and posts on the discussion forum on Blackboard. For the latter, you are required to post 8 reading responses (roughly 150 words each) over the course of the semester. This averages out to roughly one such response for every three class meetings, but you may distribute them however you like throughout the semester. These responses must not exceed 200 words. In them, you should raise a question, pose an objection, or make an argument about some aspect of the next day’s reading. You are encouraged also to respond to posts by your fellow students. In order to count, you need to post by midnight of the day before class is to meet—I will read them before class and may incorporate some of them into our discussion.

With all of your work, be sure to follow Bowdoin standards of conduct regarding academic honesty and plagiarism. Violations of these standards will be referred to the appropriate dean.

Course grade will be determined as follows:

Three Papers:	80%
Class participation	20% (10% in-class participation, 10% reading response posts)

Reading assignments:

Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders

Jan 22	Introduction: What Makes Political Thought Modern?
Jan 27	<i>Prince</i> , Dedicatory Letter and chaps. 1-6; Letter to Vettori (Appendix)
Jan 29	<i>Prince</i> , chaps. 7-14
Feb 3	<i>Prince</i> , chaps. 15-21
Feb 5	<i>Prince</i> , chaps. 22-26

Hobbes' New Science of Politics

Feb 10	<i>Leviathan</i> , Intro. (pp. 9-11), chaps. 1-6
Feb 12	<i>Leviathan</i> , chaps. 46, 10, 11, 13
Feb 17	<i>Leviathan</i> , chaps. 14-16
Feb 19	<i>Leviathan</i> , chaps. 17-20
Feb 24	<i>Leviathan</i> , chaps. 21, 29, 30, <u>and page 254</u>

Locke and Rousseau: Property and the Social Contract

Feb 26	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chaps. 1-4 (pp. 267-85)
Mar 2	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chaps 5-6
Mar 4	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chaps. 7-9
	Spring Break!!!
Mar 23	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chaps. 10-14.
Mar 25	<i>Second Treatise</i> , chap. 19, Selection from <i>On Toleration</i> (On Blackboard)
Mar 30	<i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> , pp. 51-73 (top) plus notes
Apr 1	<i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> , pp. 73-90, plus notes
Apr 6	<i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> , pp. 91-118, plus notes; Epistle Dedicatory (pp. 41-50)
Apr 8	<i>Social Contract</i> , Bk. 1
Apr 13	<i>Social Contract</i> , Bk. II, chaps. 1-6
Apr 15	<i>Social Contract</i> , Bk. II, chaps. 7-12; Bk. IV, chaps 1-2
Apr 20	<i>Social Contract</i> , Bk. III, chaps. 1-7, 9-18; Bk. IV, chap. 8.

Kant's Liberal World

Apr 22	<i>Kant's Political Writings</i> , "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History" (pp. 221-36)
Apr 27	<i>Political Writings</i> , "Idea for a Universal History" (pp. 41-53); "What Is Enlightenment?" (pp. 54-60)
Apr 29	<i>Political Writings</i> , "Theory and Practice" (pp. 61-63, 73-92)

May 4 *Political Writings*, “Perpetual Peace,” (pp. 93-115)
May 6 *Political Writings*, pp. 116-30

Paper Due Dates:

Paper 1: Feb 22.

Paper 2: Mar 28

Paper 3: Apr 20

Paper 4: May 11