

Classics of Social and Political Thought II
Social Sciences (SOSC) 15200 — Section 10
Winter Quarter 2018
University of Chicago,

Instructor: Nazmul Sultan

Office Hour: Thursday 2:00-3:30 PM (Ex Libris Café)

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Class Meetings: Monday/Wednesday 01:30 PM- 02:50 PM
Social Sciences Research Building 106

Course Description: In this course, we will explore the origins of the modern conception of political power, including the questions of sovereignty, government, rights, and liberty. The running theme of the course is the idea of social contract. Reading Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau closely, we will be examining their concepts of the state of nature and of political society. We will further analyze how the idea of “social contract” worked as a bridge between the state of nature and political society. Another major goal of the class is to rigorously reconstruct Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau’s respective accounts of sovereignty and government. Along the way, we will ask: What is the distinction between sovereignty and government? What makes political power legitimate or illegitimate? How should we understand connection between sovereignty and rights? What sort of distinctions came to be articulated and envisioned between natural and political rights? The course will push you to read the classical texts of political theory critically yet charitably, with the aim of helping you to develop your own nuanced reading of these thinkers’ arguments.

Required Texts:

The following texts are available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore:

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. E. Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).
2. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett (Cambridge University Press, 1988).
3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and other early political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge University Press, 1997).
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Course Requirements:

1) Two papers, each approximately 7-8 pages. The first paper will be due on February 4 (11 pm), and the second one on March 12 (11 pm). If you receive grades lower than B+ on your first paper, you can rewrite the paper. The revised papers will be due on February 25. The papers should be submitted as word documents via email. Make sure to put your name and the topic of the paper (e.g., Rousseau Paper) on the email subject.

2) In addition to regular class participation, students will be required to lead discussion for one session. Students will be paired up with one of their peers for class presentation. As discussion leaders, you will be free to choose the topics and questions of your discussion. Please note that discussion leaders will have to post their set of discussion questions, as well as a brief summary of the reading, on Canvas at least 48 hours before the session. On presentation days, discussion leaders should elaborate upon the questions/topics, invite responses from other students, and ensure engaged discussion.

Attendance and Late Paper Policy:

Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded. Students with more than two absences will be assumed to have withdrawn from the class. With the exceptions of documented illnesses, religious observance, or family emergencies, absences will not be excused.

Late papers will be penalized. I will deduct one full grade (A to B, for example) for each day of late submission. If you have a compelling reason and get in touch with me at least 24 hours prior to the deadline, an extension may be granted (no more than 48 hours).

Participation:

This is a seminar, organized around class discussion. You are expected to arrive to the class prepared. Please make sure that you read the text carefully, take note of passages that you wish to discuss, and come prepared with questions. Students are particularly encouraged to conduct close reading and keep their questions textually grounded. The quality of your class participation will be a central component of how I evaluate your overall performance.

Electronics are not permitted. Unless you have a legitimate reason, laptops, cellphones, and tablets should not be used during the class.

Grade Distribution:

First Paper 30%

Second Paper 35%

Class Presentation 15%

Class Participation 20%

Academic Integrity:

Any instance of plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the paper, and likely of the class. It will also be referred to the University for further action. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Schedule:

January 3: Introduction (no reading)

January 8:

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Frontispiece

Hobbes' Introduction (pp. 3-5)

Chapters 1-4

Chapter 5 [paragraphs 1-4] (pp. 22-23)

Chapter 6 [paragraphs 49-57] (pp. 33-34)

Chapter 11 (all)

Chapter 13 (all)

January 10:

Chapters 14-16

January 15:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No Class)

January 17:

Chapters 17-20

Chapter 30

Chapter 46 [paras. 32, 35-36] (pp. 464, 465-66)

January 22:

Chapter 21

Chapters 27-29

Dedicatory Letter (pp. 1-2)

January 24:

Chapter 12

Chapter 41 (paragraphs 3-5) [pp. 328-330]

Ch. 42 [paras. 4-11] (pp. 336-339)

Ch. 43 [paras. 1-3, 22-24] (pp. 397-99, 409-410)

Ch. 47 [paras. 19-34] (pp. 481-484)

January 29:

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*

Second Treatise, chapters 1-5

First Treatise, chapter 4, paragraphs 41-43

(It may be helpful to read the sections from the *Second Treatise* first, and then to return to the passages from the *First Treatise*)

January 31:

Second Treatise, Chapters 6-8

**** First Paper Due Sunday, February 4****

February 5:

Second Treatise, Chapters 9-15

February 7:

Second Treatise, Chapters 16-19

February 12:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*.

Epistle Dedicatory, Preface, Exordium, Part I (including all notes) (pp. 114-60, 195- 218)

February 14:

Discourse on Inequality, Part II (including all notes)

February 19:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Of the Social Contract*

Book I

February 21:

Of the Social Contract, Book II

February 26:

Of the Social Contract, Book III

February 28:

Of the Social Contract, Book IV

March 5:

Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* (Selections—available on Canvas)

March 7:

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Selections—available on Canvas)

Maximilien Robespierre, “On the Principles of Revolutionary Government” (available on Canvas)

**** Second Paper Due Monday, March 12****