

Classics of Social and Political Thought II

Social Sciences/SOSC 15200 (Winter 2019)

This is a draft syllabus and is subject to change

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Course Meetings: TH, 9:30am-10:50am (Cobb 402)
Office Hours*: TH 11:00am-12:00pm (Pick 518)

**To schedule an office hours meeting, please sign up on Canvas.*

i. Course Overview and Objectives

What is legitimate political and non-political authority? How is it constituted? Under what circumstances can it be challenged, reformed, or overthrown, altogether? Do such conceptions of political authority carry across time and space? Together, we will explore these and other questions through the writings of well-known figures in the history of political thought including Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. We will explore themes such as human nature, war, civil society, representation, revolution, sovereignty, and liberty, to name a few. This is the second quarter of the *Classics of Social and Political Thought* core sequence and, by now, you should be accustomed to identifying key arguments in “classic” texts in the history of political thought. This course builds on this, pushing you to charitably, yet critically, analyze and assess the arguments of this term’s texts and develop your own nuanced readings of these authors’ arguments through classroom dialogue and written assignments.

In short, this course aims to improve your ability to:

- **Assess** the claims of central texts in the history of political thought in a charitable, yet critical, manner
- **Develop** nuanced readings of historical and contemporary political thought through dialogue and writing

ii. Required Texts

Physical copies of the following texts will be available for purchase the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore. The exceptions are the starred (*) material, which will be available via PDF on Canvas. Please use these editions of the texts. If you have issues obtaining these texts, please contact me as soon as possible.

- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Hackett)
- Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge)
- -----, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Mark Goldie (Liberty Fund)*
- Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Anne M. Cohler et al. (Cambridge)*
- Rousseau, “*The Discourses*” and *Other Early Political Writings* & “*The Social Contract*” and *Other Later Political Writings* (2 vols.), ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge)

iii. Assignments, Grading, and Policies

Attendance and Participation

20 %

Regular class attendance and active participation facilitate both course learning objectives: critically (though charitably) assessing and formulating original theses concerning the arguments within these texts. Thus, attendance and participation in class is mandatory. Absences due to personal emergencies, illness, religious observance, or other legitimate causes will be excused with advanced notice and proper documentation (e.g. a letter or email from your advisor), where applicable. Good participation reflects quantity *and* quality of in-class comments. Students are expected to come to class with texts readily available, having done the reading and prepared for respectful and substantive discussion. Laptops are allowed only for course-related activities; other observed activities will result in a grade reduction. I am available for any student wishing to discuss methods for engaging more effectively in class discussion.

Quizzes

40 %

Quizzes serve as a brief written means for students to demonstrate their ability to recall class content and assess arguments about class texts. They are also intended to help students develop the writing skills for the final essay. There will be four quizzes this term (at the end of class) with ascending weight in grading (5%, 10%, 10%, 15%). Quizzes will involve two parts and are open book, but no extra-textual notes or devices (i.e. computers, phones, etc.) are allowed. The first part consists of two short-answer questions that require recalling previous course content. Because students will need to use of textual support for these short answers, they are expected to bring the relevant texts to class for that period. The second part is a take-home essay in which students argue a position based on a prompt. (Prompts are attached to the in-class quiz.) The take home essay should be roughly 250-500 words in length (12pt font, normal margins, double-spaced) and is due **by 11:59pm CST (uploaded via Canvas) the day it is assigned.**

Note: I will not discuss take home quiz information during office hours for that day.

Final Essay

40 %

The final essay gives students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to critically, yet charitably, assess the course material. This will involve comparative analysis of evidence from multiple course texts in support of one's argument and against competing claims. This must be original work from the student; plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance and will result in failure on the assignment and possibly failure in the course or further University sanctions. If students are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, they should consult <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/Policies#Honesty>. A one-page prospectus with a thesis paragraph and potential supporting evidence (with citations) will be due a week in advance. Students will bring these to class and review each other's developing arguments. I will provide essay prompts (via Canvas) a week in advance of the prospectus class. Also, I will upload a sheet for the prospectus review on Canvas. Students must answer all parts of the prospectus review sheet and upload their responses for their partner via Canvas. Final essays should be 12pt font, normal margins, double-spaced and should answer the prompt. The final essay should be 1500-2000 words. The final essay will be due **the Thursday of week 10 at 5pm CST (uploaded via Canvas)** with the prospectus review comments included at the end of the essay. Students who submit a course evaluation before the beginning of our last class, may elect to have a 24-hour extension. I will not read drafts of essays, but am available to discuss essay ideas. Late essays will be reduced by one-third a letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) for every day past the due date and I will not accept essays after three days without a legitimate cause substantiated by advanced notice and proper documentation (e.g. a letter or email from your advisor), where applicable.

If you have a documented disability and require a reasonable accommodation to complete the course, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible: <http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>. If you already have an Accommodation Determination Letter, I am available to discuss how to implement the accommodation.

iv. Tips for Success

In my experience, students who follow these tips tend to do well in this course. I encourage you to heed at least some, if not all, of them over the term.

- *Finish the reading at least 24 hours before it is due.* For example, finish Tuesday's class reading by Monday morning. This will require time management, but it allows more time for reflection.
- *Take notes as you read, in the text.* This will allow you to track your reactions to the readings, prep for quizzes, and think (ahead of class) about intriguing or puzzling passages.
- *Come to office hours.* I do not bite. I am invested in you succeeding in this course.
- *Talk with your peers about the readings outside of class.* It helps you process and vocalize your views on the text(s) in preparation for class discussion.
- [For any writing assignment] *Map out your argument, paragraph by paragraph.* If you cannot justify why a certain paragraph should be included in the writing assignment, do not include it.

v. Reading Schedule

Assignments listed under each day are ***due for that day.***

Week One

T (1/8) Introduction and Course Aims

Assignment: Pre-Assessment Survey; Concept-Based Thinker Predictions

H (1/10) Hobbes I: Humanity

Assignment: *Leviathan* introduction, chapters 5-6, 10-12 (50pp)

Week Two

T (1/15) Hobbes II: Nature

Assignment: *Leviathan* chapters 13-15 (25pp)

H (1/17) Hobbes III: The Commonwealth I – Beginnings & Justifications

Assignment: *Leviathan* chapters 16-21 (46pp)

Week Three

T (1/22) Hobbes IV: The Commonwealth II – Systems, Problems, & Redress

Assignment: *Leviathan* chapters 22, 24, 26, 29-30 (61pp)

H (1/24) Locke I: Origins – Nature, War, Slavery, & Property **[QUIZ 1]**

Assignment: *Two Treatises of Government* chapters 1-5 (36pp)

Week Four

T (1/29) Locke II: Socio-Political Power Relations I – Systems & Aims

Assignment: *Two Treatises of Government* chapters 6-13 (72pp)

H (1/31) Locke III: Socio-Political Power Relations II – Corruption & Redress **[QUIZ 2]**

Assignment: *Two Treatises of Government* chapters 14-19 (53pp)

Week Five

T (2/5) Locke IV: Religious & Civil Authority
Assignment: *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (36pp)

H (2/7) Montesquieu I: Laws & Governments
Assignment: *Spirit of the Laws* books 1-3, 5, 8 (80pp)

Week Six

T (2/12) Montesquieu II: Liberty
Assignment: *Spirit of the Laws* books 11-12 (60pp)

H (2/14) Montesquieu III: Gender, Climate, & Slavery [QUIZ 3]
Assignment: *Spirit of the Laws* books 7, 14-17 (72pp)

Week Seven

T (2/19) Montesquieu IV: Laws & Their Relations, Revisited
Assignment: *Spirit of the Laws* books 19, 20, 26 & 27 (88pp)

H (2/21) Rousseau I: Savage v. Society
Assignment: *Second Discourse* Part One, Notes III-XV (64pp)

Week Eight

T (2/26) Rousseau II: The Rise of Civilization
Assignment: *Second Discourse* Part Two, Notes XVI-XIX (31pp)

H (2/28) Rousseau III: Nature, Society, & Law [QUIZ 4]
Assignment: *Social Contract* Books 1 & 2 (41pp)

Final Essay Prompts Distributed

Week Nine

T (3/5) Rousseau IV: Government
Assignment: *Social Contract* Book 3 (37pp)

H (3/7) Rousseau V: The State Constitution
Assignment: *Social Contract* Book 4 (30pp)

Final Essay Prospectus (bring to class)

Week Ten

T (3/12) “Minute Thesis” Recap
Assignment: Post-Assessment Survey, Revisit Concept-Based Thinker Predictions

FINAL ESSAYS ARE DUE THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2019, 5PM (by email)*

**Reminder: Students who complete and email the course evaluation posted on Canvas to me before the start of our last class may request a 24-hour extension.*