

EARLY MODERN POLITICAL THEORY: PHIL 444/ POLI 459-002

Winter 2011 MW 8:35 - 9:55
Leacock 212
Professor Hasana Sharp

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Course Description:

Hobbes was the first advocate of the natural equality of human beings. He grounds his argument for natural equality in a materialist metaphysics, which entails, for him, the necessity of absolute monarchy. Spinoza assumes many of the same metaphysical principles in order to become the first modern philosopher to advocate democracy. This course will investigate the complicated relationship between these two thinkers, each of whom establishes a new, distinctly modern paradigm for political organization in the midst of a crisis in religious authority and the rise of new scientific knowledge.

Texts:

Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine* and *De Cive*. (Hackett, 1994)
Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*. (Cambridge, 2007)
Spinoza, *Political Treatise*. (Hackett, 2005)

Books available at "The Word" bookstore on 469 Milton Street.

Requirements: Evaluations will be based upon one short paper (35%), one peer review of rough draft (5%), one term paper proposal (10%), and one term paper (50% of grade). Late papers will be penalized.

Attendance and Participation: Come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss the material. Please note that you are responsible for all of the assigned material even if we do not get around to a detailed discussion of it in class.

NB: As per McGill courtesy policy, cell phones, texting, emailing and surfing the web are prohibited during class. Please put away and turn off phones and computers. Note-taking will need to occur the old-fashioned way. This class is early in the morning and we need to minimize distractions. You are welcome to bring coffee.

(http://www.mcgill.ca/files/conted/Code_of_Professional_Conduct_Classroom_CCE_Final.pdf)

Short papers: You will be asked to provide a sensitive analysis (close reading, or exegesis) of selected passages of the text. (1,000 words) (35% each)

Peer review of rough drafts: You will be required to exchange rough drafts *in class* with one of your peers and fill out an evaluation form. The feedback you provide on your peer's paper should be thoughtful and constructive. It will be graded. (5% each)

Paper proposal: The final paper will be on a topic of your choosing that treats Hobbes's and Spinoza's texts together, or just Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* (since you will have already written a paper on Hobbes). You may relate these texts to other philosophers you have studied, or to contemporary issues, if you like. Around 3/4 of the way through the term, you will turn in a prospective abstract describing your topic and suggesting a tentative thesis. It will also identify relevant parts of Hobbes's and/ or Spinoza's texts for your argument. The proposal is not a contract and it is okay if your final paper mutates into a different shape, but this will be an effort to envision your final paper sufficiently in advance and to receive feedback. Also, even though you will not be bound to its contents, it will be graded based on clarity, creativity, and appropriateness of the use of texts and source materials. (500-600 words)

Final paper: You will submit a final thesis-driven term paper that reflects your engagement with the course material. Further instructions and grading criteria will be posted on MyCourses no later than mid-term. (2,400-3,000 words)

NB: Written assignments will not be accepted by email. Late assignments will suffer a 1/3 grade deduction per day. Thus an evaluation of A- will become a B+, should it be one day late. There will be no exceptions without valid medical documentation that is promptly submitted to the professor.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information). Note that the code stipulates that any assignment suspected of plagiarism should be submitted directly to the associate dean for review.

Notes: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

				Schedule
Month	Wk	Day		Assignment Due
Jan	i	5	Introduction to class	
	ii	10	Hobbes, <i>On Man</i> , Dedicatory epistle, Chs. X-XII, pp. 36-62.	
		12	<i>On Man</i> , Chs. XIII-XV, pp. 63-85.	
	iii	17	<i>The Citizen</i> , Dedicatory, preface, Ch. I, pp. 89-109.	
		19	<i>The Citizen</i> , Chs. II-IV, pp. 121-163.	
	iv	24	<i>The Citizen</i> , Chs. V-VI, pp. 165-190.	
		26	<i>The Citizen</i> , Chs. VII-IX, pp. 191-211.	
	v	31	<i>The Citizen</i> , Chs. XII-XIV, pp. 243-288.	
Feb		2	<i>The Citizen</i> , Chs. XV-XVII, pp. 289-368.	
	vi	7	No Class – Prof. Away (work on your papers!)	
		9	Rough Draft Workshop (Don't skip this class)	
	vii	14	Spinoza, <i>Theological-Political Treatise</i> (TTP), preface, <i>Ethics</i> I appendix	First Paper Due
		16	TTP, Chs. 1-3.	
		21-25	Reading Week	
	viii	28	No Class – Prof. away	
Mar		2	TTP, Chs. 5-4.	
	ix	7	TTP, Chs. 6-7.	
		9	TTP, Chs. 10-11. (Chs. 8-9, optional)	
	x	14	TTP, Chs. 12-15.	Paper Proposal Due
		16	TTP, Chs. 16-18.	
	xi	21	TTP, Chs. 19-20.	
		23	<i>Political Treatise</i> (TP), Chs. 1-2.	
	xii	28	TP, Chs. 3-5.	
		30	TP, Chs. 6-7.	
Apr	xiii	4	TP, Ch. 8-10.	
		6	TP, Ch. 11. Wrap-up course.	