Course Professor: Catherine Lu
Three ways to contact during the term:
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 pm, or by appointment.
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Course description
This course is part of a ‘History of Western Political Thought’ series (POLI 333, 334, 433, 434) that surveys major thinkers in European political theory. This course focuses on early modern European political philosophy and political thought from the 16th to the 18th centuries, a turbulent and contentious historical context shaped by religious warfare, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the expansion of European power into the rest of the world. These political developments generated the rise of the individual as a political subject and object of governance, the emergence of the modern state and capitalism, the rise and fall of absolutism, the justification of war and revolution, and the establishment of civilizational hierarchies. Primary themes and concepts to be discussed include rights, reason, the social contract tradition, property, the sovereign and the state, resistance and revolution, legitimacy, democracy, authority, liberty, toleration, and modernity. Major thinkers: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Edmund Burke.

Course Objectives
There are three main pedagogical objectives of this course:
1. to become acquainted with key concepts, problems, and questions of early modern and modern political thought;
2. to develop the capacity to think critically in an analytically rigorous way, and to develop the skills of communicating normative and interpretive arguments in oral discussion and written work;
3. to develop the capacity to focus on and listen to lectures, digest main points on the spot, and take hand-written notes that synthesize lecture content.

Course prerequisite
Completion of Introduction to Political Theory (Poli 231 or 232) is required, or explicit permission from the Course Professor. Another 300-level political theory course is also recommended.
Course Materials
The following texts are available for purchase at Paragraphe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College Ave. Books are also on course reserve at the McGill library.


Some other required readings will be available only on MyCourses, or on-line.

Required assignments
- Two papers (each a maximum of 1250 words), due Oct 9 and Nov 18
- Class discussion notes
- Final exam

Grade distribution
First paper 25%
Second paper 25%
Class participation 15%
Final exam 35%

Policies and guidelines

1. **Policy on technology use during lectures and conferences**: Please note that this is a manual note-taking lecture course. The use or display of any mobile computing or communications devices (including computers, recording devices, phones, ipads, or ipods) is strictly prohibited during class. In exceptional cases, explicit permission from the Course Professor to use such devices may be granted.

2. **Class participation**: All relevant readings should be done before each class. Be prepared to discuss and analyze texts in an in-depth manner, so bring the texts being discussed to class. Prepare discussion notes in advance of each class (maximum of one typed page, double-spaced, 12 point font). Bring two copies of these discussion notes to class: one is for yourself to help guide your oral contributions in the class, and the other copy should be submitted to the Course Professor at the start of the class.

The discussion notes that you submit at the beginning of each class count towards your class participation grade, in addition to your physical attendance and oral participation during the class. If you come to class without any notes, your class participation grade for
that day cannot be higher than a C. If you submit notes but do not attend class, your class participation grade for that day will be counted as an absence, or 0.

You will receive three free absences with no questions asked. If you miss more than seven classes without a valid excuse (e.g., death in the family, serious illness), you will be in danger of receiving an F for your overall class participation grade (worth 15% of your final course grade). Please note that work or extracurricular activities do not constitute legitimate excuses for missing class.

3. The paper topics and instructions will be distributed on myCourses. Please note that only the Course Professor can approve paper topics and deadline extensions.

Late policy: late papers will be penalized 2/3 of a letter grade per day late. For example, if your paper was worth an A, but was one day late, you would receive a B+ instead. If your paper was worth an A, but was two days late, it would receive a B-. This policy does not apply if you are seriously ill or distracted by a serious emergency, but in the event of such circumstances it is your responsibility to inform the Course Professor, preferably in person, before the assignment is due. Being ill one for or two days before the paper is due, however, will NOT be a sufficient reason to waive the entire late penalty. Receiving a failing grade (F) on any of the papers can lead to a failure of the entire course.

Process of grade appeal on assignments: You must submit your paper with a one-page note explaining why you think you deserve a higher grade. The professor will then re-evaluate the paper, but reserve the right to raise or lower the grade, and this decision is final.

4. You must receive a passing grade for each major component of the course to pass the course as a whole. This means that an F on any of the major course evaluation components (for example, on either of the two papers, or on the final exam) can lead to a final course grade of F.

5. 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. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).

6. 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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

7. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
8. If you have a disability please arrange a meeting with the Course Professor to discuss your situation at the start of the course. Please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) at 514 398 6009 (http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/) to receive information on accommodating your needs before meeting with the Course Professor. However, please remember that the OSD has no authority to approve changes to course assignment due dates or exam dates, to devise alternative assignments, or to waive course requirements. If you should have any reason to miss a substantial part of the course (eg three weeks of class), or if you are unable to complete any course assignments or requirements for any reason, it is your responsibility to inform the Course Professor (and not just OSD) of your situation as soon as possible.

**Course schedule**

W Sept 4: Introduction


W Oct 2: Writing workshop #1

M Oct 7: Hobbes discussion


**Wednesday, October 9: First paper due**

Oct 14: Thanksgiving – no class


Nov 4: Writing workshop #2

W Nov 6: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (1755), Letter to the Republic of Geneva, preface

M Nov 11: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Part I (including notes to Part I)

W Nov 13: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Part II (including notes)

M Nov 18: Rousseau, *Social Contract* (1762), Books I-II

**Monday, November 18: Second paper due**


M Nov 25: The French Revolution


**Tuesday, December 3: Course review**

Final exam: Check official exam schedule.