

History of Western Political Thought (16th to 18th Centuries)
Political Science 433
Course Syllabus – Fall 2023
(Please check MyCourses for the official course syllabus)

Course Professor: Catherine Lu

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 studied: Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Edmund Burke.

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

Please bring a pen/pencil and paper to each lecture, as well as the course texts (printed on paper)!

These texts may be purchased at Paragraphe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College Ave.

1. Jean Bodin, *On Sovereignty*. Edited by Julian H. Franklin. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge University Press, 1992.
2. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*, ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994. ISBN 0-87220-177-5
3. John Locke, *The Political Writings*. Edited, with Introduction, by David Wootton. Hackett Publishing, 2003. (0-87220-676-9)/(978-0-87220-676-2)
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition. ISBN 9781316605547 [**this translation only**].
5. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Translated by Donald A. Cress. Hackett Publishing, 1988. (0-87220-068-X)/(978-0-87220-068-5)
6. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolutions in France* (ed. Pocock). Hackett, ISBN 978-0872200203

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

Required assignments

- Class written journal (during course lectures)
- Paper (maximum of 1000 words)
- Mid-term exam (15 minutes, oral and in-person)
- Final exam (20 minutes, oral and in-person)

Grade distribution

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|-----------------------|-----|
| Class written journal | 10% |
| Paper | 10% |
| Midterm exam | 30% |
| Final oral exam | 50% |

Policies and guidelines

1. **Policy on technology use during lectures:** 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 written journal:** 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. At the start of each lecture, the professor will pose a question about the course readings for the week, and you will write your answer (hand-written on paper) for 10 minutes. You may then be called upon in the class to read out your answer to facilitate the lecture and discussion of the text. Your hand-written journal entries will be submitted to the professor at the end of each lecture class. You must receive at least 13 + (positive) evaluations for your journal entries (from 13 lectures) to receive a grade higher than D for the class written journal component of your course grade. Please note that work or extracurricular activities do not constitute legitimate excuses for missing class.

4. 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 (on the mid-term or 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

R Aug 31: Introduction

TR Sept 5, 7 : Bodin, *On Sovereignty* [from *Six livres de la république*] (1583), pp. 1-15, 31-39, 46-52, 56-59, 64, 66- 70, 73, 75, 78-81, 86, 89-105, 110-120.

M Sept 9: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), Dedication, Introduction, Part I: Chapters 1-6

TR Sept 12, 14 : Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I: Chapters 6-12, 13-16

TR, Sept 19, 21: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II: Chapter 17-31

T Sept 26: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part III: only chapters 32, 33 (pars 21-25), 34 (pars 1-4, 16-19, 24), 35, 36 (par 1, 20), 37 (par 1-5, 7, 13), 38 (pars 1, 5), 39-40, and

R Sept 28: Class cancelled

T Oct 3: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part III: ch. 41, 42 (pars 1-31, 67-80), and “A Review and Conclusion.”

R Oct 5: Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689)

October 5: Paper due

T Oct 10: Fall break, no classes

R Oct 12: Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (1689), Chapters 1-9

T Oct 17: Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Chapters 10-19

R Oct 19: Class cancelled

T Oct 24: Hobbes and Locke discussion and review

R Oct 26/27: **Course mid-term scheduled over 2 days**

TR Oct 31, Nov 2: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (1755), Letter to the Republic of Geneva, preface, Part I (including the notes, except notes 3, 5, 7, 8, 10)

TR Nov 7, 9: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Part II

TR Nov 14, 16: Rousseau, *Social Contract* (1762), Books I-II, Books III-IV

T Nov 21: Rousseau Discussion

R Nov 23: Burke, *Reflections on the Revolutions in France* (1790), pp. 3-99

T Nov 28: Burke, *Reflections on the Revolutions in France*, pp. 99-218

T Dec 5: Course review

Final exam: Oral exam in the official exam period