

Philosophy 342: **Social and Political Philosophy through History**

730:342:01, Spring 2019

Campbell Hall Room A1

MTh3 (11:30 – 12:50)

Prof. James Swenson

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Office: AB West 4186 (2-3795)

MT 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

This course presents an historical introduction to classic texts of political philosophy, focusing on the early modern period preceding the great democratic revolutions of the late eighteenth century. Upon completion of this course, you should understand the development of key notions in our modern political vocabulary (state, sovereignty, legitimacy, virtue, rights, liberty, toleration, etc.). You should be able to explain how they functioned in their original context, and how the purposes that they served, both politically and philosophically, changed over time. You should further be able to evaluate their cogency and their continuing utility.

This course is based on an approach that is both historical and hermeneutical. Assigned readings will be drawn primarily from original sources. Secondary sources (background, commentary, and analysis) will be assigned occasionally, and further bibliography will be distributed on particular topics. Class discussion will focus on the understanding and analysis of the primary texts.

**Required Reading:**

The following texts will be ordered through Barnes & Noble:

- Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Barker (Oxford World's Classics [ISBN 9780199538737])
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Skinner & Price (Cambridge UP [ISBN 9780521349932])
- Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck (Cambridge UP [ISBN 9780521567978])
- Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Laslett (Cambridge UP [ISBN 9780521357302])
- Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Cohler *et al.* (Cambridge UP [ISBN 9780521369749])
- Hume, *Selected Essays*, ed. Copley & Edgar (Oxford World's Classics [ISBN 9780199540303])
- Rousseau, *Of the Social Contract and Other Political Writings*, ed. Bertram (Penguin Classics [ISBN 9780141191751])

All of these works exist in multiple editions and translations. You are free to use other editions that you may already own, including e-books. Other readings will be made available through Sakai.

## Required work:

- 1) Three short papers (approximately 3 pages) on topics selected from a list of assigned possibilities. The short papers should aim to give an accurate summary of the chosen aspect of the author's argument and present a brief analysis of the goals the author is pursuing by advancing this argument, and an evaluation of the cogency of the position adopted. **The short papers are collectively worth 50% of the final grade** (two will count for 15% apiece and the third [the best of the three grades] for 20%). Short papers will be accepted electronically up until midnight on the due date.
- 2) The final paper (8-10 pages) will be on a topic of each student's choosing derived from class discussion. The final paper should attempt to synthesize a number of topics or perspectives on a single topic into an original argument, which may be either historical or evaluative in character. The topic should be submitted with a brief thesis statement on or before April 25. **The final paper is worth 40% of the final grade.** It is officially due on the last day of class, but extensions of one week or less will be given to all students who request them when submitting their topic.
- 3) Regular attendance is mandatory and active participation in class discussion is an essential part of the learning process. **Attendance and participation will constitute 10% of the final grade.**
- 4) There will be no mid-term or final examination.

If you have a disability and may require some type of accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. The Office of Disabilities Services is located in Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, on Livingston Campus. Guidelines and information on policies and procedures can be found at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>.

## Course Policies:

**Students are expected to attend class and be prepared to participate in discussion.** If you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. You may miss two class sessions without penalty provided your absence is reported through the system in a timely fashion. Absences due to religious observance or participation in university-sponsored events or activities such as intercollegiate athletics are treated as authenticated absences. Your final grade will be reduced by 2 points (to a maximum of 10) for each unauthenticated absence beginning with the third.

**Papers should be submitted electronically through Turnitin on the course Sakai site.**

**You are responsible for being familiar with the university's academic integrity policy**, which can be found at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>. The academic integrity policy is designed to assure both the fairness of evaluation and the effectiveness of learning. If you cheat or plagiarize, you are not only seeking an unfair advantage with respect to your classmates, you are also depriving yourself of the opportunity to master the material and skills that you are here to learn. Please note in particular the definition of plagiarism:

*Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course.*

**Violations of the academic integrity policy will be reported through procedures established by the University without exception.**

**Schedule:**

**NB: PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Jan 24	Intro
Jan 28	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
Jan 31	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
Feb 4	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
Feb 7	Cicero, <i>On Duties</i>
Feb 11	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Feb 14	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Feb 18	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>
Feb 21	Montaigne, "On Custom"
Feb 22	<b>First short paper due</b>
Feb 25	Grotius
Feb 28	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>
Mar 4	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>

Mar 7	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>
Mar 11	Harrington, <i>Oceana</i> , I
Mar 14	Locke, <i>An Essay concerning Human Understanding</i>
Mar 15	<b>Second short paper due</b>
Mar 25	Locke, <i>Letter on Toleration</i>
Mar 28	Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i>
Apr 1	Locke, <i>Second Treatise on Government</i>
Apr 4	Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i>
Apr 8	Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i>
Apr 11	Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i>
Apr 12	<b>Third short paper due</b>
Apr 15	Hume, <i>Essays</i>
Apr 18	Hume, <i>Essays</i>
Apr 22	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>
Apr 25	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>
	<b>Final paper topic due</b>
Apr 29	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>
May 2	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>
May 6	Conclusion
	<b>Final paper due</b>