

PS 52

Draft of February 15, 2008

Class meets in 3403 James
Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:25-10:40 am.
Spring 2008
Prof. P. Currah
Brooklyn College, CUNY

Modern Political Theory

This survey course covers fundamental concepts in modern political thought, including freedom, justice, equality, power, authority, alienation, ideology, citizenship, the social contract, liberalism, and democracy. In this course, "modern" political thought begins with Niccolò Machiavelli, who wrote *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy* in the early sixteenth century in Italy, and ends with Friedrich Nietzsche, who wrote the *On the Genealogy of Morality* in Germany in the late nineteenth century. In between, we will read primary works by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx. We will also read contemporary articles written from the perspectives of those excluded from the political theory "canon."

Office Hours and contact information

Tuesdays, 1:20 - 2:30 p.m.
Fridays, 8 – 9 am.
Or by appointment

Office: 3401 James
Email: profcurrah@gmail.com

Course Texts:

Required:

Available now at Shakespeare & Company on Hillel Place.
(The total cost of the books below, excluding tax, is \$67.65)

Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*
Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*
Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
Marx, *Selected Writings*
The Classical Utilitarians: Bentham and Mill
Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

You should also own a copy of a writing stylebook, one that explains how to cite sources, common grammar problems, etc. A good one is: Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference, with Writing in the Disciplines*. Available in the Brooklyn College Bookstore (in the basement of Boylan) in the book sections for *English 1* or *English 2*.

Additional readings—consisting of secondary literature—will be distributed in class or made available on Blackboard.

Course grade and assessment

Response papers: 40%. Ten two-page typed response papers on the week's readings.

Midterm exam - 20%. The in-class midterm will be on Friday, March 18th. Study questions, from which the actual exam questions will be drawn, will be distributed in advance in class. This midterm will test your ability to recognize key quotes from the thinkers we have studied; your knowledge of particular thinkers' approaches to justice, with reference to particular concepts; and finally, your ability to synthesize the material through compare and contrast the approaches, concepts, and assumptions of different thinkers.

Final exam - 20%. Most of the final exam will only cover material since the midterm, though there will be one question asking you to sum up the course. Study questions, from which the actual exam questions will be drawn, will be distributed in advance in class and on the course web page. This exam will test: your ability to recognize key quotes from the thinkers we have studied; your knowledge of particular thinkers' approaches to justice, with reference to particular concepts; and finally, your ability to synthesize the themes of the course by referencing at several different thinkers. **Final Exam: Friday, May 16th, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

Participation/attendance: 20%. Includes your attendance record, class preparation and participation, and results of **surprise quizzes** on the readings. You are expected to attend all classes, barring illness or emergencies. No one will be penalized for missing a class because of a religious holiday.

Notes on the grading and course requirements:

You must complete the assigned readings before class.

There will be surprise quizzes during the semester to ensure that you are doing the reading. These quizzes will not be difficult if you have done the reading.

You should meet with me during office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your writing and/or other questions you have.

All assignments and your final grade will be graded on a scale, not a curve.

Late response papers will not be accepted.

Incompletes: It is my policy, and that of the Brooklyn College Department of Political Science, that incompletes are given only in exceptional circumstances such as illness or family emergency.

Important College Deadlines

1. Thursday, January 31: Last day to add a course;
2. Monday, February 11: Last day to file Pass/Fail application;
3. Thursday, February 14: Last day to drop a course without a grade;
4. Monday, March 17: Last day to file for Spring 2008 Graduation;
5. Wednesday, April 9: Last day to apply for withdrawal from a course with a W (non-penalty) grade;
6. Thursday, April 10: Last day to resolve Fall 2007 Incomplete grades
6. Thursday, April 10: Last day to resolve Fall 2007 ABS grades

Students with Disabilities

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Brooklyn College Policy: "The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation."

My individual policy, which fits within College policy: All substantiated violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F on the assignment in question. In addition, I will also submit a Faculty Action Report form designating academic and possibly a disciplinary penalty (suspension, expulsion). Please read the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity online at <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies/pdf/CUNY%20PolicyAcademicIntegrity.pdf>. The Brooklyn College policy for implementing this policy is here: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies/pdf/AIP.pdf>. For examples of plagiarism, go here: <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core3/currah/acinteg.htm>

Schedule of classes and readings

Friday, January 25: Introduction to the course: The "modern," political theory, why we're reading all these books

Tuesday, January 29: Niccolò Machiavelli: Contingency, Agency, *Virtù*

Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (1513) chapters I-X (pp. 5-35).

Friday, February 1: Machiavelli continued

Reading: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chapters XIV-XV (pp. 35-80)
Optional, David Wooten, "Introduction," pp. xi-xlvi.

Tuesday, February 5: Nominalism, Rational Actors, and Hobbes's Leviathan State

RESPONSE PAPER ONE: Two page response paper on Machiavelli due in class.

Selections from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. (1651). *Note: this reading will be made available on Blackboard or distributed in class.*

Optional: Sheldon Wolin, "Hobbes: Political Society as a System of Rules," from *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) pp. 214-256, plus notes.

Friday, February 8: Hobbes continued

More reading from selections from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. (1651). *Note: this reading will be made available on Blackboard or distributed in class.*

Tuesday, February 12th: No class, college closed

Friday, February 15: The Classical Liberalism of John Locke

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (1689), pp. 5-42.

Tuesday, February 19: Locke, continued

RESPONSE PAPER TWO: Two page response paper on Hobbes due in class.

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, pp. 43-88.
Optional: C.B McPherson, "Editor's Introduction," pp. vii-xxiv.

Friday, February 22: Locke, continued

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, pp. 43-88.

Tommy Lott, "Early Enlightenment Conceptions of the Rights of Slaves," in *Subjugation and Bondage: Critical Essays on Slavery and Social Philosophy*, ed. Tommy L. Lott (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999). (Distributed in class).

Optional: Robert Bernasconi and Anika Maaza Mann, "Locke, slavery, and the two treatises," in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, edited by Andrew Valls (Ithaca: Cornell, 2005).
(Blackboard or distributed in class)

Optional: Richard Popkin, "The Philosophical Basis of Modern Racism," (Blackboard or distributed in class)

Tuesday, February 26: Locke, continued

RESPONSE PAPER THREE: Two page response paper on Locke due in class.

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, pp. 88-124.

James Madison, "The Same Subject Continued (The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection)," *From the New York Packet. Friday, November 23, 1787. (Federalist Papers)*. (Blackboard or distributed in class)

Friday, February 29: CATCH UP CLASS

Tuesday, March 4: "Everywhere they are in chains": Jean-Jacques Rousseau's critique of classical liberalism

Rousseau, "Letter to the Republic of Geneva," "Preface", and "Part I," of *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754), pp. 25-60, plus notes, pp. 83-106.

Friday, March 7: Rousseau, continued

Rousseau, "Part II" of *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp. 60-81, plus notes, pp. 106-109.

Optional: Peter Gay, "Introduction," to Rousseau's *Basic Political Writings*, pp. vii-xvii.

Tuesday, March 11: Rousseau's democratic theory: The Social Contract

RESPONSE PAPER FOUR: Two page response paper on Rousseau's Second Discourse due in class

Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762), Books I and II, pp. 141-172.

Friday, March 14: Rousseau continued

Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books III and IV, pp. 173-227.

David Theo Goldberg, "The Time of Racial States," from *The Racial State*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. To be distributed in class.

Tuesday, March 18: IN CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Friday, March 21st: NO CLASS

Tuesday, March 25

RESPONSE PAPER FIVE: Two page response paper on social contract theory due in class

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Book V, from *Emile or Education* (trans. Alan Bloom, pp. 356-389. (*Blackboard or distributed in class*))

Carole Pateman, "Genesis, Fathers and The Political Liberty of Sons," from *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 77-115, plus notes. (*Blackboard or distributed in class*)

Friday, March 28: Edmund Burke and the Conservative Critique of the "new conquering empire of light and reason" (the Enlightenment)

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), pp. 3-52.

Tuesday, April 1: Burke continued

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), pp. 53-101.

Bernard Mandeville, "The Fable of the Bees" (1723) (*Blackboard or distributed in class*)

Friday, April 4: Burke, continued

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), pp. 102-165 and 194-218.

Optional: J.G.A. Pocock, Editor's Introduction, pp. vii-li.

Tuesday, April 8: Utilitarianism Introduced

John Troyer, "Editor's Introduction," pp. vii-xvii.

RESPONSE PAPER SIX: Two page response paper on Burke due in class

Friday, April 11: Bentham's Calculus

Bentham, "Principles of Morals and Legislation," pp. 8-22

Bentham, "The Greatest Good for the Greatest Number," pp. 93-94.

Tuesday, April 15: John Stuart Mill's Defense of Liberty

RESPONSE PAPER SEVEN: Two page response paper on Bentham due in class

John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," pp. 151-193.

Friday, April 18: Mill continued

John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," pp. 194-244.

Tuesday, April 22: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Friday, April 25: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, April 29: Marx's critique of political emancipation

RESPONSE PAPER EIGHT: Two page response paper on Mill due in class

Marx, "On the Jewish Question" (1844), pp. 1-26.

Friday, May 2: Marx continued

Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," (1846) pp. 103-156.

Marx, "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*" (1859), pp. 209-213.

Tuesday, May 6: Marx's call to action

RESPONSE PAPER NINE: Two page response paper on Marx due in class

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" (1848), pp. 157-186.

Friday, May 9: Nietzsche and the end of the "modern"

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Preface and First Treatise, pp. 1-33.

Optional, Maudemarie Clark, "Introduction," pp. vii-xxxiv.

Tuesday, May 13

RESPONSE PAPER TEN: Two page response paper on Nietzsche due in class

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), Second Treatise, 35-66. pp. 1-33.

Final Exam: Friday, May 16th, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.