

PHIL 245

Political and Social Philosophy

Mon & Wed, 1:00pm- 1:50pm (TYD 2106) (& Fri discussion section)

Instructor: Christopher Morris

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Office hours: Mon 2:30-4:00, Tue 4:00-5:00,
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and by appointment.

An introduction to modern political philosophy by way of a study of selected classics. This semester we shall read and discuss selections from the works of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), Adam Smith (1723-1790), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and Karl Marx (1818-1883), and others. We shall examine critically the ideas and ideals of the distinctive traditions that have influenced political thought and practice. Our goal will be to gain an understanding of the main theses of these authors and to evaluate their relevance to contemporary political societies.

The focus of the course will be the following questions: How should we organize political society? The characteristic form of political organization in the modern world (16th-17th centuries to now) is that of the *state* (or, misleadingly, the “nation-state”). Should we organize society in this way, or are there better alternatives? What should the functions and tasks of governments be? We shall examine the implications of these classical theories for some contemporary controversies.

Students will be asked (1) to attend classes, (2) to read substantial selections from the assigned authors, (3) to take a mid-term test (Mon 5 Mar), (4) to write a short essay (due Mon 9 April), and (5) to take a final exam. Topics for the essay will be distributed, although students may select their own topics with written permission of the instructor. Essays must be submitted by the date indicated above; late work will be penalized.

The essay will count toward 35% of the final grade, the mid-term 25%, and the final for the remaining 40%. If class attendance is poor or students are not keeping up with the reading, surprise quizzes may be given. The instructor reserves the right to raise the final grade of anyone whose work shows dramatic improvement, as well as the right to fail any student who does not pass the final exam.

Students experiencing any difficulties or problems with the course should not hesitate to speak to the instructor. Please do not wait until the end of the term.

Text

Classics of Modern Political Theory, edited by Steven Cahn (Oxford University Press, 1997).

This large and relatively inexpensive text contains virtually all of the major texts of modern political theory through the end of the 19th century. Students may buy other editions of the works assigned, and many excellent inexpensive editions exist.

No secondary works are recommended for the class, but any student eager to read some should ask the instructor for suggestions.

Tentative reading assignments

You are expected to complete the readings by the time you attend the class for which they are assigned. The lecture will almost always bear directly on the assigned reading but will not necessarily explain it. Changes will occasionally be made, and these will be announced at the start of class. Unless otherwise indicated, readings will be found in *Classics of Modern Political Theory*. Readings marked by an * will be distributed or made available by other means.

Dates	Topics	Assignments
Wed 24 Jan	<i>Introduction</i>	
Mon 29 Jan	<i>Late Medieval Europe</i>	Morris, "The Modern State"*
Wed 31 Jan	<i>Hobbes: introduction</i>	<i>Leviathan</i> , Introduction (80-2), chs. 1-12 (excerpts)
Mon 5 Feb	<i>Hobbes: the natural condition of humans</i>	<i>Leviathan</i> , chs. 13, 14, 15 (118-133)
Wed 7 Feb	<i>Hobbes: a way out</i>	<i>Leviathan</i> , chs. 16 (133-5), chs. 17-8 (135-42), 19 (1 st 2 para.)
Mon 12 Feb	<i>Hobbes: the state</i>	<i>Leviathan</i> , chs. 21 (152-7), 24 (157-60), 26 (161-71), 29-30 (183-96)
Wed 14 Feb	<i>Hobbes: problems</i>	
Mon 19 Feb	<i>Locke: the natural condition of humans</i>	<i>2nd Treatise</i> , chs. I-IV (217-24)
Wed 21 Feb	<i>Locke: property</i>	<i>2nd Treatise</i> , ch. V (225-32)
Mon 26 Feb	<i>Locke: political society</i>	<i>2nd Treatise</i> , chs. VII-XI (240-56)
Wed 28 Feb	<i>Locke: limited government</i>	<i>2nd Treatise</i> , chs. XI-XIII (256-65), XV (268-9), XVIII-XIX (277- 90)
Mon 5 Mar	TEST	
Wed 7 Mar	<i>Hume: the origins of justice</i>	<i>2nd Enquiry</i> (490-500)
Mon 12 Mar	<i>Hume: the origin of government</i>	<i>Essays</i> (505-517)
Wed 14 Mar	<i>Rousseau: the natural condition of mankind</i>	<i>2nd Discourse</i> (370-97)

Mon 19 Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>	
Wed 23 Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>	
Mon 26 Mar	<i>Rousseau: the natural condition of mankind</i>	<i>2nd Discourse (397-419)</i>
Wed 28 Mar	<i>Rousseau: popular sovereignty</i>	<i>Social Contract (420-33)</i>
Mon 2 Ap	<i>Rousseau: the general will</i>	<i>Social Contract (443-80)</i>
Wed 4 Ap	<i>Rousseau: some worries</i>	
Mon 9 Ap	<i>the American Revolution</i>	<i>Jefferson, Declaration of Independence* term essay due</i>
Wed 11 Ap	<i>American Constitutional Government</i>	<i>Articles of Confederation* (1781), US Constitution (1789) (604-19)</i>
Mon 16 Ap	<i>the French Revolution</i>	<i>Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen (663-4)</i>
Wed 18 Ap	<i>Burke: conservatism</i>	<i>Reflections on the Revolution in France (667-83)</i>
Mon 23 Ap	<i>Smith: system of natural liberty</i>	<i>Wealth of Nations (531-45)</i>
Wed 25 Ap	<i>Smith: the duties of government</i>	<i>Wealth of Nations (545-52)</i>
Mon 30 Ap	<i>Marx: early thoughts</i>	<i>The German Ideology (857-67)</i>
Wed 2 May	<i>Marx: economics</i>	<i>Econ. essays (890-903)</i>
Mon 7 May	<i>Marx & Engels: class struggle, the state</i>	<i>The Communist Manifesto (867-89)</i>
Wed 9 May	<i>Engels: communism</i>	<i>Socialism: Utopian and Scientific (904-27)</i>
Mon 14 May 1:30-3:30	<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>(to be confirmed)</i>