**Labor and Liberty in the Scottish Enlightenment**

Social Thought 20676, cross-listed in Political Science 20676

**Winter Quarter 2021**

Tuesday/Thursday, 4:20 to 5:40pm CST (remote/Zoom)

**Lecturer:** Danielle Charette ([dcharette@uchicago.edu)](mailto:dcharette@uchicago.edu))

Office hours: Wednesdays, 7-8pm CST and by appointment

**Course Description:**

When we ask children what they want to be when they grow up, we presume their participation in a division of labor. Few concepts in the history of economic thought are as central as the division of labor, or as immediately visible in our social structure. But how did this division evolve? And does specialization encourage social well-being? Theorists of the Scottish Enlightenment treated “the separation of arts and professions” and “the distinction of ranks” as an historical development—one with consequences not just for the accumulation of wealth but also for its effect on gender roles, family relations, national security, and the organization of justice. Scottish authors such as Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, and John Millar debated whether the division of labor was in fact a sign of natural “progress.”

This seminar investigates how these early sociologists and political theorists treated the future of work—and its effects on education, civic participation, and national cohesion. We will ask whether the rise of specialization has led to social atomization or encouraged new forms of social interdependence. In the latter half of the course, we will explore how eighteenth-century theories of social division and domination influenced subsequent thinkers, particularly Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Friedrich Hayek.

**Texts:**

The following texts are available for purchase at the Seminary Coop. Other readings will be posted to the course website.

Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, ed. Fania Oz-Salzberger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006).

Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, 2 vols. ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S Skinner (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981).

Emile Durkheim, *Division of Labor in Society*, ed. Steven Lukes (New York: Free Press, 2014).

Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader,* ed. Robert Tucker, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978).

**Attendance and Expectations:**

Successful participation is much more than being present. To receive a good grade, you must read the required readings thoroughly before each class. Be prepared to answer questions, raise queries of your own, comment on the discussion board, and listen attentively and respectfully to your colleagues. Attendance at every class session is expected and repeated absences will result in a failing participating grade. If you need to take the course asynchronously, please let me know in advance so we can plan ahead with recordings and alternative assignments.

**Assignments and Grading:**

**Final paper** (55%): At the end of the term, you will submit a **10-page final paper**. This assignment calls for a clear and well-supported thesis that draws on the texts of at least two of the thinkers studied in this course, plus several well-chosen secondary sources. Students should meet with me **before** **Week 7** to discuss a suitable topic and secondary sources in advance. A complete outline, including the introduction and bibliography, is due by **6pm on Saturday, March 6** (end of week 8). **The outline is worth 10% of the final paper grade.** *Late papers or outlines will lose a third of a letter grade* (e.g. B to B-) *for every 24 hours past the deadline*. The final paper is due **Tuesday, March 16 by 10pm.**

**Discussion board questions** (10%): Students should post **four** discussion questions on Canvas over the course of the term. Please post these at least 24 hours before the next class meeting so that your classmates and I have time to read and respond. ***All questions must be posted before March 9.***

**Discussion board answers:** (20%): Answer **six** questions of your choice on the discussion board over the course of the term. These posts will be provisional. Feel free to test out new ideas—but take your time in answering. Posts should be between 200 and 300 words. Excellent posts will refer not only to the course readings but also to your peers’ contributions. You may respond to questions posted from previous sessions. Think of these posts as good warm-up exercises for your final papers. ***All posts must be submitted before March 13*.**

**Participation**: (15%) Attentive and good-spirited class participation is expected. That means doing more than just completing all course readings. Come to class prepared to contribute and to consider different views. *If you need to attend class asynchronously, please be in touch as soon as possible so we can arrange for alterative participation assignments*.

**Asynchronous Policy:** Students with time-zone conflicts because of the pandemic should plan to listen to Zoom recordings of each class and attend at least **six office** hour sessions with me. They should also post **a 200-300 word comment** 24 hours before each class, in addition to the other discussion board assignments.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is a serious but very avoidable offense. Familiarize yourself with the University’s guidelines on plagiarism and proper citation here: <https://provost.uchicago.edu/handbook/clause/academic-honesty-and-plagiarism>.

**Course Readings**

Week 1

**Tuesday, January 12:**

David Hume, Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences” (1742), pp. 111-37

“Of Commerce” (1752), pp. 253-67

**Thursday, January 14**

Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771)pp. 83-91, 93-115, 123-156

Week 2

**Tuesday, January 19**

Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks.* pp 157-190, 229-80

**Thursday, January 21**

Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), pp. 7-94

Week 3

**Tuesday, January 26:**

Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 106-194

**Thursday, January 28:**

Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, pp. 194-264

Week 4

**Tuesday, February 2:**

Smith**,** *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Book I.i.-v.15 (pp. 10-53 of Smith’s text, not the “General Introduction”); Book I.vii-viii (pp. 82-104).

**Thursday, February 4:**

Smith**,** *Wealth of Nations*, Book I.x (pp. 116-60); Book II intro (276-8); Book II.iii (pp.330-49)

Week 5 **\*\*\**Set up meetings to discuss paper ideas*\*\*\***

**Tuesday, February 9**

Smith**,** *Wealth of Nations*, Book III.i-iv (pp. 376-427)

**Thursday, February 11**

Smith**,** *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV.vii.b.49-vii.c.108 (pp.584-641); Book IV.ix.47-ic.52 (pp. 683-688)

Week 6

**Tuesday, February 16**

Smith**,** *Wealth of Nations*, Book V.i.a-V.i.d.19 (pp. 689-731); Book V.i.f-V.i.i.6 (pp. 758-816)

**Thursday, February 18**

Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” pp. 39-46 only

Marx, *The German Ideology* (1845-46), pp. 148-163, 176-186

Week 7

**Tuesday February 23**

Marx, *The German Ideology*, pp. 186-200

Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), pp. 471-500

**Thursday, February 25**

Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), pp. 3-7, 33-84

Week 8

**Tuesday, March 2**

Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, pp. Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, pp. 88-104, 116-135, 183-199

**Thursday, March 4**

Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, *Division of Labor*, pp. 201-220, 277-318

**\*\*\*Paper outline due Saturday March 6 by 6pm\*\*\***

Week 9

**Tuesday, March 9**

Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society”

**Thursday, March 11**

*Final class*.

**\*\*\*Final papers due March 16 by 10pm\*\*\***