

Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics

PLPT 3020
Modern Political Theory
Fall 2019
hours: Monday 1:00 - 3:00, and by appt.

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This course examines great thinkers and texts during the "modern" period. We will focus on four main themes:

- (a) classic works of the great theorists who wrote during this period, considered in their historical contexts;
- (b) analysis of their central concepts, which form the basis for the conceptual apparatus we bring to the analysis of political affairs;
- (c) the main currents of the "liberal" tradition of political theory, from the rise of classical liberalism during the period of Hobbes and Locke, into the industrial revolution and the problems this caused.
- (d) fundamental criticisms of liberal political theory, as expressed by its most important adversaries.

Please be advised. This is largely a reading class. The works, though all great classics, are often considered dry. But they are fundamental to understanding our political reality and so issues that concern all of us. To paraphrase Trotsky: "You may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you."

Books have been ordered at the University bookstore and should be purchased if at all possible. All material is on reserve in Clemons Library. Shorter Readings are on reserve only (on the course collab page).

T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge, paperback): Chaps. 1-18, 20-21, 26, 28-30, Review and Conclusion

J. Locke, *The Second Treatise on Civil Government*, in *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge, paperback)

D. Hume, *Political Writings*: 164-81, 1-98 (Hackett, paper)

PLUS three selections on collab:

Treatise of Human Nature, Book III, Pt. 1;

Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Appendix iii, "Some Farther Considerations With Regard To Justice"

Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Conclusion

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge, paperback): Books 1-12, 14, 19

recommended: *The Federalist*, #'s 9, 10, 47, 51 (collab)

J. Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, 2nd ed. (Hackett paperback):

Discourse on Inequality

Discourse on Political Economy (pp. 121-40)

The Social Contract

recommended: M. Robespierre, Speech on the Republic's political morality (February 5, 1794)
(collab.)

J. Bentham: Selections, in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (collab)

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (Hackett, paperback)

R. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd. ed. (Norton, paperback)

(Norton, paperback): pages (to be read in this order): 3-6, 681-2, 469-500, 146-200,
143-145, 203-217, 294-302, 361-76, 419-442, 760-68

Lochner v. New York, 198 U.S. 45 (1905) (selections: collab)

T.H. Green, "Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract," in *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation and Other Writings* (collab).

Requirements:

1. Examinations

Two 50 minute exams, on dates to be named

Final Exam is Saturday, December 14: 2 PM - 5PM

2. Analytical paper, on subject of your own choosing (approx 10-12. pp.), **due Monday, November 25.**

Late papers will be penalized; incompletes will not be given.

Brief guidelines for the paper are posted on the class collab page:
(paper assignment.doc).

Grading: final exam and paper count 37.5%; each hourly exam counts 12.5% (with class

participation then added). Final examination is loosely cumulative.

3. Discussion Section: You must attend discussion section; attendance will be taken, and excessive absences penalized. You must do the reading and be prepared to discuss it. Class participation will be taken into consideration and weighed heavily in grading.

Secondary Sources in the History of Political Theory (on reserve)

G. H. Sabine, *The History of Political Theory*.

J. Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, two vols. (Machiavelli through Marx)

M. Forsyth and M. Keens-Soper, eds., *A Guide to the Political Classics: Plato to Rousseau* (Oxford, 1988)

M. Forsyth, M. Keens-Soper, and J. Hoffman, eds., *The Political Classics: Hamilton to Mill* (Oxford, 1993)

I. Hampsher-Monk, *A History of Modern Political Thought*.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, on the internet, is generally excellent and an extremely useful resource (<http://plato.stanford.edu/>), as is, generally, Wikipedia.