Fall 2016 Modern Political Thought (Pol S 302 Section 02)*

Meeting time and place: 11:00 AM -12:15 PM E-201
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:50pm -1:50pm and by appointment

Course Description

How ought we to organize our common political existence? On the basis of which standards are we to judge the political and legal institutions that structure our lives? In modern times, when overarching religious-political orders have either collapsed or become deeply controversial and unstable, these important questions have no obvious answers. This course deals with some of the most influential attempts made by European political thinkers at addressing these questions in the aftermath of the collapse of the Christian religious-political order. These theoretical attempts continue to have universal significance. They have had a global influence and have foreshadowed the ways in which attempts are continually made to replace traditional orders everywhere.

The course focuses on debates surrounding the use of Reason as a source of political and moral standards. It spans from the second half of the Eighteenth Century through the beginning of the Twentieth. During the Age of Enlightenment, thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Immanuel Kant, and Jeremy Bentham offered universal principles based on Reason for judging human actions and political institutions. They were opposed however by traditionalist thinkers like Edmund Burke who raised the challenges of tradition, particularity, and history. The general outlines of the debate between these sides continue to shape the ways in which we conceive of our political options in the Twenty-First Century. For example, debates surrounding globalization and nationalism rely on the tension between a politics based on universal Reason and a politics that is based on cultural particularity. Furthermore, debates concerning group rights reveal the tension between a politics of collective identity and a politics of individual self-development.

The course is divided into four sections. We begin by considering the debate between Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft over the French Revolution, the event that most clearly marks the onset of modern politics. In the second section we examine in more detail some of the main ideas of Enlightenment political thought. The third section of the course deals with the Nineteenth Century. Much of that century’s political thought was marked by sober reflection on the successes, excesses, and short-comings of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. We focus on three attempts made by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill to offer theoretical worldviews that seek to preserve the achievements of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, while avoiding their pitfalls. In the fourth and final section of the
course we consider Friedrich Nietzsche’s radical attempt to subvert the entire tradition of the Enlightenment and the legacy of the French Revolution, which he claims rely on illusions. We end the course with a glimpse at the work of Max Weber who in the shadow of Nietzsche offers a stark diagnostic image of the modern world.

**Class Requirements**

*Attendance:* Students who miss more than four of the mandatory class meetings risk failing the course.

*Punctuality:* Our meetings begin at 9:30 am **sharp** and do not end until 10:45 am. Students who walk in late cause serious disruption, as do students who leave early. As a result every two late entrances or early departures will be counted as one absence.

*Class participation:* 10%

*Quizzes and in-class writings:* 10%

*Two short papers:* 20% (10% each)

*In-class Midterm essay exam:* 30%

*In-class Final essay exam:* 30%

**Submission of all out-of-class written work**

All homework assignments in this course must be submitted electronically via “Turnitin” (Blackboard’s anti plagiarism software) as well as in hard copy. Assignments not submitted for plagiarism review will not be accepted.

**Blackboard**

All students are expected to check Blackboard regularly and to make sure that the e-mail address with which they are registered on blackboard remains current. Students are expected to check their e-mail at least once a day, as course related announcements will be sent via e-mail.

**Exams**

STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE BOOKS, NOTES, PHONES, OR ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES WITH THEM DURING THE EXAMS. They are also required to bring one or two blue books to each exam.
**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Cheating and plagiarism are serious crimes. Students who are caught engaging in these activities will receive an automatic F for the course and will be reported to the appropriate university authorities.

According to the SDSU Senate “Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the University as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another; (e) submitting another person’s artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and (f) submitting as one’s own work papers purchased from research companies.”(Source: [http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html#cheating](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html#cheating))

**Required Books**

All of the following books are required and are available at the University Bookstore:


There are additional required readings available on Blackboard. Students are required to bring their own copy of the readings to class on the days that they are due.
Course Learning Objectives

In this course you will learn to:

- Approach complex theoretical texts in ways that make them easier to comprehend
- Provide written and oral interpretations of texts of political theory
- Become proficient at writing interpretive essays that rely on textual evidence to illuminate texts of political theory
- Compare and contrast different political theories
- Explain in writing and orally the stakes involved in adopting different political theories
- Apply insights from different political theories to live political debates
- Explain what the main themes of the Enlightenment are
- Determine whether and how a particular theory fits into the Enlightenment project or challenges it
- Recognize criticisms of Enlightenment political thought
- Distinguish between universalist political theories and particularist ones
- Distinguish between different modern theories of History
- Explain why loss of faith in Reason and History constitutes a crisis for us moderns
- Point to some of the directions of political thought that have emerged to address the crisis of modernity

Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Tuesday August 30
There is no class meeting on this day
Students are required to listen to introductory lecture using the link posted on Blackboard

I. Debating the French Revolution

INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Thursday September 1
Mandatory class meeting
A film is shown in class for which students are responsible
Tuesday September 6
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard Documents: 1. Gay (pp. 13-25); 3.Diderot (pp.288-291); and 4. Declaration of Rights. There is no document 2.

INDICTMENT

Thursday September 8
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: Edmund Burke REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE pp.3-19 “…they held it inviolable;” p.24; pp. 26 “The ceremony of cashiering…” - 31 “…of our rights and privileges.”

Tuesday September 13
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: Edmund Burke REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE pp.31-57 “…himself to his subjects.”

Thursday September 15
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: Edmund Burke REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE pp.59-73; 75 “I almost venture…” - 91 “…virtue cannot exist.”

Short paper 1 is due from students whose last name begins M-Z in Turnitin by 9:30 AM as well as in hard copy by 9:30 AM

Tuesday September 20
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: Edmund Burke REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE pp.151-163, 173, 194-199, 213-218

Short paper 1 is due from students whose last name begins A-L in Turnitin by 9:30 AM as well as in hard copy by 9:30 AM

DEFENSE

Thursday September 22
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard Document: 5.Wollstonecraft (pp. 5-14, 87-97, 126-141, 150-155)

II. Elements of Modern Political Vocabularies

TWO UNIVERSALIST CURRENTS

Tuesday September 27
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard Documents: 6. Bentham (pp. vi-xi, 3-10) And 7. Bentham
Thursday September 29
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard Documents: 8. Szymborska (pp. 185-186) And 9. Reiss (from his introduction to Kant Political Writings pp.16-21) And 10. Kant (pp. 61-72 only)

Tuesday Oct 4
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard Documents: 11. Rousseau (pp. 59-65) And 10. Kant (pp.73-87 only)

Thursday October 6
Mandatory class meeting
10. Kant (pp.87-92) And 12. Kant (pp. 98-108)

Tuesday October 11
Mandatory class meeting
Catch-up and review

Thursday October 13
Mandatory class meeting
In-class exam 1

III. Reconciling the Enlightenment with its Critics: Three Attempts

UNIVERSAL REASON AND COLLECTIVE SELF REALIZATION: IDEAL SYNTHESIS

Tuesday October 18
Mandatory class meeting

Thursday October 20
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: G. W. F. Hegel Introduction to the Philosophy of History, pp.23-28, 30-45 (...end of third paragraph).

Tuesday October 25
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: G. W. F. Hegel Introduction to the Philosophy of History, pp.50-56, 57-59 (...end of first paragraph), 60 (...bottom paragraph)-61 (...top paragraph), 62 (...third paragraph)-63, 64 (...second paragraph)-66 (...end of second paragraph), 67 (...second paragraph)- 67 (...end of page), 71(...middle paragraph), 75 (...second paragraph)- 82.
UNIVERSAL REASON AND COLLECTIVE SELF REALIZATION: MATERIAL SYNTHESIS

Thursday October 27
Mandatory class meeting

Tuesday November 1
Mandatory class meeting

Thursday November 3
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: **THE MARX-ENGELS READER**. Karl Marx “On the Jewish Question” pp. 26-36 (…just as war ends with the conclusion of peace) and pp. 39(But the religious spirit…)- 46.
Read from Book: **THE MARX-ENGELS READER**. Karl Marx “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844” Section on “Estranged Labour.” pp. 71(The worker becomes all the poorer…) – 77(...which he finds himself as a worker)

Tuesday November 8
Mandatory class meeting

*Short Paper 2 is due in Turnitin at 9:30 AM and in hard copy in class at 9:30 AM*

UNIVERSAL REASON AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Thursday November 10
Mandatory class meeting

Note: the required reading for today includes Elizabeth Rapaport’s Editor’s introduction. If you have a different edition of **ON LIBERTY** it is still your responsibility to find a copy of this introduction and read it.

Tuesday November 15
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: J. S. Mill **ON LIBERTY**. “Chapter II.”

Thursday November 17
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: J. S. Mill ON LIBERTY. “Chapter III"

Tuesday November 22
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Book: J. S. Mill ON LIBERTY “Chapter IV.”

IV. Radical Challenge: Modernity without Illusions?

Tuesday November 29
Mandatory class meeting

Tuesday December 6
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard: 15. Nietzsche (pp.15-56)

Thursday December 8
Mandatory class meeting
Read from Blackboard: 16. Weber (pp.134-156).

Tuesday December 13
Mandatory class meeting
Catch up and review

Tuesday December 20
Mandatory class meeting
In-class Final Exam at 10:30 AM

Note: This syllabus is subject to revision.

* This is an Explorations course in Social and Behavioral Sciences. Completing this course will help you learn to do the following with greater depth: 1) explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences; 2) comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences; 3) Identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness; 4) enhance your understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

Explorations Courses that fulfill the 9-unit requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. Your three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary, more complex and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses.