

Renaissance and Modern Political Thought
POLS 372/WGST 372/PHIL 436, Fall 2014

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Office hours: T 1:30-3 pm,
W 4-5:30, & by appointment
McGannon 136

Course Description

The class will study seminal works in Western political thought, from the 16th to the 19th century, analyzing them as systems of thought, as more-or-less coherent frameworks for understanding politics. Objectives are:

- 1) to learn about the meanings, contexts, and evolution of ideas that have continued to interest political thinkers--notions of political community, virtue, law, rights, freedom, and equality as these ideas have developed in modern political thought;
- 2) to develop an understanding of how the ideas and structures of modern politics are intertwined with, and shaped by, gendered public and private spheres and public and private virtues.

Knowledge of the deeply ingrained gendered aspects of modern politics was not understood widely before the proliferation of feminist scholarship in the 20th century. This knowledge is important for understanding the potential for justice or injustice in the political and cultural institutions and practices that have developed in Western democracies. It is also important for guarding against injustice as these institutions and practices are adapted for conditions in emerging democracies.

Format & Requirements

Because this course is about ideas--which are to be analyzed and applied critically rather than memorized--the format emphasizes opportunities for students to process ideas through discussion and writing. The format is a structured discussion, supplemented by occasional short lectures. This format places a great deal of responsibility on students, who are expected to complete reading assignments on time and participate in class discussions. Students who do not complete reading assignments before class will not be able to understand the discussion and will not be prepared to write assigned essays and exams.

Requirements: 1) Students are expected to complete reading assignments before the beginning of the class in which they are to be discussed and to participate regularly in class discussions of the readings. There may be occasional pop quizzes on the readings, if that seems necessary. 2) In addition, students take turns serving as "expert" discussants, responsible for raising questions about the reading assignment and commenting on questions raised by other students and by the instructor. 3) Each student will write two short essays. 4) Drafts of these essays will be discussed in tutorial sessions with one or two other students and the instructor. In the tutorials, every student is expected to provide helpful criticisms of others' work. 5) Each student will take a mid-term exam and a final exam. 6) Attendance at every session is required. Students are responsible for signing the attendance sheet at the beginning of class. Absences are excused only if students provide a good reason--e.g. illness, required university activity--preferably in advance and turn in written responses to the study. 7) All students are required to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the semester.

Core texts

Machiavelli,
Machiavelli,
Hobbes,
Locke,
Rousseau,
Rousseau,
Wollstonecraft,
Mill and Taylor,

All of these texts are (or will be) available in the campus bookstore. All are also available on line.

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longer works. All of these works are also available fr

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>.

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or

published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

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Student learning, disability statement:

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [314-977-8885](tel:314-977-8885) or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Tentative Schedule

8/26 Introduction: Machiavelli on public and private virtue

Video,

- 10/23 Penny Weiss, ERes
- 10/28 Jean-Jacques Rousseau,
- 10/30 Rousseau, continued
- 11/4 Rousseau,
- 11/6 Rousseau, continued
- 11/11 Mary Wollstonecraft,
- 11/13 Wollstonecraft, continued
- 11/18 Paper #2 due at beginning of class. BRING 3 HARD COPIES OF YOUR PAPER TO CLASS. Peer review of papers during class.
- 11/20 John Stuart Mill, excerpts, <http://www.constitution.org/jsm/liberty.htm>. Hard copy of polished paper #2 due at beginning of class.
- 11/25 John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor,
- 11/27 Holiday
- 11/29 Taylor and Mill. continued
- 12/1 Review
- 12/11 Final Exam, 12-1:50 pm