

PSCI 3308A

Modern Political Thought

Monday and Wednesday 11:35-12:55

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

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Office Hours: Monday 10:30 a.m-11:15 a.m.; Wednesday. 10:30 a.m-11:15 a.m.;
Friday 11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or by appointment.
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This course examines modern Western political thought with an emphasis on modern democratic theory. We begin with critiques of modern approaches to knowledge and politics (presented in the essays by Oakeshott and Euben). We then focus on the work of three important democratic theorists. We consider Rousseau's vision of a virtuous city guided by the general will as described in his *Political Economy* and *Social Contract*. Next, we turn from Rousseau's contemplation of an ideal community to Tocqueville's famous reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the democratic social condition, based upon his practical observations of an actual society, nineteenth century America. Our third author, Jean Bethke Elshtain, considers the challenges and promise of democratic citizenship in a contemporary context in her work, *Democracy on Trial*.

Most of these authors stress the importance of the citizen's attachment to the community and might therefore be seen as taking a "communitarian" approach. We will also consider liberal defenses of individual rights and protests against tyranny of the majority (in the works of Tocqueville, Mill and Constant), as well as arguments for the extension of freedom, equality and justice to women, workers, racialized groups and others (in the works of Mill, Marx, and Young). We will conclude with Camus' reflections on the responsibilities of the writer in the face of political violence and totalitarianism.

Objectives of the Course:

One key objective is to understand the teachings of these thinkers on their own terms; another is to compare and contrast the thinkers' approaches to major concepts, such as freedom, equality, justice, participation, deliberation, tyranny and individual rights. The course features a mix of classic and contemporary works in order to provide both depth of analysis and breadth of knowledge. It also aims to give the student the ability to describe in his or her own words how the ideas of the thinkers can inform

reflection about present day political and ethical dilemmas.

The course is designed to help students learn the art of interpretation by practicing it. As well, it is set up to teach the importance of careful reading. The course also aims to help students become clearer writers, to refine their skills of argumentation and to engage in independent thinking.

Prerequisite: third-year standing.

N.B The course proceeds by textual and contextual study of philosophical texts. Our approach will be theoretical.

Class Etiquette: Each person who speaks in class should be given the floor. Talking or whispering to other students while someone else is speaking is destructive of the quality of class deliberation.

Required Texts (**Available at Haven Books**)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract: With Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy*. Ed. Roger Masters. Trans. Judith Masters. Bedford Books, 1978.

Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. Ed. Sanford Kessler. Trans. Stephen D. Grant. Hackett, 2000.

Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*. Anasai Press, 1993.

A packet of required readings

Course Requirements:

Participation and Attendance	10%
True/false quiz Wed. Oct. 13	10%
Tocqueville Paper, 6-8 double-spaced pages, due Mon. Nov. 8	30%
Final exam (scheduled during the formal exam period)	50%

Quiz: The true/false quiz will be held at **12:30 p.m.** sharp on **Wed. Oct. 13**. Students will have from that time until the end of class to write the quiz. You will be responsible for *On the Social Contract*, Books 1-4. In exceptional circumstances, a make-up quiz may be written but only if students have documentation proving that serious unforeseen circumstances, such as illness or family affliction, have arisen. As per early feedback guidelines, the True/False Quiz will be returned by Wed. Oct. 20.

Essay: The essay is due at the beginning of class on **Mon. Nov. 8**. The essay is to be of 6-8 double-spaced pages with no more than 300 words per page. It will be graded on the basis of criteria which include: clarity, organization, coherent justification, focus,

provision of ample evidence and documentation, reflection on course readings and overall grasp of the topic under discussion. A one-page description of these criteria will be distributed when the paper topics are handed out. The same grading criteria (with some adjustments due to the difference of format) will be used for the exam. Our goal will be to return all graded essays that are passed in on time to students within two to three weeks of the date the essay is due.

Policy regarding late papers: Late papers are subject to a penalty of one half point out of 30 per day. Unless you have documentation proving that serious unforeseen circumstances, such as illness or family affliction, have arisen, you can expect the penalty to be fairly and consistently applied. Late papers will not be accepted after the last day of classes.

Final Exam: The final exam is designed to test your knowledge and understanding of the course readings. There will be two sections; each will contain a choice between two essay questions. It will be a 3 hour exam and will be scheduled during the formal examination period.

Please also note the following:

-Late essays not submitted directly to the instructor must be placed in the drop-box outside the Political Science Office, Loeb B640. They will be date-stamped. The drop-box is emptied **every weekday at 4 p.m.** and all items collected at that time are date-stamped with that day's date. Essays placed in the drop-box after working hours are date-stamped the following day.

-Assignments sent by fax to the Department of Political Science will not be accepted.

-It is not acceptable to hand in the same assignment for two or more courses.

-The Undergraduate Calendar states "To obtain credit in a course, students must meet all the course requirements for attendance, term work, and examinations." (Academic Regulation [AR] 2.1) The grade of 'F' will be assigned where term work is incomplete.

Schedule of Readings:

Note: Numbers refer to readings in the course pack.

Mon. Sept. 13 Introduction

Wed. Sept. 15 1) Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*. (Liberty Press, 1991), pp. 1-36.
2) Roxanne Euben, "Premodern, Antimodern or Postmodern? Islamic and Western Critiques of Modernity." *Review of Politics* 59, no. 5 (Summer 1997) pp. 429-459.

Mon.Sept.20	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Political Economy</i>
Wed. Sept. 22	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i> , Book 1
Mon. Sept. 27	<i>On the Social Contract</i> , Book 1, cont'd, and Book 2
Wed. Sept. 29	<i>On the Social Contract</i> , Book 2, cont'd
Mon. Oct. 4	<i>On the Social Contract</i> , Book 3
Wed. Oct. 6	<i>On the Social Contract</i> , Book 4
Mon. Oct. 11	Thanksgiving; University Holiday
Wed. Oct. 13	3) Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients compared with that of the Moderns," in <i>Constant: Political Writings</i> , Biancamaria Fontana, ed. (Cambridge, 1988) pp. 309-328.
	12:30 p.m.: True/false quiz on Books 1-4 of <i>On the Social Contract</i>
Mon. Oct. 18	Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> Tocqueville's Introduction (pp. 1-15) and Vol. 1, Part 1, Chapter 2 (pp. 15-33).
Wed. Oct. 20	Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> Vol. 1, Part 1, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 (pp. 34-62).
Mon. Oct. 25	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol. 1, Part 2, Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 87-117). (The chapters listed refer to the edition by Kessler and Grant. Note that other editions may list chapters 6-7 of Vol. 1 Part 2 as 14-15 instead)
Wed. Oct. 27	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol. 1, Part 2, Chapters 8-9 (pp. 117-146).
Mon. Nov. 1	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol. 2, Preface, (pp. 169-170) and Vol. 2, Part 2, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 (pp. 201-224).
Wed. Nov. 3	<i>Democracy in America</i> Vol. 2, Part 4, Chapter 6 (pp. 304-309).

- Mon. Nov. 8 **Tocqueville Paper due.** Film : T.B.A
- Wed. Nov. 10 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts: First Manuscript, "Alienated Labour"*:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>
 and Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*,:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/prefaceabs.htm>
- Mon. Nov. 15 4) John Stuart Mill, excerpts from *The Subjection of Women in Social and Political Philosophy*, James Sterba, ed. (Thomson Wadsworth, 2003) pp. 340-351.
- Wed. Nov. 17 5) Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship," *Ethics: A Journal of Moral, Political and Legal Philosophy* 99, no. 2 (January 1989) pp. 117-142
- Mon. Nov. 22 Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*, chapters 1 and 2
- Wed. Nov. 24 *Democracy on Trial*, chapter 3
- Mon. Nov. 29 *Democracy on Trial*, chapter 4
- Wed. Dec. 1 *Democracy on Trial*, chapter 5
- Mon. Dec. 6 Albert Camus, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech:
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1957/camus-speech-e.html

Conclusion

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations.** If you

require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 15 2010 for December examinations and March 11 2011 for April examinations.**

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student’s performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may

use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.