

Classics of Social and Political Thought III

Social Sciences/SOSC 15300, Spring 2017

TR, 3:00-4:20pm

Classics Building, 111

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Office hours: T, 4:30-6pm,
or by appointment (Pick 507)

i. Course Overview and Objectives

What is legitimate political authority? How is it constituted? Under what circumstances can it be challenged, reformed, or overthrown, altogether? Furthermore, what role does history play in reimagining the horizons of political community? Together, we will explore these and other questions through the writings of well-known figures in the history of political thought including—but not limited to—Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Mill, Marx, Nietzsche, Du Bois, and Arendt. We will explore themes such as founding, constitutions, conflict, revolution, republics, federalism, power, liberty, individualism, progress, and democracy, to name a few. This is the third quarter of the *Classics of Social and Political Thought* core sequence and, by now, you should be accustomed to identifying and analyzing key arguments in “classic” texts in the history of political thought. This course builds on this, pushing you to charitably, yet critically, assess the arguments of this term’s texts and develop your own nuanced readings of these authors’ arguments through classroom dialogue and written assignments.

In short, this course aims to improve your ability to:

- Assess the claims of central texts in the history of political thought in a charitable, yet critical, manner
- Develop nuanced readings of historical and contemporary political thought through dialogue and writing

ii. Required Texts

Physical copies of the following texts will be available for purchase the Seminary Co-Op Bookstore. *Please use these editions of the texts.* If you have issues obtaining these texts, please contact me as soon as possible. All other readings will be posted on Chalk.

- Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Library of America)
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. Gray (Oxford)
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Tucker (Norton)
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, eds. Clark and Swenson (Hackett)
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, eds. Blight & Gooding-Williams (Bedford)

iii. Assignments, Grading, and Policies

Attendance and Participation

20 %

Regular class attendance and active participation facilitate one's ability to both assess the claims of this course's texts and develop nuanced readings of them. Thus, attendance and participation in class is mandatory. Absences due to personal emergencies, illness, religious observance, or other legitimate causes will be excused with advanced notice and proper documentation, where applicable. Good participation reflects both the quantity and quality of in-class comments. Students are expected to come to class with texts readily available, having done the reading and having prepared for respectful and substantive discussion. Laptops are allowed only for course-related activities; other observed activities will result in a grade reduction. I am available for any student wishing to discuss methods for engaging more effectively in class discussion.

Author Analysis

30 %

The author analysis serves as a verbal means of evaluating the students' ability to assess the claims of the course's texts and develop a nuanced reading (i.e. thesis) for submission to peer review. In order to balance varying degrees of exposure to the course material and the type of argumentation required in this course, author analyses will be conducted and evaluated in groups. Groups will spend the first ten to fifteen minutes of class presenting their thesis, supporting textual evidence, and responses to potential counter-arguments. The next fifteen to twenty minutes will be a free-range discussion where others may offer constructive feedback in the form of contrary textual evidence, unclear points or themes, or other things that come to mind. Presenting students will be evaluated on their thesis, use of evidence, counter-arguments, and responses to classroom feedback. Non-presenting students will also be evaluated on the quality of their feedback. I will provide more details in the first week. Student groups are required to meet with me at least twenty-four hours in advance of their presentation to discuss their group's thesis and evidence.

Final Paper

50 %

The final paper in this course is intended to give students a written opportunity to assess the arguments of the course's texts and develop a nuanced argument in response. Therefore, papers will require students to defend a compelling thesis, marshal supporting textual evidence, and respond to potential counter-arguments. Students may write on the author they presented for the author analysis if they so choose, but their chosen prompts must be substantively distinct. Papers must be original work from the student; plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance and will result in failure on the assignment and possibly failure in the course or further sanctions. If they are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, students should consult <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/Policies#Honesty>. A one-page prospectus with a thesis paragraph and potential supporting evidence (with citations) will be due roughly a week in advance. Students will bring these to class and review each other's developing arguments. I will provide paper prompts a week in advance of the prospectus class. Also, I will upload a sheet for the prospectus review on Chalk. Students may choose to use the sheet or write/type out their feedback on a separate sheet, but they must answer all parts and give this to the student whose work they are reviewing. Final drafts of papers must be emailed to me by 5pm the day they are due with the prospectus review comments included at the end of the paper. I will not read drafts of papers. Late papers will be reduced by one-third a letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) for every day past the due date.

If you have a documented disability and require a reasonable accommodation to complete the course, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services (<http://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>) as soon as possible. If you already have an Accommodation Determination Letter, I am available to discuss how to implement the accommodation.

iv. Reading Schedule

Week One

T (3/28): Course Introduction; Montesquieu (I) – General Principles
Assignment: Evaluation; *Spirit of the Laws*, Books I-III (pp 3-30); (28pp)

H (3/30): Montesquieu (II) – Republicanism and Constitutionalism
Assignment: *Spirit of the Laws*, Book IX.1-5 (pp 131-134) and Book XI.6 (pp 156-166); (15pp)

Week Two

T (4/4): The American and French Revolutions
Assignment: *Federalist Papers* 9, 47; Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies* and *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (pp. 3-33); Robespierre's *Prospectus for Le Défenseur de la Constitution* [1792] and *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* [1793]; (54 pp)

H (4/6): Tocqueville (I) – Foundations and Democratic Theories, Pt. I
Assignment: *Democracy in America*, pp. 3-17, 31-65, 74-77, 197, 224-230 (62pp)

Week Three

T (4/11): Tocqueville (II) – Democratic Theories, Pt. II
Assignment: *Democracy in America*, pp. 264-300, 311-318, 330-364 (80pp)

H (4/13): **NO CLASS**

Week Four

T (4/18): Tocqueville (III) – Social Theories, Political Mechanisms, Equality, and Inequality
Assignment: *Democracy in America*, pp. 365-419, 470-476, 479-480, 483-493, 581-619, 625-628, 649-652, 669-678, 692-710, 785-796, 814-834 (184 pp)

H (4/20): Mill (I)
Assignment: *On Liberty*, Chaps. 1-2, pp. 5-54 (50pp)

Week Five

T (4/25): Mill (II)
Assignment: *On Liberty*, Chaps. 3-5, pp. 55-112 (58pp)

H (4/27): Mill (III)
Assignment: *The Subjugation of Women*, Chs. 1-2, pp. 409-454 (46pp)

Week Six

T (5/2): Marx (I)
Assignment: "On the Jewish Question," pp. 26-52 (27pp)

H (5/4): Marx (II)
Assignment: "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts," pp. 66-105, "Theses on Feuerbach," pp. 143-146 (44pp)

Week Seven

T (5/9): Marx (III)

Assignment: “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” pp.469-500, “For a Ruthless Critique of Everything Existing,” pp. 12-15, “The Fetishism of Commodities” [*Capital*], pp. 319-329 (48pp)

H (5/11): Nietzsche (I)

Assignment: *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Preface and First Essay, pp. 1-33 (33pp)

Week Eight

T (5/16): Nietzsche (II)

Assignment: *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Second and Third Essays, pp. 35-66, 83-118 (68pp)

H (5/18): Du Bois (I)

Assignment: *Souls of Black Folk*, Forethought, Chs. 1, 3-6, pp. 34-44, 62-102 (52pp)

Week Nine

T (5/23): Du Bois (II)

Assignment: *Souls of Black Folk*, Chs. 9-14, pp. 133-195 (63pp)

H (5/25): Arendt (I)

Assignment: *On Revolution*, Introduction and Ch. 1 (The Meaning of Revolution), pp. 1-48 (48pp)

Week Ten

T (5/30): Arendt (II)

Assignment: *On Revolution*, Ch. 4 (Foundation I: Constituto Libertatis), pp. 132-170 (39pp)