

Classics of Social and Political Thought
The University of Chicago
The College
Winter 2023; 9:30-10:50 TuTh

Instructor:
John Levi Martin
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Office Hours Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 *and by appointment**

Writing Advisor:
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Course:

“What is justice? What makes a good society? And who the hell asked you, anyway?” This sequence examines such problems as the conflicts between individual interest and common good; between morality, religion, and politics; between liberty and equality; between teachers and students; between 9:30 and 10:50 AM.

Readings:

Most of the readings are books available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore. Other readings will be posted to our CHALK site. If printing things out from this is a burden to you, let me know, and we’ll work out another way. You do the reading *before* the class that it is associated with on the syllabus. Special note: I have followed Sankar Muthu’s version of this class to the T in terms of the readings.

Books ordered at the Seminary Cooperative Bookstore:

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. E. Curley (Hackett)
John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett (Cambridge University Press)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and other early political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge University Press)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge University Press)

Requirements and Grading:

Not surprisingly, a big part of the class is doing the readings, and perhaps re-reading if you realize after class that you missed a lot of what was going on. Regular and cheerful attendance is expected; that means and contributing not only about what you understand and appreciate, but also what you don’t understand and/or hate. There are three five page papers. A “five page paper” is one that can be anywhere from a single word to five pages (double-spaced, 12 point, 1” margins) but not an n-dash more. You can put a cover page on if you want, or if you have the space, your name can be at the top. The idea is to work on expressing your thoughts in as direct and elegant a fashion as you can.

We are fortunate to be working with a writing advisor from the *SOSC Writer* program. She will conduct two mandatory workshops for everyone; you’ll also need to meet with her before your first paper. This is only what you *must* do; you are encouraged to work with her in the way that will best support your writing. We will schedule the workshops as things settle down at the

beginning of the quarter.

A word on laptops: if you have a learning issue that really requires the use of a laptop, please see me. Otherwise, please do not bring laptops to class. (Tablets on which readings are present are okay, but you should have a book for almost all of these and I urge printouts for the other. But if you want to read them on your phone, or your watch, or your google goggles, I won't prevent you.) They suck participation away from the class as a whole; we want you paying attention to one another, and not an illuminated screen. If you do bring a laptop any day, for that day, you start with a negative participation score, and will have to be unusually engaged and animated to overcome this.¹

Your grade is computed 20% for each paper, 20% brute attendance (physical presence) and 20% participation. Some participation every day is some of that 20; more is more. Papers are to be turned in to my "box" in the sociology department main office. Do you not know where the sociology department main office is? Capacity to independently ascertain its whereabouts and successfully transport oneself there by 4:00 in the afternoon is necessary to earn a passing grade in this section.

On participation: It has been brought to our attention that many students don't think that teachers really grade on participation, but we do. We will actually keep track of who participates via saying something in class every day! That means that if you only say something half the time, you might get only half the participation points, which is like getting an F on a paper!

At the same time, making (1) irrelevant or (2) uninformed comments don't help: that is, if we are talking about the reading and you didn't do it, talking about your aunt's cabbage patch and nature instead of Locke on the state of nature doesn't help at all. So....if you aren't secure about just jumping in in the middle of a gab-fest, decide in advance something you want to say and toss it in, especially at the beginning ("I'd like to make sure we talk about Locke's weird idea about..."). You don't need to talk a lot every day, but you should be making a substantive contribution when you can.

A word on secondary sources: the texts we are reading are challenging. It is not uncommon for students to be unsure of their own interpretation. In some cases, editors/translators will be of great assistance. We hope that you will soon find your sea legs here, but if you do wish to turn to a secondary treatment as a scaffolding for your first reading, whether Wikipedia, Cliff notes, *Classics Illustrated*, or *The Enlightenment for Complete F***** Idiots*, make sure that you only use this to orient yourself, at which point you put the secondary treatment down, never to be picked up again, and read independently. If you do turn to a secondary source when writing your paper, do make sure to cite it. We certainly want to discourage their use, but understand that sometimes it is better than the alternative. You are, however, always responsible for independently supporting any claim you make.

¹ Note that by "unusually engaged" I don't mean looking up when Aquinas was born on Wikipedia—I mean listening to and responding to other students.

Reading assignments

Meeting #1 (Tuesday, January 3): Introduction and beginning of **Hobbes**.
Hobbes's Introduction (all: pp. 3-5)

Meeting #2 (Thursday, January 5): **Hobbes 2**.
Leviathan, Review and Conclusion (paragraph 15) (pp. 495-6); Chp. 4 (paragraphs 3-13, 22-24);
Chp. 6 (paras 1-7, 34-41, 47-59); Chp. 8 (paras 1-2, 13-19); Chp. 10 (paras 1-3, 16-20, 53-54);
Chp. 11 (all); Chp. 13 (all)

Meeting #3 (Tuesday, January 10): **Hobbes 3**
Leviathan, Chp. 14 (all); Chp. 15 (paras 1-17, 21, 34-41); Chp. 16 (paras 1-7, 13-15); Chp. 17
(all); Chp. 18 (para 1); Chp. 19 (paras 1-8, 14-23); Chp. 20 (paras 1-15, 18-19)

Meeting #4 (Thursday, January 12): **Hobbes 4**
Leviathan, Chp. 18 (all); Chp. 30 (paras 1-11, 12-24, 27); Chp. 46 (paras 32, 35-36); Chp. 31
(para 41); Review and Conclusion (paras 16-17)

Meeting #5 (Tuesday, January 17): **Hobbes 5**
Leviathan, Letter Dedicatory (pp. 1-2, esp. second para); Chp. 21 (all); Chp. 28 (paras 22-23);
Chp. 29 (paras 1-12, 16, 19, 22-23); Review and Conclusion (paras 1-9)

Meeting #6 (Thursday, January 19): **Hobbes 6**
Leviathan, Chp. 41 (paras 3-5); Chp. 42 (paras 4-11); Chp. 43 (paras 1-3, 11, 22-24); Chp. 8
(para 27); Chp. 47 (all: pp. 477-484); Chp. 47 (Latin version) (paras 28-29) (pp. 487-488)

***** PAPER 1 IS ASSIGNED TODAY IN CLASS *****

Due in 9 days! January 26th, 10:15 AM! Paper only!

Meeting #7 (Tuesday, January 24): **Locke 1**
Second Treatise of Government (note: page 267 onward), Chp. 1-5 (all); Chp. 6 (only paras 52-
55, 57, 58, 61, 74-76)

Meeting #8 (Thursday, January 26): **Locke 2**
Second Treatise of Government, Chp. 7-9

Meeting #9 (Tuesday, January 31): **Locke 3**
Second Treatise of Government, Chp. 10-15

Meeting #10 (Thursday, February 2): **Locke 4**
Second Treatise of Government, Chp. 16-19

Meeting #11 (Tuesday, February 7): **Locke 5**
A Letter Concerning Toleration (pp. 7-62); the editor's introduction (pp. ix-xxiii) is
recommended

***** PAPER 2 IS ASSIGNED TODAY IN CLASS *****

Due in 9 days! February 16th, 10:15 AM! Paper only!

Meeting #12 (Thursday, February 9): **Rousseau 1**

Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men ('*Second Discourse*'): Preface; Exordium; Part I (all); Part II (paragraphs 1-19);
Rousseau's Notes: 9, 11, 15, 16

Meeting #13 (Tuesday, February 14): **Rousseau 2**

Second Discourse, Part II (paragraphs 20-58)

Meeting #14 (Thursday, February 16): **Rousseau 3**

Of the Social Contract, Book I (all); Book II, Chp. 1-3; Book IV, Chp. 1-2

Meeting #15 (Tuesday, February 21): **Rousseau 4**

Of the Social Contract, Book II, Chp. 4-10

Meeting #16 (Thursday, February 23): **Rousseau 5**

Of the Social Contract, Book II, Chp. 11-12; Book III, Chp. 1-9, 16-17

Meeting #17 (Tuesday, February 28): **Rousseau 6**

Of the Social Contract, Book III, Chp. 10-15, 16-17 (re-read), 18; Book IV, Chp. 1-2 (re-read), 3, 5-9

***** PAPER 3 IS ASSIGNED TODAY IN CLASS *****

Graduating seniors; due in 7 days (March 7th)! Everyone else, due March 9th 10:15 AM! Paper only! I mean it!

Meeting #18 (Thursday, March 2): **Kant**

"Idea for a Universal History" (Propositions 4-6 only, pp. 6-9); "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" (all, pp. 17-23); "Theory and Practice" (Part 3, pp. 60-66)
Note: for comparison on the topic of progress, see also the following excerpts from two speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr., pp. 141-142, 277-278

Other little things....

* Office hours "by appointment" are usually best for you, though you are always welcome to drop by during my scheduled hours. The way to do it is to email me a set of times you can meet in order of preference, and then I'll choose the one I can do. This shortens the number of back-and-forth emails and allows us to set something up quicker.

** Of course we run on the honor system here, but the internet has changed the nature of academic misconduct in such a way as to lead to more "borderline cases." As you are responsible for knowing where this line is, if you have any doubts, definitely talk to me and advisors here. Please hand in papers on time; late papers go down .5 grades for every day late.

*** Your grade average is 60% papers, 20% non electronicized attendance, 20% participation.