

## Renaissance and Modern Political Thought

POLS 3720/PHIL 4360/ WGST 3720

Fall 2019

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Detail from Abraham Bosse's frontispiece for *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes (Getty Images).

### Course Description

The class will examine selected works in the history of Western political thought from the 16th to the 19th century, the period when the modern idea of a social contract between reasoning individuals—and related notions of civic virtue, law, rights, freedom, and equality—emerged. As we move from Machiavelli to Mill, we will pay particular attention to the gendered division between public and private spheres that marks modern liberal thought and institutions. Knowledge about the pervasive influence of this division in modern democratic societies was not widely understood before the proliferation of feminist scholarship in the 20th century. Yet, this knowledge is important for understanding injustices in our political institutions and for devising effective responses to those injustices.

When we read Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Astell, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Taylor Mill, and Mill, we will consider their answers, and our own, to questions such as: What is the purpose of politics? How does the separation of public and private spheres serve that that purpose? Historically, which values, interests, and groups are served by that separation? Which are marginalized?

### Core texts

All of the texts below are available on line, in libraries, and for purchase on Amazon and other websites. You will need to bring a copy of the assigned text (either electronic or print) to every class. Links to online

texts are provided on the schedule below and in detailed assignments posted on Blackboard. If you wish to purchase some texts, the five marked with an asterisk (\*) are those for which a print text will be most useful. I have ordered a few copies of these five for the campus bookstore.

Niccolo Machiavelli, *La Mandragola/The Mandrake* (1524)

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1513) and *The Discourses* (1517, published 1531)\*

Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (1651)\*

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (1689)\*

Mary Astell, *Reflections on Marriage* (1700)

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1761)\*

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (1762)

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)\*

Harriet Taylor Mill, "Enfranchisement of Women" (1851)

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859) & Utilitarianism (1861)

John Stuart Mill, *Subjection of Women* (1869)

Other reading assignments listed on the schedule below are available on electronic reserve in Pius Library (ERes). **The password for electronic reserve for this course is *Modern*.**

### Learning objectives:

*By the end of the semester, you will be able to:*

- 1) *Discuss and write about* meanings and evolution of notions of political community, virtue, law, rights, freedom, and equality, as these notions have developed in modern political thought.
- 2) *Explain* how the ideas and institutions of modern politics are intertwined with, and shaped by gendered public and private spheres.
- 3) *Read carefully, analyze, and compare* our historical texts.
- 4) *Use evidence* from these texts to construct persuasive theoretical arguments, in both written and oral work.

### This course satisfies several requirements:

- political theory requirement for the major in Political Science
- elective for the major in Women's and Gender Studies
- Arts & Sciences core requirement for upper division philosophy
- Arts and Sciences social science requirement

**Social science core student outcomes:** Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will gain a better understanding of human diversity. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.

### Format & Requirements

The class format and requirements are intended to serve the learning objectives above. Because our purpose is to understand and learn to apply critically the concepts gleaned from modern political thinkers, assignments are designed to offer students different kinds of opportunities to practice discussing and writing about these ideas. The general format is a structured discussion, supplemented by occasional short lectures. Texts are always available so that you can become accustomed to reading carefully to understand an author's purpose. No memorization is required; repeated discussion and writing about particular authors will make their ideas familiar to you. You are expected to read primary sources for yourself, critically analyze their implications for democracy and justice, and ferret out the ways in which they leave

room for, or may even foster, injustice. This class format places a great deal of responsibility on individual students. You will get much more out of the course if you commit to completing reading assignments before class so that you can follow the discussion and participate regularly. That's the way to supply yourself with the analytical tools you will need to write good essays. Otherwise you will not be well equipped.

The easiest way to reach me is by email, [wynne.moskop@slu.edu](mailto:wynne.moskop@slu.edu). Do not hesitate to email with questions and concerns, or to drop by my office, McGannon 136, during office hours (and whenever the door is open), or to schedule an appointment at other times. I am often on campus and available.

#### Requirements:

- 1) You 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. You can think of the assigned reading as a "lecture" that everyone in the class has already attended; in that context, the purpose of class discussion is to process the speaker/author's ideas so that we understand them better and have the opportunity to consider their ramifications. Naturally, you cannot expect to get much out of the discussion if you haven't "attended" the lecture.
- 2) Always bring a copy of the assigned text to class. Either print or electronic versions are acceptable.
- 3) Use the study questions I provide for every reading (as a guide to important points) to reflect on the reading and to formulate your own contributions to class discussion. For some difficult readings, I will ask students to submit written responses to study questions.
- 4) There may be occasional pop quizzes over the readings to encourage you to pay close attention to them. Pop quizzes count toward your class participation grade.
- 5) Everyone in the class will have multiple opportunities to serve as an "expert" discussant who is responsible for commenting on study questions and for raising questions of your own.
- 6) You will write four essays. These essays will be evaluated according to criteria explained on the assessment/grading rubric posted on Blackboard.

The first essay will be very short (750 word limit) so that we have time to go over your draft carefully before you turn in a final version. The class will be divided into tutorial groups of 2 or 3. You will share your draft with me and with other members of your tutorial group. Then we meet together to review each draft. Using the assessment/grading rubric posted on Blackboard as a guide, we will suggest ways to improve each essay. In the tutorial sessions, each of you will have a turn as an author and as a helpful critic, so that you gain experience listening to others and learning from their perspectives. Since this is the only essay assignment for which we will take class time for tutorial groups, it is important to pay close attention to the rubric and the feedback you receive so that your future essays show improvement.

The remaining three essays will vary somewhat in length and topics, but assessment/grading criteria will be the same. Again, to improve, it is always important to reflect on the assessment rubric and feedback on your previous essays. For Essay #2 (1000 word limit), due at midsemester, I will ask you to respond to a question I provide that requires you to compare multiple readings assigned during the first half of the semester. Essay #3 will be a longer paper (1500 word limit) on a topic of your choice. One class session will be devoted to peer review of your paper, but there will be no tutorial session. Essay #4 (1200 word limit), due at the end of the semester, will require you to respond to a question I provide that asks you to reflect primarily on readings assigned during the second half of the semester. Students who earn a B+ or higher on Essay #3 will have the option to develop and extend that essay instead of writing Essay #4.

- 7) At midsemester and again at the end, every student will participate in a small group oral exam over questions about assigned readings. Questions will be provided one week in advance.
- 8) There will be at least one reading and presentation project that small groups work on together.
- 9) Because discussing assigned readings and considering the perspectives of others is essential for for understanding and learning to apply the ideas and insights in our readings—**attendance is required at every class session**. Absences are excused only if you provide a good reason--e.g. illness, required university activity--preferably in advance and also email me written responses to the study questions for that reading assignment within a week after your absence. You are allowed one unexcused absence with no penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will lower your class discussion grade by a half letter.
- 10) Computers and tablets are to be used in class only to access assigned readings.**
- 11) All students are required to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the semester.

### Grading

Grades will be determined as follows:

class participation, pop quizzes, & attendance - 1/4

performance as discussant, peer critic, and oral exam participant - 1/4

essays – 1/2

Midterm and final grades will be reported in terms of the College of Arts and Sciences grading scale: A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3.0, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2.0, C-=1.7, D=1.0, F=0.0. However, grades given on assignments are up to individual professors; e.g. in this class, it is possible to receive a D+ or D- on a given assignment.

### Student Success Center

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. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the [Student Success Center](#) to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

### University Writing Services

I encourage you to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. *I frequently ask students to visit the writing tutors for help.* Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit the [Student Success Center](#) or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.

### Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office ([deanofstudents@slu.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@slu.edu) or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare

students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: [https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy\\_academic-integrity\\_6-26-2015.pdf](https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf).

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

### **Title IX**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; [anna.kratky@slu.edu](mailto:anna.kratky@slu.edu); 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the [Office of the General Counsel](#).

### **Disability Services**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at [Disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or 314-977-3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

### **Tentative Schedule**

*The schedule may vary to accommodate needs of the class. Detailed assignments for each class will be posted on Blackboard. You are responsible for checking Blackboard. Normally, specific assignments for each week will be posted on Friday of the previous week.*

- 8/27 Introduction: The role of virtue in politics. QUESTIONS: How does Machiavelli understand virtue in politics? In private life? For men? For women? We will view and discuss the first part of a video of Machiavelli's comic play, *La Mandragola/The Mandrake* (1524), <https://vimeo.com/140492508>
- 8/29 I will be away at a conference. Class will not meet, but you do have an assignment.

View the rest of the *Mandragola* video. If you do not have access to vimeo, you may view this video in the Pius Library Media room, where it is on reserve for this course.

Also, read Machiavelli, *The Mandrake*, [http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century\\_Florence\\_files/Mandragola\\_Translation.pdf](http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Sixteenth-century_Florence_files/Mandragola_Translation.pdf), and email responses to study questions posted on Blackboard to [wynne.moskop@slu.edu](mailto:wynne.moskop@slu.edu), by noon.

- 9/3 Mary O'Brien, "The Root of the Mandrake," **ERes**. The password is *Modern*.
- 9/5 Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1513). <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/machiavelli1532.pdf>. QUESTION: Is Machiavelli immoral, amoral, or moral?
- 9/10 Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (1517, published 1531) <https://www.constitution.org/mac/disclivy.pdf>.
- 9/12 Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, continued
- 9/15 **Draft of Essay #1 due** Sunday, 9/15, by 6 pm to instructor and to all members of your tutorial group.
- 9/17,19 There will be no regular class this week. We will meet in tutorial groups of 2 or 3 to review draft essays. Your essay should follow guidelines on the assessment rubric (posted on Blackboard). Each of you will also serve as a helpful critic for draft essays authored by other students in your group. As a critic, you are responsible for using the guidelines to suggest how other students in your group might improve their essay. Your performance as a critic will be evaluated according to how well your comments and suggestions use the rubric. You will build on feedback you receive in the tutorial to revise your essay and submit a final version within 48 hours after your tutorial session.
- 9/24 Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan* (1651). <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/hobbes-leviathan-1909-ed>. What is the role of reason in politics? What are the terms of the social contract
- 9/26 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, continued
- 10/1 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (1689). <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf>. QUESTIONS: What is the role of sense experience in politics? What is the role of property? How is property related to political liberty?
- 10/3 Locke, *Second Treatise* continued  
Linda Nicholson, excerpt from *Gender and History*, Ch. 5 "John Locke: The Theoretical Separation of the Family and the State," pp. 152-166 (The Family and the State, and Conclusion). **ERes**.
- 10/8 Mary Astell, *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700), <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/astell/marriage/marriage.html>. QUESTION: How is marriage related to politics? What political purposes does it serve?
- 10/10 Penny Weiss, *Canon Fodder: Historical Women Political Thinkers*, ch. 7 "Power: Mary Astell," **ERes**.  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" (1848). **Link**  
QUESTION: What rights and freedoms do women lack beyond those demanded by the Declaration of Independence?

- U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776)
- 10/15 No class. **Essay #2 due** to [wynne.moskop@slu.edu](mailto:wynne.moskop@slu.edu) by noon.
- 10/17 Small group oral exams, McGannon 104
- 10/22 Fall Break
- 10/24 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1761), <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/rousseau-the-social-contract-and-discourses>. QUESTIONS: How does Rousseau's understanding of liberty differ from Locke's? What political and social institutions does liberty require?
- 10/29 Rousseau, *Social Contract* continued
- 10/31 Rousseau, *Emile, or Education* (1762), <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/rousseau-emile-or-education>
- 11/5 Carol Pateman, "Contract, the Individual, and Slavery," Ch. 3 in *The Sexual Contract*, <http://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Carole-Pateman-The-Sexual-Contract.pdf>
- Charles Mills, 8-minute video talk, "The Racist Roots of Liberalism" (2010) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEr-xXHVjKk>. What evidence of racist roots does Mills cite?
- 11/7 Conservative reaction to liberal political ideals: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/burke1790part1.pdf>. QUESTIONS: What does Burke think of natural rights? How does his version of the "contract" differ from those we've studied so far?
- 11/12 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), <https://www.bartleby.com/144/>. QUESTIONS: What does Wollstonecraft mean by education? On what points does Wollstonecraft agree with Rousseau? On what points does she disagree? 11/14 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* continued
- 11/19 Harriet Taylor Mill, "Enfranchisement of Women" (1851), <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/awrm/doc15.htm>. QUESTION: How does the approach of HT and JS Mill to women's equality differ from that of natural rights thinkers?
- Draft of Paper #3 due at beginning of class. Bring 2 hard copies of your draft to class; you will be paired with another student for a mutual peer review.**
- 11/21 John Stuart Mill, *Subjection of Women* (1869), [https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1859\\_1.pdf](https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1859_1.pdf)
- 11/24 Final version of Essay #3 due to [wynne.moskop@slu.edu](mailto:wynne.moskop@slu.edu) by 6 pm on Sunday, 10/24.**
- 11/26 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (1859), <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf>. QUESTION: As a utilitarian, how does Mill's approach to liberty differ from the approach of natural rights political thinkers?
- Utilitarianism* (1863), <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf>
- Attendance at this class is optional, but processing the content is not optional. Those of you who have to miss may get credit for this class by emailing me written responses to all study questions by noon on 11/26.*
- 11/28 Holiday
- 12/3 Race and liberal political ideals in the U.S.
- Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* (1892), ERes

12/5 Group oral exams

12/10 **Essay #4 due.**