

DIRECTED STUDIES: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT, SECTION 7

Yale University
Spring 2021

Course Information

Time: MW 9:00-10:15
Instructor: Daniel Schillinger
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Objectives

“A study of works of primary importance to political thought and intellectual history. Focus on the role of ideas in shaping events, institutions, and the fate of the individual. In the fall term, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas. In the spring term, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Tocqueville, Emerson, Marx, Nietzsche, and Arendt.”

In other words, Historical and Political thought canvasses the full history of Western political thought with the aim of illuminating fundamental texts and questions. Reading Plato and Nietzsche, Aristotle and Arendt, Rousseau and Du Bois, we will participate in a titanic and thrilling conversation about the ends of human life for individuals and collectives. While we will observe characteristic divergences between ancients and moderns, Christians and Machiavellians, proponents of the Enlightenment and its critics, our primary aim is neither to tell a story about the evolution of ideas nor to identify what we take to be political truths. Rather, we want to inhabit the mind of each thinker, to see as he or she sees, from the inside. Even more importantly, we will approach the history of political thought as a conversation animated by fundamental questions—that is, as a kind of Platonic dialogue writ-large. Questions that we will take up include the following: What is the best regime? How does political activity contribute, if at all, to human flourishing? Is wisdom title to rule? What is the role of power in domestic and international politics? What are the arguments for and against democratic citizenship? Should the state tolerate a variety of religious ideals and practices? What is freedom? If modern political life is characterized by alienation and injustice, then what has gone wrong? How might we overcome these issues? Alternatively, should we reconsider ancient alternatives?

By immersing ourselves in our chosen texts, and by working through the texts in both conversation and writing, we will cultivate excellence in textual analysis and interpretative argumentation. In fact, these texts require immersive reading, writing, and reflection, because they are as carefully written as they are philosophically rich. Finally, through our engagement with the untimely and alien political thought of the past, we may hope to gain critical distance on our own political horizons and beliefs.

Required Texts

Please purchase personal copies of the following texts, making sure to find the correct translations and editions. Limited copies are available through the Yale University Bookstore; other good options include Powell's, Bookshop, Abe Books, and Book Depository. All other readings will be posted to the course's Canvas site.

- 1) Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Selected Political Writings*. Edited and translated by David Wooton. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- 2) Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- 3) Locke, John. *Second Treatise on Government*. Edited by C.B. Macpherson. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980.
- 4) Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Two Discourses and the Social Contract*. Edited and translated by John T. Scott: Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- 5) Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Translated by Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- 6) Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*. Edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- 7) Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *Ecce Homo*. Edited by Walter Kauffman. Translated by Walter Kauffman and R.J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- 8) Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Edited by Jonathan Holloway. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.
- 9) Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1968.

Course Expectations and Practices

By far the most important expectation and requirement for this course is that you read the assigned texts carefully and prior to class. You should expect to read for at least two hours, and perhaps for much longer, in preparation for each session. Read and read again! Take notes! In this course, the only way out is through—that is, through the text with pen in hand. You should also strive to attend every session. There are no excused absences except in the event of a documented illness or emergency. Most importantly, during class, please try to discuss the texts and to engage with your classmates in a spirit of questioning, openness, and friendship. This seminar hinges on your conversation. Because we will conduct seminars over Zoom, your full attention and participation are more important than ever. Students who read carefully and participate enthusiastically will have every chance of success. For my part, I promise to be flexible, open, and attentive, especially during these strange, awful times. Please don't hesitate to talk to me about anything related to the course. You can email or call me (914-522-1657). I want to help you as much as I can.

Marking Scheme

1) Paper 1 (5 pages due Fri. Sep. 11 by 11:59 PM)	20 %
2) Paper 2 (5 pages due Fri. Oct. 16 by 11:59 PM)	20 %
3) Paper 3 (5 pages due Fri. Nov. 13 by 11:59 PM)	20 %
4) Final Exam	25 %
5) Attendance and Participation	15 %

Essays and Assessment Criteria

Each essay that you write for this course should satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) The essay clearly and directly responds to the prompt.
- 2) The essay contains a thesis-driven argument and a coherent structure (rather than a mere summary of one or more texts, a list of facts, or an absence of structure).
- 3) The essay displays careful engagement with the course materials through its analysis of textual evidence and key concepts.
- 4) The essay eschews basic errors and achieves a polished writing style.

The third criterion is the most important: your essay should display your careful and sustained engagement with the course materials. Even so, “A” essays will satisfy each criterion listed above by exhibiting mastery of both the course content and the elements of the academic essay. “B” essays will fall short of mastery while attaining competence. “C” essays will satisfy these criteria to a minimal extent. “D” essays will not meet these criteria, though they will show some effort toward the composition of a solid paper. “F” essays will suggest an unacceptable lack of effort on this assignment and in the course. Essays should be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, and they should adhere to an accepted style of citation (e.g., Chicago).

With each essay assignment, I will include a pre-draft assignment that will allow you to involve me in your writing process. Pre-drafts are optional, non-graded writing assignments designed to sharpen your academic writing.

Participation and Presentations

Participation in class discussion is essential to this course. While participation should be consistent and energetic, it will be graded, ultimately, on the basis of its judiciousness and quality. As a part of your participation in the course, you will be asked to give one brief presentation of a striking passage or theme during a Thursday session. Each presentation should be based on about 200 words of written analysis that aims to elicit conversation. We will arrange a presentation schedule during the first week of the course.

Extensions and Lateness

No extensions will be permitted in the absence of official documentation of a serious illness or an emergency submitted to me prior to the deadline. Late papers will be penalized one quarter letter grade for each day late. To be clear, a late paper that would have received an A- will receive a B+ if it is one day late, a B if it is two days late, and so on. Should you need an extension, please talk to me as soon as possible.

Honor System and Academic Integrity

I am serious about promoting academic integrity in this course; any kind of unauthorized assistance will not be tolerated. Please consult the definition of academic integrity in the Yale University Student Handbook.

Accessibility and Religious Observance

I am committed to accessible and inclusive learning. Students in need of accommodation should contact me as soon as possible.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1

Lecture: Daniel Schillinger on Machiavelli

Feb 1: Machiavelli, *The Prince*
Letter to Vettori, Dedication, chs. 1-14.

Feb 3: Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chs. 15-26.

Week 2

Lecture: Daniel Schillinger on Hobbes

Feb 8: Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Book 1, Preface, Chapters 1-6 (pp. 81-101), 9-13, 16-17 (pp. 107-26), 26-27 (pp. 131-33), 34 (pp. 137-39); Book 2, Chapter 2 (pp. 165-71); Book 3, Chapter 1 (pp. 189-93) and 31 (pp. 208-11).

Feb 10: Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 1, 5-6, 10-14.

Week 3

Lecture: Norma Thompson on Locke

Feb 15: Hobbes, *Leviathan* chs. 16-18, 20-21, 29-30.

Feb 17: Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* chs. 1-12.

Week 4

No lecture.

Feb 22: No class.

Feb 24: Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* chs. 13-19.

Week 5

Lecture: Stuart Semmel on Rousseau and the French Enlightenment

March 1: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*: Dedication, Preface, Part 1 (including notes IX and XV).

March 3: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*: Part 2.

Week 6

Lecture: Terence Renaud on Rousseau, Kant, and the German Enlightenment

March 8: *Social Contract*, Books 1-2.

March 10: Kant, PDF: "What is Enlightenment?" "Idea for a Universal History."

Week 7

Lecture: Stuart Semmel on the early French Revolution and Burke

March 15: French Revolution Documents, PDF.

March 17: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 84-134, 140-141.

Week 8

Lecture: Terence Renaud on Burke and the late French Revolution

March 22: Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 148-53, 163-95, 228-31, 266-73, 285-86, 373-77.

March 24: No class.

Week 9

Lecture: Norma Thompson on Tocqueville

March 29: *Federalist*, PDF: 1, 10, 37, 51.

March 31: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*: Vol. I: Introduction, Part 1 ch. 2 (pp. 27-32, 35-40, 43), chs. 3-4, ch. 5 (pp. 56-58), Part 2 chs. 1, 3-4, 5 (pp. 187-90); 7-8.

Week 10

Lecture: Benjamin Barasch on Hegel

April 5: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*: Vol. II Notice, Part 2 chs. 1-5, 8-10, 20, Part 3 chs. 1-2, 8-12, 21 Part 4 chs. 6-8.

April 7: Hegel, PDF: “Lordship and Bondage” from *Phenomenology of Spirit* and selections from Hegel’s Introduction to *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*.

Week 11

Lecture: Timothy Kreiner on Marx

April 12: Marx, “The Communist Manifesto” (pp. 157-186).

April 14: Marx, *Capital*, “The Commodity” (pp. 220-243), “Primitive Accumulation” (pp. 294-297), and “Historical Tendency” (pp. 297-300).

Week 12

Lecture: Benjamin Barasch on Nietzsche

April 19: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface and Essays 1 and 2.

April 21: Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Essay 3.

Week 13

Lecture: David Sorkin on Du Bois

April 26: Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chs. 1-5.

April 28: Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chs. 10-14; pdf: "Souls of White Folk."

Week 14

Lecture: David Sorkin on Arendt

May 3: Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Preface, vii-ix; 3-10; 123-157; 222-227; 290-302.

May 5: Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 437-459; 474-479; PDF: "Personal Responsibility Under a Dictatorship."