

Syllabus for Modern Political Philosophy

This course examines the continuing relevance of some of the greatest and most influential figures in the history of modern political philosophy. To do so, it examines the answers their work suggests to various central questions that arise in reflecting on political life.

More specifically, we shall consider at least *four* of the following five authors: Thomas Hobbes; John Locke; Jean-Jacques Rousseau; Karl Marx; and John Stuart Mill. The questions we shall address will include the following.

- (1) Do we need a state, and, if so, why?
- (2) Under which conditions, if any, do we have a moral duty to obey a government's commands,
- (3) Under which conditions, if any, do we have a moral right to overthrow an illegitimate government?
- (4) Do individuals possess rights that the state has a moral duty to respect and protect?
- (5) How, if at all, can toleration be justified?
- (6) What's wrong with paternalism?
- (7) What's so good about democracy?
- (8) Can private property be justified? If so, how should it be distributed? If not, why not?
- (9) How do capitalism, socialism, and communism differ? Are there good reasons to favour one system over another?

Primary Texts

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ed. Edwin Curley)

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (ed. Peter Laslett)

John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (ed. James Tully)

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *"The Social Contract" and Other Later Political Writings* (ed. Victor Gourevitch)

J. Elster (ed.), *Karl Marx: A Reader*

J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (ed. John Gray)

Secondary Texts

Christopher Bertram, *Rousseau and The Social Contract*
G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*
Joshua Cohen, *Rousseau – A Free Community of Equals*
Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*
Gregory Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*
John Gray, *Mill on Liberty: A Defence*
Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*
John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*
(ed. Samuel Freeman)
Jon Riley, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Mill on Liberty*
A. John Simmons, *The Lockean Theory of Rights*
A. John Simmons, *On the Edge of Anarchy*

The course will be taught via interactive lectures and seminars in which students make presentations and act as discussants.

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June 25, 2010