

History of Political Thought II (L32 392):

Legitimacy, Equality, and the Social Contract

Fall Semester, 2008



Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2:30

Siegle Hall L02

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Government is often justified as legitimate on the grounds that it is based on the consent of the governed. In History of Political Thought II, "Legitimacy, Equality, and the Social Contract," we examine the origins of this view, focusing our attention on canonical works in the social contract tradition, by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), David Hume (1711-1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In the concluding weeks of the course, we briefly examine John Rawls's recent return to the social contract tradition and consider some contemporary critiques of social contract theory.

This course is the second in a three-semester sequence on the history of political thought. Students are encouraged but not required to take all three courses. Prerequisite: One previous course in political theory or political philosophy.

Course Requirements

1. You must complete the readings in a timely fashion and participate actively in class discussions. Please note that, although the readings average less than 50 pages per class, they are often dense and difficult, requiring careful attention. Class participation counts for 10 percent of your grade.
2. You will write three five-page papers, due in Ron Watson's mailbox in Siegle 207 at noon on 9/26, 10/24, and 11/14. Please note: a meeting designed to help you write these papers will be held on 9/24, before the first paper is due. Together, these count for 60 percent of your grade (20 percent each).
3. You will write a closed-book essay exam the final day of class, 12/3. This exam counts for 30 percent of your grade.

Course Materials

1. Many of the readings for this class are available online through E-Res. Password: "Thought."
2. The following books are on sale at the campus bookstore:

William Golding, *The Lord of the Flies* (Penguin).

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett).

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, Gregor ed.).

Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, Gregor ed.).

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge, paperback student edition).

Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Cornell).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the Discourses* (Everyman).

Course Syllabus and Schedule of Class Meetings

[B] = Book, on sale at campus bookstore

[E] = Article or book excerpt, online through E-res

Introduction and Overview

Wednesday, August 27: Introduction and course overview (no readings)

Monday, September 1: Labor Day (no class meeting)

Wednesday, September 3: Golding, *Lord of the Flies* [B]



Hobbes

Monday, September 8: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Introduction, Chapters 1-6 [B]

Wednesday, September 10: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 13-15 [B]

Monday, September 15: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 17-21 [B]

Wednesday, September 17: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 26, 29-31 [B]

Monday, September 22: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 32, "Review and Conclusion" [B]

Wednesday, September 24: Wayne C. Booth, Joseph M. Williams, and Gregory G. Colomb, *The Craft of Research*, Chapter 7, "Making Good Arguments" [E]

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26
SHORT PAPER #1 DUE
12 NOON,
RON WATSON'S MAILBOX,
Siegle 207

Locke and Rousseau

- Monday, September 29: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 1-6 [B]
- Wednesday, October 1: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 7-15 [B]
- Monday, October 6: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 16-19 [B]
- Wednesday, October 8: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Dedication, Preface, and First Part [B]
- Monday, October 13: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Second Part [B]
- Wednesday, October 15: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Books I and II [B]
- Monday, October 20: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book III [B]
- Wednesday, October 22: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book IV [B]

Friday, October 24
SHORT PAPER #2 DUE,
12 NOON,
RON WATSON'S MAILBOX,
Siegle 207

Hume and Kant

- Monday, October 27: Hume, "Treatise of Human Nature," Book III, Part 2, Sect. 1–7, [E]
- Wednesday, October 29: Hume, "Treatise of Human Nature," Bk. III, Part 2, Sect. 8, 9, 11, [E]
Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government," "Of the Origin of Government," "Of Passive Obedience," "The Idea of the Perfect Commonwealth," "Of the Original Contract" [E]
- Monday, November 3: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Korsgaard Introduction, Preface, and Section I [B]
- Wednesday, November 5: Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Sections II and III [B]
- Monday, November 10: Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Sullivan Introduction, pp. vii-xvi; Preface, pp. 3-7 / 6:205-6:210; Introduction to the MM, pp. 9-11 / 6:211-6:218; Introduction to the Doctrine of Right, pp. 23-26 / 6:229 - 6: 233 and pp. 29-31 / 6:237-6: 238; "Doctrine of Right, Part I: Private Right," pp. 37-66 / 6:245-6:284 and pp. 84-86 / 6:306-6:308 [B]
- Wednesday, November 12: Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, "Doctrine of Right, Part II: Public Right," pp. 89-124 / 6:311-6:355[B]



Friday, November 14:
SHORT PAPER #3 DUE,
12 NOON,
RON WATSON'S MAILBOX
Siegle 207

Conclusion: Some Contemporary Contributions

- Monday, November 17: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-22 / sections 1-4; pp. 54-65 / sections 10-11; pp. 75-83 / section 13 [E]
- Wednesday, November 19: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 83-108 / sections 14-17; pp. 118-122 / section 20; pp. 136-161 / sections 24-26 [E]
- Monday, November 24: Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, chapters 1, 3, and 8 [E]
- Wednesday, November 26: Thanksgiving Eve (no class meeting)
- Monday, December 1: Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, pp. 1-40 [B]
- Wednesday, December 3 Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, pp. 41-89, 120-133 [B]
- Monday, December 8 In-class final exam