

PS266
MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Instructor: Nate Gilmore

Credits: 3 (traditional definition)

Classes: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00-9:15 AM in Ingraham 120

Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 AM in North Hall 406 or by appointment.

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Requirements: Sophomore standing ad PS 160 or ILS205 or PS209 prior to fall 2017.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The great ideals of the Enlightenment—liberty, equality, humanity, progress, constitutional government, and religious toleration—remain the founding ideals of free governments today. Yet those ideals, and the methods the Enlightenment took to reach them, are no longer held to be self-evident. In this course we will encounter the greatest minds of 18th and 19th-century Western thought, writers who attempted to modify, perfect, or overthrow the Enlightenment and its chosen child, liberalism. We will attempt to understand both the Enlightenment's durability and the price we have had to pay for that durability. To become worthwhile defenders or correctors of liberalism, we will learn all we can from liberalism's greatest critics. Because the best way to protect a fortress is to see it with the eyes of an enemy.

We will begin, therefore, with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for it is Rousseau's condemnation of modern society in the name of sincerity, commitment, nature, virtue, and the City that first breaches the walls of liberalism and even the citadel of the Enlightenment. We will then consider the fallout from Rousseau's attack in the works of Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke, and G.W.F. Hegel, each of whom radicalize certain parts of Rousseau's thought in order to overcome others. Next we will follow John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville as they try to reconcile Rousseau's and the Germans' critiques with both earlier forms of liberalism and ancient conceptions of greatness. Finally, we will turn to Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, the prophets of modern anomie, alienation, ossification, revolution, revaluation, and nihilism. We will conclude the class by looking back on how far we've come and wondering where we seem to be headed next.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Survive hand-to-hand combat with excellent books; write well; think freely (if fortunate); doubt selves; doubt others; question ruthlessly; discuss convivially; wake up at 7 AM.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The translations listed are the translations that each student is expected to have and to use both in class and on all assignments. Additional readings from Kant and Hegel will be provided online via Canvas. All texts listed below will be available at the Wisconsin Bookstore, but they can be purchased elsewhere.

Burke, Edmund. 2009. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Oxford: Oxford World Classics.

Kant, Immanuel. 1993. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. James W. Ellington. New York: Hackett.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Mill, John Stuart. 1978. *On Liberty*. 8th ed. Ed. Elizabeth Rapaport. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1966. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1997. *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. Ed. Victor Gourevitch. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1997. *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. Ed. Victor Gourevitch. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2002. *Democracy in America*. Trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

The following texts will be available on Canvas: Immanuel Kant, “Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose” and “What is Enlightenment?”; G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, selections.

OPTIONAL TEXTS

You and I are not Margaret Atwood. Since we are not Margaret Atwood, we can all improve our writing (as Atwood herself has done every day for 60 years). To improve your writing, you need teachers who know how to write well. Luckily, those types of people like writing books.

Cook, Claire. *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. A lean book that will teach you how to cut the fat off of your essays. Bid your adverbs and prepositions goodbye.

Garner, Bryan. *Garner on Language and Writing*. Chicago: American Bar Association, 2013. Especially handy for those of you interested in law school; chapters one and five, however, appeal to everyone.

Garner, Bryan. *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. The modern author's usage Bible. Garner is a witty genius.

Norris, Mary. *Between You and Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2015. Light, informal, and often hilarious. Just what you'd expect from a copy editor at the *New Yorker*, right?

Trimble, John. *Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing*. Englewood: Prentice-Hall, 1975. Garner's BFF down at Texas and a man who took teaching as a vocation. Aristocratic, paternal, loving—Trimble's the grandfather you always wished you had.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites: POL200Y1 / POLC70H3 and POLC71H3

Grade:

Participation	15%
Midterm Paper (1500-2100 words)	25%
Final Paper (2400-2750 words)	30%
Final Exam	30%

Due Dates:

Midterm Paper: Due October 24 at midnight

Final Paper: Due December 5 at midnight

COURSE GUIDELINES

Participation: If you show up every week and participate once a class, you've secured yourself at least a B- for participation. Miss some classes, or don't speak, and you'll go lower; speak well, ask careful questions, wrestle the text with all that barely suppressed Midwestern ferocity, and you'll go higher.

But if speaking in class isn't your style, you can still ace participation: *I count coming to office hours or emailing me questions as participation.* So do that weekly, and thoughtfully, and you'll be on your way to easy points.

Papers: The majority of your grade in this class comes from papers. Please keep the following rules in mind while you are writing:

1. Papers must be submitted with the word count at the top of the first page.
2. Late papers will be penalized three points for each day they are late. A paper that is two days late will be penalized six points; a paper that is three days late will be penalized nine points, etc. The maximum late penalty is 15 %. Papers will no longer be accepted 10 days after the due date.

3. No extensions will be offered without a physician's certificate or proof of extenuating circumstances except in cases of religious observances.
4. *Plagiarism is anathema. Read the University of Wisconsin's policy on plagiarism at <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>. When you submit your work, you agree that you are submitting work that belongs only to you. Submit another's work, in any form, in part or in whole, and you risk failure, suspension, and expulsion. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask me by email or in person at any time. If you plagiarize, you will be reported; there are no exceptions; I have no mercy.*
5. Be sure to keep both an extra hard copy and a spare electronic copy of your work in case your submission is lost.
6. Do not consult outside sources when writing your papers. You should meet this texts as their authors intended them to be met: alone, with only your wits to defend you.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of a series of comparative essays based on the authors we read during the year (e.g. "Compare Nietzsche's view of the master and slave moralities to Marx's view of bourgeois and proletariat class ideologies."). Prior to the final exam date, students will be given a set of six essay subjects that might appear on the final exam. Three of those essays will appear on the exam, and students will be required to choose and answer two of them.

Remarking Policy: Students who wish to appeal their grade on one of the essays may do so by writing a 1-2 page, single-space appeal in which they respond to the comments of the grader and explain why they believe the paper deserves a higher grade. I will then reconsider the paper in light of the appeal and **either increase or decrease** the grade on that basis.

Writing Resources on Campus: What's more fun than learning about editing from a book? Learning about editing in person. I encourage you to find information about the university's writing center at <https://writing.wisc.edu/individual/> . Yes, some of the tutors there are not actually smart, but it's worth the risk: if you get a good one, it might change your life.

UW Accommodations Statement: "The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations."

UW Diversity Statement: "Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the

university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>”

Computers: Computers are permitted in this class for note taking purposes only. I will penalize any transgressors and potentially eject them from the classroom. Cell phones are not allowed, without exception. I will reduce your total grade by 1% for each time I see you on your phone or doing anything other than taking notes on your computer during class.

Recording lectures is forbidden and doing so will result in a 10% penalty on the final grade; if you have a certified academic need (hearing difficulties, vision deficiencies, etc.), please talk to me and we’ll figure out a solution.

COURSE OUTLINE

Note: I will adjust the readings as we go; I’ll let you know by email if I do.

September 5—Introductory class. Handouts from Descartes and Nietzsche

September 10—Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Epigram, Epistle Dedicatory, Preface, Exordium

September 12—Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Part I (Including Notes)

September 17—Rousseau, *Second Discourse*: Part II (Including Notes)

September 19—Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I

September 24—Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book II

September 26—Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books III & IV

October 1—Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

October 3—Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” and “Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent” (available on Canvas)

October 8—Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p.1-64

October 10—Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p.65-135

October 15—Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p.135-250

October 17—Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Preface; I.1.3; II.1.1-4, 7, 9-10, 15, 20

October 22—Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II.2.1-5, 7-17, 20; II.3.17, 19, 21

October 24—Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, I.2.6-7; II.4.1-8; **Midterm Paper Due at midnight**

October 29—Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 1

October 31—Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 2

November 5—Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 3 and 4

November 7—Selections from Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (available on Canvas)

November 12—Marx, “On the Jewish Question.”

November 14—Marx, “Estranged Labor”; “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Therefore”

November 19—Marx, Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*; *The Communist Manifesto*

November 21—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* Part I

November 26—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* Part II

December 3—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* Part III

December 5—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* Parts V and VI; **Final Paper Due at Midnight**

December 10—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* Parts VII and VIII

December 18—7:45 AM-9:45 AM—Final Exam