

**Political Science 433-001**  
**History of Political and Social Thought 3: The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Fall, 2007  
McGill University  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 13.05-14.25

**Professor Jacob T. Levy**

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Office hours Tuesdays and Thursdays 14.45-15.30, with additional office hours before papers are due.

**1. Aims and Learning Objectives:**

This is a course in the history of western political and social thought in early modern times—broadly the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It spans the English Civil War and Glorious Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the American and French Revolutions, a period that brought most of the political ideas of the west into recognizably modern form. The significant themes in the period include social contract theory as a mode of political justification; the idea of a break with ancient and medieval, Aristotelian and Thomist, thought; the possibility of a shared political life among members of different religious groups; popular consent; the rise of commercial and polished society, and the meaning of progress; the right to revolt; and the idea of a constitution.

The aims of the course include:

- 1) To continue the broad training in the history of western political thought begun in the sequences first two semesters, and to prepare students for Political Science 434, for those who choose to take it as part of that sequence;
- 2) To offer substantive knowledge about the themes mentioned above, about a selection of the most important thinkers in the history of western political philosophy and social thought, and about the intellectual, political, economic, and social history of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- 3) To offer students the opportunity to learn to interpret and understand theoretical and philosophical texts about politics, and to adjudicate among rival understandings or interpretations of those texts;
- 4) To offer students the ability to critically evaluate those texts, both with respect to the quality of their arguments and with respect to their normative or explanatory claims;
- 5) To offer students the ability to improve their own ability to make normative and explanatory arguments about politics and society;
- 6) To improve students' skills at communicating such arguments in discussion and in written work.

**2. Texts:**

The following required texts are available for purchase at the McGill Bookstore, and are on reserve. **Please use these English editions, and bring your copy to class with you.** The only exception is that, if you wish to work with Rousseau in the original French, you are encouraged to do so.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994 [1688].

John Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed James Tully, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983 [1689].

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1690].

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [various initial dates; "Discourse on Inequality" first published 1755]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [various initial dates; *SC* first published 1762].

Other readings are available in a course packet from Eastman, and are also on reserve. Each day's class will presume that you have done the reading listed for that date.

### 3. Grading and teaching arrangements

The first several classes will be lectures, though questions and discussion are encouraged. Beginning on September 18, roughly every other class will have a portion of at least 30 minutes, and at most the entire class period, set aside for discussion; please come to these discussions prepared to initiate topics of conversation and to draw others' attention to important themes or passages in the text, as well as being prepared to answer direct questions. Attendance at sessions marked "discussion" is mandatory, and lack of attendance will affect your participation grade.

Late papers will be docked 2/3 of a letter grade per day (an A paper becomes B+, then B-, then C) with the first day beginning *immediately* after the papers are due. Papers that are more than three days late will not be accepted, resulting in failing the paper which means (see below) failing the course. *Documented* illnesses or family emergencies will be the only grounds for exceptions or extensions. Papers are due at 12 noon, hard copies at my office.

You may e-mail me a copy of a paper to confirm that it was finished by 12 noon. This will avoid the late penalty, *if* the hard copy is delivered in a reasonable time thereafter and is identical to the electronic copy.

**In order to pass the course as a whole, you must receive a passing grade for each of the course components.** Excessive absences from discussion classes or a failure to take part in them, or failing to turn in any one of the papers thus results in a failing grade for the course as a whole.

#### A. Paper option 1

Papers of 2500-3000 words are due on October 10 and October 29. A paper of 3000-3500 words is due on November 30. Guidelines for paper topics will be distributed, though you may propose alternative topics in advance. Note that the due dates are not class dates.

These papers are not research papers and do not require consulting any works outside the syllabus, though you are free to do so. If you go beyond the syllabus, you are encouraged to emphasize additional primary works rather than secondary commentaries on the authors, though this is a suggestion not a rule.

The course will be graded as follows:

Participation in discussions: 20%

First and second papers: 25% each

Third paper: 30%

#### B. Paper option 2

A single term paper of 10,000-11,000 words is due on December 4. This *is* a research paper and should show some engagement with *both* primary works outside the bounds of the syllabus *and* some secondary works. You should discuss topics with me at least three weeks before the due date. An abstract or outline of roughly one page should be e-mailed to me no more than ten days before the due date.

The course will be graded as follows:

Participation in discussions: 20%

Paper: 80%

#### 4. Syllabus of Readings (“CP” indicates course packet):

September 4: Introduction

September 6: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, letter to Godolphin, Introduction, ch. 1-6, pp. 1-35

September 11: *Leviathan* ch. 7-12, pp. 35-74

September 13: *Leviathan* ch. 13-17, pp. 74-110

September 18: continued (reread ch. 13-17) **Discussion**

September 20: *Leviathan* ch. 18-23, pp. 110-159

September 25: *Leviathan* ch. 24-30, pp. 159-233 **Discussion**

September 27: *Leviathan* ch. 31-33.4, 33.22-25, 34-40 pp. 233-252, 259-326.

October 2: *Leviathan*, ch. 41, 42.1-31, 42.67-80, 43, 46, Review/Conclusion, pp. 326-49, 366-410, 453-68, 489-97  
**Discussion**

October 4: Locke, *Letter*, entire

October 9: no class, Monday schedule. **Reading:** *Second Treatise*, ch. 1-6, pp. 267-318. **Discussion**

October 11: *Second Treatise*, ch. 7-14, pp. 318-80. **Discussion**

October 16: *Second Treatise*, ch. 15-19, pp. 380-428 **Discussion**

October 18: **CP:** Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, vol. 1, Kaye ed., Liberty Fund, “The Grumbling Hive” and “The Moral,” pp. 17-37

**CP:** Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Cohler et al. eds., Cambridge: Books II, III, VIII.1-20, XI.1-7, XII.5, XV.5, XIX.4-15, XX.1-2. pp. 10-30, 112-126, 165-66, 192-3, 250, 310-16, 338-9

**CP:** Diderot, “Definition of an Encyclopedia,” in Baker, ed, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, Chicago, pp. 71-89

October 23: Rousseau, Discourse on the Sciences and Arts, pp. 4-28

Rousseau, “Discourse Concerning The Origins of Inequality,” Part I, including Letter to the Republic of Geneva, Preface, and Notes to Part I, pp. 114-160, 195-218

October 25: “Discourse Concerning Inequality,” Part II, including notes, pp. 161-88, 218-22 **Discussion**

October 30: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Books 1 and 2, Book 4 ch. 1, pp. 41-81, 121-22

November 1: *Social Contract*, Book 3, Book 4 ch. 1-3, 7-9, pp. 82-127, 141-52. **Discussion**

November 6: Rousseau, *Political Economy*, pp. 3-38; *Government of Poland*, ch. 1-5, 11-12; pp. 177-194, 224-38

November 8: **CP:** Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Oz-Salberger ed., Cambridge, Part I, section 1; Part III, section 2; Part IV, section 1; Part VI, sections 2-4. pp. 7-16, 118-31, 172-5, 231-57.

**CP:** David Hume, *Essays Moral Political and Literary*, Miller ed., Liberty Fund, Part II essays 2, 5, 6, 12, pp. 268-80, 308-31, 465-87.

November 13: **CP:** Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Liberty Fund ed., Book 1 ch. 1-3; Book 2 introduction; Book 4 ch. 4.vii.c, Book V ch.1.f.50-ch. 1.g.36. pp. 13-36, 276-8, 591-96, 616-27, 632-41, 781-809 **Discussion.**

November 15: **CP:** Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay [writing as “Publius”], *The Federalist Papers*, Rossiter ed., Penguin; nos. 9-10, 14-15, 39-40, 47-51, 57, 70, 78, 84, and Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence; pp. 66-79, 94-108, 236-51, 297-322, 421-29, 463-471, 509-20, 528-32

November 20: **CP:** Abbé Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?*, from *Political Writings*, Sonnenscher ed., Hackett, pp. 94-116, 130-3

**CP:** “Decrees of the National Assembly,” *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, and *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*, in Baker, ed., *Old Regime*, pp. 226-31, 237-42

November 22: **CP:** Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 13-47, 54-64, 71-9, 87-91, 105-8

November 27: **CP:** Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, Philip ed., Oxford; Book 1, Preface, selections, and Conclusion; Book 2, Introduction, ch. 1- 4. pp. 86-102, 122-27, 190-7, 210-62. **Discussion.**

November 29: **CP:** Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, MacDonald ed., Ch. 1-3, 7-8; pp. 117-65, 252-77. **Discussion.**

December 4: **CP:** Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" and "On the Common Saying, 'This May be True in Theory, But It Does Not Apply in Practice,'" from Reiss, ed., *Political Writings*, Cambridge

**CP:** Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared With That of the Moderns," in Fontana, ed., *Political Writings*, Cambridge, pp. 307-328

### **5. McGill Statement on Academic Integrity:**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/> for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/>).

### **5a. Professor Levy's addendum:**

I actively monitor online paper sites and am otherwise aggressive in investigating possible academic dishonesty. It's perhaps the most unpleasant part of my job, but I think I owe it to honest students to be active in this way. I note that, in general, the quality of papers available online is very poor, and well below what is expected of McGill students; their poor quality is a frequent tip-off as to their source, but of course can result in unacceptable grades even if the dishonesty is not caught. All suspected instances of plagiarism *will* be reported.

### **6. Miscellany:**

Please turn off all cell phones before the beginning of class; and please do not go online, IM, etc. during class time. During class discussion times, all laptops should be put away.

During discussions, vigorous, civil, and on-topic disagreement, with each other and with me, is expected. The full range of interpretive and normative views about our texts and the questions they discuss is within bounds; just be prepared to articulate and defend your positions. Arguments *ad hominem* against one another, insults, or the treatment of disagreement as illegitimate are not welcome. When introducing contemporary political questions into discussion, please do so carefully, civilly, and with the expectation that others in the room do not share your preexisting political commitments. One of the purposes of studying political theory is to step back from contemporary political disagreements in order to get greater historical or philosophical perspective on the meaning of our disagreements. That purpose is defeated if discussions about political theory degenerate into shouting matches, or smug assumptions of universal agreement, about contemporary issues.

E-mail is the best way to reach me, besides stopping by during office hours. I don't respond to IM.

As always, students have the right to submit written work in French. They are also encouraged to read Francophone authors (Rousseau, Montesquieu, etc.) in the original, though I ask that they also obtain the English translations so that we can have shared page references during discussion. I have some French copies of the relevant works available for loans to students. Papers written in French will be assessed by me, on the same timetable and according to the same standards as papers written in English.

*Some guidelines for writing papers- Jacob T. Levy, fall 2007*

1. You must seriously consider serious objections to your argument. For example, if you are criticizing an author, you must construct and respond to a strong defense of the author, and if you are defending, you must construct and respond to a strong criticism. Attacking straw men is bad, and a complete lack of attention to possible counterarguments is worse. If you cannot imagine serious counterarguments to your thesis, then your thesis is probably trivial (or your imagination is too constrained). *Do not underestimate the importance of this. A paper that considers no counterarguments or only very weak ones is not a persuasive or successful paper.*
2. Meeting #1 requires taking a clear position on the question you are addressing. "This paper will explore the issues related to" is not a thesis (and, obviously, doesn't allow for any interesting counterargument).
3. Logic counts.
4. Spelling counts. Running a spell-check is the beginning, not the end, of finding spelling errors.
5. Grammar and correct usage count. Using the grammar-check in Microsoft Word is *not* recommended as a method of finding grammatical errors. Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, and Shertzer's *The Elements of Grammar* are much more reliable guides. If you own none of these, you should invest in one or more as soon as possible.
6. Style counts, but see #7.
7. Most of what they taught you in high school composition (if your high school had such a course) remains true. Outlining before you start writing is useful. A thesis paragraph at the beginning of the paper, thesis statements at the beginnings of many paragraphs, and periodic signposts about what has been proven so far and what remains to be proven, help keep a paper clear. It is true that overdoing this kind of thing can make essays seem mechanical and unlovely; but it is better to err on the side of a clear unloveliness than to err on the side of stylish confusion. As with grammatical rules, you should know the rules of composition and be able to use them easily before you decide that their violation is warranted in this or that case for stylistic reasons. So, for example, one sometimes has good reason to use the passive voice. Unless one understands the problems with the passive voice, however, one can't distinguish the rare appropriate uses from the many sloppy ones.
8. A metaphor is not an argument. A list is not an argument. Even an analogy, by itself, is not an argument.
9. One argument can refute, undermine, or override another. Refutation: "This is wrong. The evidence otherwise, the causality runs the other way, there is no logical link here..." Undermining: "This may be correct, but look where else it gets us in the long term, or what other consequences the argument has that proponents didn't notice, or what obviously ridiculous cases the argument actually has to cover on its own terms, or..." Overriding: "This may be correct, but this other issue is more important, because it is more urgent, because there is some logical or moral ranking of principles, because justice is more important than utility..." If your argument overrides another, you normally have to give reasons why x is more important than y, not simply assert it.
10. Beware of introductions and conclusions, especially in short papers. A lengthy introduction discussing how important a question is and how many great thinkers have thought about it for how many centuries is a waste of space, and space is your most precious resource. Cut to the chase; offer your thesis and outline your argument. Conclusions should not include surprises; they should clearly state the conclusions that have already unfolded through the course of the argument. Unsupported speculations about other related questions, or unargued-for controversial claims about the wider significance of what you have established, can only weaken the force of the arguments you *have* made.
11. Statements such as "I think X," "I believe X," and (worst of all) "I feel X" are autobiographical. They tell the reader something about you; they tell the reader nothing about claim X. Sometimes—rarely—there is a call for such constructions, but don't use them when you really mean to be arguing in support of X.
12. Beware of what the old T.V. show "Yes, Minister" jokingly referred to as *irregular verbs*: "I give confidential security briefings. You leak. He has been charged under section 2a of the Official Secrets Act" or "I have an independent mind, you are eccentric, he is around the twist." Irregularities you might commit: "I believe in freedom, you believe in license, he believes in anarchy." "I belong to a denomination, you belong to a sect, he belongs to a cult." "I have principles; you have an ideology; he is a fanatic." "I believe in appropriate regulation; you are an authoritarian; he is a fascist." "I am a philosopher; you are a casuist; he is a sophist." In each case there are legitimate distinctions to be drawn; but there is also a temptation to score rhetorical points by simply renaming the phenomenon depending on whether it is liked or disliked. (Hobbes: "There be other names of government in

the histories and books of policy; as tyranny and oligarchy; but they are not the names of other forms of government, but of the same forms disliked. For they that are discontented under monarchy call it tyranny; and they that are displeased with aristocracy call it oligarchy: so also, they which find themselves grieved under a democracy call it anarchy..." If you draw these distinctions, you should be able to defend them. It is not an argument simply to give what you like a nice name and what you don't like a rude one.

*This is a list of some common mistakes, but is by no means complete. Buy and use a style guide such as Fowler's or Strunk & White for more complete guidance. Examples and explanations are short and sometimes incomplete; when they conflict with fuller accounts in a style guide or dictionary, rely on the latter.*

**You will be held fully responsible for errors on these points.** Using "disinterested" for "uninterested" will have an effect on your grade. Spending an hour with this list at the beginning of the term, and half an hour with it before submitting a paper, may well be a low-effort way to improve your grades.

*Observe the following distinctions.*

**if/ whether** (*if* demands an implicit or explicit *then* in consequence. *Whether* takes an implicit or explicit *or not*. If your sentence or thought begins with "I wonder," [implied "then"] it should take "whether," not "if." I wonder whether [implied "or not"] there are any exceptions.)

**farther/ further** (*farther* for actual physical distance, but "Nothing could be further from my thoughts.")

**may/ might** (When speaking about a present or future action, *might* expresses some doubt, while *may* is agnostic about likelihood. When speaking about past actions, only *might have* is correct for counterfactuals, things that could have happened but didn't. "If Japan had won the battle of Midway, it might have won the war.")

**may/ can** (*can* refers to possibility, *may* to permission)

**its/ it's** (*its* means *belongs to it*; *it's* is short for *it is*)

**tolerance/ toleration** (Usually *tolerance* is a personal attitude, *toleration* a policy, as in state toleration of religion)

**discreet/ discrete** (*discrete* means noncontinuous or individuated, not subtle or quiet or private.)

**which/ that** (*which* for clauses that aren't necessary to identify the object, usually set off by commas; *that* for clauses that are necessary to specify the one being talked about.)

**who/ whom/ that** (Avoid *that* when the antecedent is a person. *Who* is to *whom* as *we* is to *us*.)

**affect/ effect** (A affects B; A effected a change in B; C is the cause, D is the effect; a prisoner turns over personal effects; he affects a cane, pocket watch, and bowtie in order to appear eccentric. Unless you're quite sure of this distinction, stick to using *affect* as a verb and *effect* as a noun.)

**imply/ infer** (The author implies, the data imply; the reader or the researcher infers.)

**disinterested/ uninterested** (*disinterested* means impartial; someone who doesn't care is *uninterested*.)

**hopefully/ I hope that** (*hopefully* does not mean what you almost certainly think it means. "He looked up his grade hopefully," not "Hopefully, it won't rain today.")

**lay/ lie** (*lay* is a transitive verb; it requires an object. I lay the book down; I went to lie down on the bed.)

**less/ fewer** (*fewer* for discrete objects you can count, *less* for general amount. Less reading, but fewer pages of reading. We need less labor; we need fewer workers.)

**sensuous/ sensual** (Anything appealing to the senses, such as a painting or a piece of food, can be sensuous. Most of us most of the time don't find food sensual.)

**populace/ populous** (*Populace* is a noun; the population, the people. *Populous* is an adjective.)

**tenant/ tenet** (Unrelated. A *tenant* inhabits a house or a piece of land. A *tenet* is a belief or a principle. A philosopher, or anyone else, who held his or her tenants firmly might be guilty of assault.)

**between/among** (*between* for two people or objects, *among* for three or more.)

**everyday/ every day** (When you mean "routine" or "normal," it's *everyday*.)

**principle/ principal** (*Principle* is the noun that means a rule, a norm, a goal. *Principal* is the adjective meaning primary, or the noun that refers to a primary actor, the first officer of our university, or the director of an agent.)

**precedent/ president** (*According to the precedent set in Clinton vs. Jones, a President may be sued while in office*.)

**dissent/ descent** (*Hobbes worries that too much dissent might begin a society's descent into civil war*.)

**lose/ loose** (To *loose* something is to release it from some kind of restraint, to let it go. *Loose* as a verb isn't an everyday construction; it can always be replaced by *release* or *let loose*. If the sentence doesn't work with such a replacement, then you mean *lose*, the opposite of *gain* or *find*. I *lose* my freedom, my glasses, or my job; I have the most to *lose*.)

**like/ such as** (*Like* creates a category that *excludes the example you're about to mention*. In this course we read books *like* [but not including] Rousseau's *Emile*. We read books *such as* [and possibly including] his *Social Contract*.)

**of/ have** (would *have*, should *have*, could *have*, must *have*; not would of, could of, should of, must of)  
**comma/ semi-colon/ colon** (Semi-colons separate full independent clauses in the same sentence, or items in a list that contain commas within them. A colon precedes a list, or separates two independent clauses in the same sentence when the second is a restatement or an amplification of the first. Commas set off most phrases and dependent clauses, and separate the items in a list except when the items themselves contain commas.)  
the phrase is "**all intents and purposes**," and not, e.g., "all intensive purposes."

*Pay careful attention to:* subjunctive verbs, noun-pronoun agreement, subject-verb agreement

*Be careful to avoid:*

dangling participles ("Being unready to face the day, coffee helped." It wasn't the coffee that was unready.)

prepositions after transitive verbs ("He advocated for the position that...")

incorrect prepositions ("different than;" in American English it's "different from." In British English "different to" seems sometimes to be acceptable, but I do not understand when.)

switching verb tenses mid-thought ("Aristotle argues x; further, he said y.")

I am not a stickler about dangling prepositions provided that they don't create a lack of clarity.<sup>1</sup>

There is no rule in English against splitting an infinitive or beginning a sentence with a conjunction. In both cases, be attentive to clarity; and if you begin a sentence with a conjunction be sure that it is a complete sentence and not a fragment.

The overuse of parentheses is a stylistic problem, but not one I worry about too much. The misuse of parentheses is a more serious problem. If you've written a sentence with a parenthetical aside in the middle of it, you should be able to subtract the whole parenthetical aside and be left with a meaningful, coherent sentence. Among other things, that means that material in parentheses cannot be the sole antecedent for a subsequent pronoun or the sole subject for a subsequent verb; and the material in the parentheses goes not affect the *number* of a subsequent pronoun or verb.

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<sup>1</sup> "That is the sort of nonsense up with which I will not put"—attributed to Winston Churchill, commenting on the dangling preposition rule, but Churchill had a surer mastery of the language than most of us do.