

Power, Identity, Resistance I

Social Sciences (SOSC) 11100
Autumn Quarter 2016

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Office: Gates-Blake Hall Room 303
Office Hours: Tu/Th 2:00pm-2:50pm

Section 8: Tu/Th 12:00pm-1:20pm, Harper 148
Section 14: Tu/Th 3:00pm-4:20pm, SS Research 401

Course Description

This seminar is the first quarter of a three-quarter sequence in the social sciences. It examines the ways in which power both constitutes and is constituted by economics, politics and culture in the modern era. We look at the different modes by which power is exercised as well as at various means of resisting domination. We also look at the ways in which economic, political and cultural forces interact to shape our identities. Through exposure to canonical texts, this seminar will provide you with tools for thinking through social problems and will enhance your argumentative skills. More broadly, it will help you develop your capacity for critical reasoning and writing. This autumn, we will examine the doctrine of political liberalism as it evolved from the 17th through the 19th centuries. We consider how liberal political orders generate spaces of individual freedom and social equality. We also ask the question: do liberal principles inadvertently lead to the emergence of new forms of unfreedom and inequality? Our thinkers this quarter are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edmund Burke, Mary Wollstonecraft, and J.S. Mill.

Required Texts

- Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin)
- Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett)
- Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago)
- Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford)
- Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and ... of Men* (Oxford)
- Mill, *On Liberty* (Hackett)

Breakdown of Grades

- First Paper, 15 percent
- Second Paper, 20 percent
- Third Paper, 25 percent
- Short Assignments, 15 percent
- Attendance, 10 percent
- Classroom Participation, 15 percent

Course Expectations

This course serves as an introduction to social thought. Class time will be spent reconstructing and evaluating the arguments of classic texts as well as comparing these arguments to one another. The course will work best if it is a collective effort in which we all participate. For that reason, your attendance is required. One absence per quarter will be excused, as long as you notify me of your absence by email before the start of class (exceptions will be made for emergencies). Additional absences will result in the loss of 3.33 points off of your final grade.

Of course, not only attendance but also participation in discussion is essential for a successful seminar. Please take notes by hand rather than on a computer, as screens put distance between classroom participants. Students are expected to bring their own, marked-up copies of the readings to class. Read all of the required reading and to be prepared to discuss it in detail. Over the course of the quarter, you will be also expected to complete a series of writing assignments.

Writing Assignments

There are two kinds of writing assignments in this class. Short writing assignments should take about one hour. Longer assignments should take 8 hours (that is to say, an afternoon and probably an evening as well). These time estimates are suggestive of what I am looking for in terms of content. Short assignments should be approximately 300 words, single-spaced, with parenthetical citations as needed. By contrast, long assignments must be 1200-1500 words, double-spaced, and in 12pt font with one-inch margins. Long assignments should also use proper, Chicago-style footnotes for citations. For all assignments, include your name, my name, and the course number, including the section number, at the top. Also, always give your paper a substantial title. Any papers that are longer than a page should include page numbers at the bottom of each page.

Short assignments. These are meant to be “exploratory” writings. Use writing as a way to figure out what you think about a text. Here are some questions to consider. What (theoretical/practical) problem does the author address? What are his or her main points? How does the author seek to prove these points? What sort of reasoning does he or she provide and what evidence? If you had the author sitting next to you, what would you say to him or her? How would you evaluate the author’s arguments? How do the author’s points reflect on the way you chose to live your life? Please note: you don’t have to answer all of these questions in your paper. You will be given a check for any writing that shows you are making a real effort (half-credit is also possible).

Long assignments. For these, you are expected to do exploratory writing on your own and then to organize your thoughts into a polished piece of writing. One week in advance of each assignment’s due date, I will provide two questions from which you will choose one. In your essay, be sure to explain what theoretical problem or question you will address. Then, put forward an argument based on your reconstruction and evaluation of positions taken by the authors we read in class. Essays should be well organized and well written. Each paragraph must have a clear topic sentence that advances the argument by one step. You should back up the points you make using both reasoning and evidence, but note that in this class, evidence will consist solely of quotations from the texts we read, properly cited. At the end of your essay, be sure to explain the significance of the arguments you have reconstructed as well as of your evaluations (why does any of this matter?). Also, please include a works cited section with proper biographic information.

Note that short assignments will not be accepted late. Long assignments will be accepted late, but they will be marked off by a third of a letter grade for every day a paper is late (unless arrangements have been made with me before the original due-date has passed).

Appendix: Additional Course Policies

Disabilities: Please contact me and Student Disability Services (<https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/request-review>) by the end of the second week if you have a documented disability so we can make reasonable accommodations. All discussions will remain confidential.

Citations: For essay assignments, cite by author, title and page number any ideas that are (a) not common knowledge and (b) not your own idea. Anything covered in lecture counts as common knowledge. Put quotations in quotation marks and, again, identify their source. When possible, paraphrase from sources (and cite them) rather than quoting them directly. For citation style, I prefer the Chicago Manual of Style, which uses footnotes for citations. If you are unfamiliar with this citation style, please see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/03/>

Academic Dishonesty: Acts of plagiarism, cheating, or copying work from other students, as well as other sorts of academic dishonesty, are serious violations of university policy. Do not copy ideas, quotations, portions of papers or entire papers from friends, websites, books, articles, or term-paper mills. You will get caught, either in this course, or in a later one. The consequences of cheating for your education and your moral character will last a lifetime.

Discrimination, Intimidation & Harassment: It is the right of all students to have equal access to course content in an environment free of prejudice, discrimination, and harassment. Learn your fellow students names. Treat them with respect regardless of differences of perspective.

Questions: If you have any questions, do not hesitate to visit me in office hours. I will also answer emails pertaining to the course, but I will do so only during my office hours and only when I do not have students in my office. In other words, I prefer that if you have a substantial question, you ask me in person. If you cannot come to my office hours because of a scheduling conflict, or for any other reason, we can always arrange to meet at another time. I am also regularly in my office, so feel free to come by and say hello. Please use email primarily for administrative issues, such as notifying me of an absence or requesting a meeting outside of regularly scheduled times.



READING SCHEDULE

Week I

September 27th: Introduction
September 29th: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Frontispiece, Introduction, Chapters 1-6, 10 & 11

Week II

October 4th: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 12-16
October 6th: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapters 17-24

Week III

October 11th: Hobbes *The Leviathan*, Chapters 25-30
October 13th: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 1-6

Week IV

October 18th: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 7-13
October 20th: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 14-19

Week V

October 25th: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Letter to Geneva, Preface, Intro, First Part
October 27th: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, Second Part

Week VI

November 1st: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Books 1 & 2
November 3rd: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Books 3 & 4

Week VII

November 8th: Burke, *Reflections*, pp 3-65; 76-97
November 10th: Burke, *Reflections*, pp 97-142; 160-199

Week VIII

November 15th: Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Introduction & Ch. 1-4
November 17th: Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Chapters 9-13

Week IX

November 22nd: JS Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 1-3
November 24th: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week X

November 29th: JS Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 4-5
December 1st: READING PERIOD

Finals Week

WRITING SCHEDULE

Week I

September 27th:
September 29th: Reading Response (Hobbes 1)

Week II

October 4th:
October 6th: Reading Response (Hobbes 2)

Week III

October 11th:
October 13th: Reading Response (Locke)

Week IV

October 17th: **First Paper Due Monday in Gates-Blake 310 by 5pm**
October 18th:
October 20th:

Week V

October 25th: Reading Response (Rousseau 1)
October 27th:

Week VI

November 1st: Reading Response (Rousseau 2)
November 3rd:

Week VII

November 8th: Reading Response (Burke)
November 10th:
November 11th: **2nd Paper Due in Friday in Gates-Blake 310 by 5pm**

Week VIII

November 15th: Reading Response (Wollstonecraft)
November 17th:

Week IX

November 22nd: Reading Response (Mill)
November 24th: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week X

November 29th:
December 1st: READING PERIOD

Finals Week

December 5th: **3rd Paper Due in Monday in Gates-Blake 310 by 5pm**



“Non est potestas super terram quae comparetur ei”

Job 41:24

[There is no power on earth that can be compared to him]

LEVIATHAN

or

The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil

by Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury.

London 1651

Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or press down his tongue with a cord? Can you put a rope in his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak to you soft words? Will he make a covenant with you to take him for your servant forever? Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you put him on leash for your maidens? Will traders bargain over him? Will they divide him up among the merchants? Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears? Lay hands on him; think of the battle; you will not do it again! Behold, the hope of a man is disappointed; he is laid low even at the sight of him. No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him

up. Who then is he that can stand before me? Who has given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. I will not keep silence concerning [Leviathan's] limbs, or his mighty strength, or his goodly frame ... When he raises himself up the mighty are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves. Though the sword reaches him, it does not avail; nor the spear, the dart, or the javelin. He counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee; for him sling-stones are turned to stubble ... Upon earth there is not his like, a creature without fear. He beholds everything that is high; he is king over all the sons of pride. — Job 41 (RSV)