

Classics of Social and Political Thought, III

SOSC 15300, Section 4 – Spring 2013

Time: T & R, 10:30-11:50
Room: HM 141

Instructor: Christopher D. Berk
Email: chrisberk@uchicago.edu
Office Hours: F 10-12
Pick Hall, Room 522

Description

What is justice? What makes a good society? This sequence examines such problems as the conflicts between individual interest and common good; between morality, religion, and politics; and between liberty and equality. We read classic writings from Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas to such great founders and critics of modernity as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Constant, Tocqueville, Mill, Marx, Nietzsche, and Weber. Writing before our departmentalization of disciplines, they were at the same time sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, economists, and moralists; they offer contrasting alternative conceptions of society and politics that underlie continuing controversies in the social sciences and in contemporary political life.

Required Texts

- [1] Du Bois, W. E. B. 1997. *The Souls of Black Folk*. USA: Hackett. [ISBN-13: 978-0312091149]
- [2] Marx, Karl & Friedrich Engels. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company. [ISBN-13: 978-0393090406]
- [3] Mill, John Stuart. 2008. *On Liberty and Other Essays*, edited by John Gray. New York, Oxford: Oxford UP. [ISBN-13: 978-0199535736]
- [4] Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1998. *On the Genealogy of Morality*, translated by M. Clark and A. Swensen. USA: Hackett. [ISBN-13: 978-0872202832]
- [5] Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2006. *Democracy in America*. USA: Harper. [ISBN-13: 978-0061127922]

All books are on order at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore.

Course Structure

This is a seminar course. Each session will begin with a 10-minute student presentation on the readings, and most of the classroom time will be dedicated to discussion.

Requirements & Grading

Participation (20%): Your participation grade has three components. First, students are expected to read the assigned material before class and to *contribute to discussion regularly* and thoughtfully. Please bring the readings to class, as we will reference texts in discussion. Attendance is mandatory. Students with three unexcused absences will fail the participation section of the course.

Second, students are expected to give *one short presentation* during the quarter (approximately 5-10 minutes in length) based on the assigned readings for that day. That presentation should critique the readings, raise questions, and draw connections to other readings and themes. The purpose of the presentation is to encourage discussion.

Third, You are required to *post a prepared question* about the day's reading on the Chalk discussion board by midnight before each class session. Be prepared to present your question at the beginning of class. A good reading question is one that directly engages the text. Your question should cite a specific passage, term, or concept that you are puzzled about, and it should offer your interpretation of the passage at hand. If you are giving the in-class presentation for the day, you do not have to submit a discussion question.

Papers (80%): You are required to write *three papers* for this course, two shorter papers and one longer term paper. The shorter papers, 1250-1500 words (5-6 pages) in length, will be due after the 3rd and 7th weeks of the quarter. That is, the first paper must be handed in no later than **Monday, April 22**, and will count for 10 percent of your final grade. The second paper must be handed in no later than **Monday, May 20**, and will count for 30 percent of your final grade. The longer paper, 2000-2500 words (8-10 pages) in length, will be due **Monday, June 10**, and will count for 40 percent of your final grade.

Except in documented cases of illness or emergency, late papers will lose 5 percentage points per day. However, each student may, at his or her discretion, take a 24-hour extension for one of the papers, no questions asked. If you are using your extension please indicate this on the first page of your paper.

Please submit all papers electronically in an *editable* format (.doc, .docx, .odf, etc.) to chrisberk@uchicago.edu no later than 5pm on the due date. Please put your name **ONLY** on the last page of the paper. Also, put the word count on the first page of the paper. All papers should have a title, pagination, and be double spaced in size-12 Times New Roman font.

Computer Use During Class

You're welcome to use a computer (tablet, etc.) in class, but if you bring a computer you will be expected to post copies of your class notes on the course wiki (on Chalk, in the "Tools" submenu) following the class session to share with others. If you are not willing to do this, do not bring a computer with you.

Disability Accommodation

Students in need of accommodation for an impairment and/or disability should contact me as soon as possible. You should also contact the Coordinator for Disability Services (773-834-4469), as outlined in the Student Handbook, to document your needs and determine a reasonable accommodation.

Reading Schedule

Practical notes on reading:

This course has a heavy reading load. You should expect to spend at least three hours reading per class session. Most of it will be detailed reading of texts where accuracy and command are necessary. At other times, however, you may need to read quickly through a large amount of material, passing rapidly over details and pulling out the central themes and concepts. I am aiming for an average of 150 pages per week (50-100 per session).

Week 1

4.02

- * Beaumont & Tocqueville, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and its Application in France*, pp. xlv-xlvii [Chalk]
- * Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (D), pp. xiii-xiv

4.04

- * Tocqueville, *D*, pp. 9-20, 31-70

Week 2

4.09

- * Tocqueville, *D*, pp. 87-98, 180-208, 231-245

4.11

- * Tocqueville, *D*, pp. 246-363, 395-400

Week 3

4.16

- * Tocqueville, *D*, pp. 417-418, 429-436, 503-513, 550-558, 667-705

4.18

- * Mill, “On Liberty” (L), pp. 5-82

Week 4

– *Paper 1 due: Monday, April 22* –

4.23

- * Mill, *L*, pp. 83-128

4.25

- * Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention [Chalk]
- * Mill, “On the Subjection of Women” (SW), pp. 471-523

Week 5

4.30

- * Mill, *SW*, pp. 524-582
- * Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, pp. 3-17 [Chalk]

5.02

- * Marx, “On the Jewish Question,” pp. 26-52
- * Goldman, “The Tragedy of Women’s Emancipation” [Chalk]

Week 6

5.07

- * Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts,” pp. 66-105

5.09

- * Marx, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” pp. 469-500

Week 7

5.14

* Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (GM), pp. 1-33

5.16

* Nietzsche, *GM*, pp. 35-66

Week 8

– *Paper 2 Due: Monday, May 20* –

5.21

* Nietzsche, *GM*, pp. 67-118

5.23

* Weber, “Science as Vocation,” pp. 1-31 [Chalk]

Week 9

5.28

* Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 13-50, 103-125 [Chalk]

5.30

* Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (SBF), pp. 33-44, 62-102

Week 10

6.04

* Du Bois, *SBF*, pp. 148-195

– *Paper 3 due: Monday, June 10* –

Updated March 30, 2013