

How should we arrange our lives together?

Some political theorists regard this question as the most important of all. Against the traditions of divine right monarchy, they claim that political foundation requires a contract among would-be subjects. John Locke, for example, argues that only explicit consent on the part of the future subject makes political order legitimate and creates an obligation to obey the law. For others, such as Marx and Mill, considering political order through the perspective of a founding contract alone is of limited value because important aspects of shared lives remain invisible, intractable, or uncontested. The aim of this course is to familiarize students with core texts of the social contract tradition and other classics of modern political thought.

We will ask:

What makes the state legitimate?

Why should I obey the law?

When do political subjects face conflicts about what they should do?

How do various theorists conceptualize power?

What aspects of life should be considered politically relevant?

And, finally, what are the limits of the social contract perspective?

POSC 215: MODERN POLITICAL THEORY - SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY AND ITS LIMITS

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This course meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:10 to 2:20 p.m. in PPHAC 338.

I invite you to visit my office hours on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and from 2:45 to 3:45 on Thursdays. You can also contact me by e-mail to set up an appointment, if you have a permanent conflict with the set times.

Books available for purchase at the Moravian College Bookstore

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett)

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Prometheus)

Robert Tucker (editor), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton)

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Cambridge)

Course Objectives

- introduce critical ways of thinking about power and legitimacy
- study selected texts of the modern period that are fundamental to political theory
- perform close readings of those original texts
- investigate these texts with regard to the political subject and various institutions
- enhance students' understanding of the challenges of liberal democratic ideals
- identify the values and assumptions we bring to the judgment of a political argument
- strengthen analytical, written, and oral skills

Evaluation

Engagement	25%	ongoing	Please see notes below.
Commonplace book notes	25%	ongoing	Checked in class and collected sporadically. Please see instructions below.
Exam	25%	Thursday, March 5, in class	
Paper	25%	Wednesday, May 6, no later than noon, to Mrs. Deitch in Comenius 206	

Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading and writing assignments
Tuesday, January 20		Introductions, discussion of syllabus
Thursday, January 22		Discussion of commonplace book instructions
		Bring your commonplace book to class: label and set reward
Tuesday, January 27		Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , pp. 1-35
	1	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, January 29		pp. 47-50 and 63-78
	2	Commonplace book notes
Tuesday, February 3		pp. 79-105
	3	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, February 5		pp. 106-145
	4	Commonplace book notes
Tuesday, February 10		6) pp. 210-219 and 477-4
	5	Commonplace book notes SUBMIT COMMONPLACE BOOK AT THE END OF CLASS

Thursday, February 12		NO CLASS Special office hours, by appointment
Tuesday, February 17		Documentary on John Locke
		Commonplace books returned
Thursday, February 19		John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , pp. 2-30
	6	Commonplace book notes
Tuesday, February 24		pp. 30-65
	7	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, February 26		pp. 65-91
	8	Commonplace book notes
Tuesday, March 3		pp. 91-124 Review of Hobbes and Locke in preparation of examination
	9	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, March 5		EXAMINATION IN CLASS
		SUBMIT COMMONPLACE BOOK WITH YOUR EXAMINATION
Tuesday, March 10		NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS
Thursday, March 12		NO CLASS – SPRING RECESS
Tuesday, March 17		Discussion of indexing instructions
		Commonplace book returned, start indexing and numbering pages in class
Thursday, March 19		Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Book I - Book II, chapter 4

	10	Commonplace book notes
Tuesday, March 24		Book II, chapter 5 – Book III, chapter 2
	11	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, March 26		Book III, chapter 3 – Book IV, chapter 1
	12	Commonplace book notes
Tuesday, March 31		Friedrich Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”
	13	Commonplace book notes (first half of text)
Thursday, April 2		Engels, “The Origin” (continued)
Tuesday, April 7		Karl Marx, “The German Ideology: Part I,” pp. 146-200
	14	Commonplace book notes (first half of the text)
Thursday, April 9		Marx, “The German Ideology” (continued)
Tuesday, April 14		Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” pp.66-93
	15	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, April 16		pp. 94-125

Tuesday, April 21		John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , chapter 1
	16	Commonplace book notes
Thursday, April 23		chapter 2
		Submit completed commonplace book, including page numbers and index
Tuesday, April 28		chapters 3 and 4
Thursday, April 30		Last day of class, final discussion, course evaluations
		Commonplace book returned

Hobbes	Locke	Rousseau

Advantages of the social contract

Limits of the social contract

Textual Evidence

Learning how to use textual evidence is one of the top priorities of this course. We cannot work without the text. It is an explicit requirement that you bring your impulsively highlighted and passionately marked up books or articles to every meeting. If you prefer not to write in books, you should take detailed notes on the text, including the page numbers of critical passages. The highest form of participation is to take the voice of the author seriously, to be able to reconstruct and reconsider the argument, and to direct others to critical passages. Unsupported answers will be less valued than those that draw the discussion back into the text.

Analysis, not only summary, is the point of our reading. Underline important passages, take notes, ask questions, and come to class prepared to participate in discussions. A good question is an excellent contribution. What does the text say? What does it not say? What does it imply? When we read political theories we are looking for arguments, implications, and complications. Do not regard the text as a smooth surface. Don't be afraid to change your mind. Discussion is generative when it allows all participants to voice a position, to receive feedback from others, to reconsider, and to possibly revise the initial claim.

What does an engagement grade represent?

A: Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; careful engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.

B: Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.

C: Incomplete or superficial readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.

D: Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.

F: Persistent, vegetative state; low-level trance; slightly elevated body temperature.

Commonplace Book Entry Instruction

PREPARATION

- Carefully complete your assigned reading before class and before writing notes.
- A simple ballpoint pen is recommended to reduce smearing while writing.
- Scheduling: for the first few entries, you will require more time to become accustomed to the process, approximately one to two hours. Later entries will take less time once you have mastered the format and feel freer about writing your reflection, perhaps 30 minutes to one hour.

FIRST REQUIRED ELEMENT: FORMAL ENTRY

FOR THE FIRST READING OF A TEXT:

- Date all notes in this way: day of week, month and date, year
For example: Wednesday, January 7, 2014
- Include full bibliographic information for notes that begin discussion on a new text. For example:
Michael Pollan, The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals. New York: Penguin, 2006.
- Please consult the Chicago manual of style website or similar sources for citation rules
www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.
- Look up birth and death dates of each author including cities.
- Look up two historical events during the lifetime of the author and note them.
- Write out three passages of your choice. Passages should consist of three to five lines of text. Identify the page number and follow each passage with a question or a comment for discussion in class.

Continued on next page...

FOR A LATER READING OF A TEXT:

- Date
- Full author name, full title
- Three passages with comments or questions (see above)

SECOND REQUIRED ELEMENT: REFLECTION

- Reflect on your reading. Compose a single thoughtful page.
 - Eight sentences are a minimum for a complete entry. I recommend two paragraphs.
 - This reflection will describe your thought process and the questions, comments, and connections to other texts or ideas that you make while reading.
- Identify unknown words, look up definitions, and record. You need to note the page numbers for the words and also to cite the source of your definitions.
- Identify the thesis or central concern of each reading.
- Deepen your thoughts on the material. This is your personal intellectual reflection. Own your thought.
- Write notes clearly and neatly.

EVALUATION:

- Commonplace books will be checked sporadically in class and also collected according to the calendar above.
- Entries must be completed *before* the day of class when the text on which the entry is based will be discussed.
- Entries are considered in terms of completion and quality.
- Reflections should not be summaries. Find a connection to the text that is personal to you. Interesting reflections are sometimes raw. It's okay to be honest about having trouble understanding or relating to a text, but you need to be willing to think through your own response to a text.
- Incomplete and missing entries do not receive credit.
- Complete entries receive a ✓+ ; ✓ or ✓-. This translates into 3, 2, or 1 points at the end of the semester. Your final grade for the book is based on these numbers: $14 \text{ (number of entries this semester)} * 3 \text{ (full points for an entry)} = 42 \text{ points}$. Up to 8 points can be awarded for overall quality, the index, and any original individual efforts. 100%=50 points.
- Over the course of the semester, a complete set of notes might easily reach 50 to 70 pages of handwriting. Last semester, an international student submitted a book with well over one hundred pages.
- Better books include consistent and diligent work with vocabulary and thoughtfully honest reflections.

Basics

Rule #1: Silence and put away your phone before you enter the classroom.

If you are a parent or a caretaker (I am) and thus need to be accessible at all times, please let me know.

Protect the classroom as a space of dialogue and learning.

Value our texts. Develop your own thinking in class and in your commonplace book. Engage your fellow students and their thoughts. Look out for each other. Be inclusive.

Come and talk. You are always welcome to come to office hours. No appointments needed.

Be diligent. Be prepared. Show up.

An undocumented absence will harm your engagement grade at the rate of 5% of your total course grade.

Drink now. Eat somewhere else at some other time.

Expect to spend 140 minutes preparing for each 70-minute class meeting.

Submit your commonplace book on time.

For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment.

Late work is penalized: 5% of final commonplace book grade per day.

Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment or the course. Please see Moravian College Student Handbook for an account of academic honesty. See <http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic and Disability Support located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or call (610) 861-1401.

Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

This syllabus is subject to change.

Index Instructions for Your Commonplace Book

These instructions are intended for the second half of the semester. We will discuss indexing in class on Thursday, April 16. You can think about the index, but I advise against working on it too soon. It's best to wait until we speak about this in class. Once you have completed many entries in your commonplace book, you can look back at where you have been intellectually and draw some conclusions regarding what has mattered most to you in your study of our texts. Creating an index is not only a way of finding a particular term on a particular page. Instead, it is an active intellectual process of identifying what is worth looking for, what is worth returning to. To create an index is to give meaning and value to your work by returning to it and organizing it along lines that you choose.

In the late seventeenth century, the political theorist John Locke developed the indexing method we will use. He published it in a work entitled [A New Method of Making Common-Place-Books](#). Below, you will find a three-step process for creating your index in the pages reserved for that purpose at the back of your commonplace book. Please also see the sample index I have created on the back of this page.

- 1) **COUNT LINES AND DRAW THE INDEX STRUCTURE:** You will need to count lines to do this correctly. There are twenty-six letters in the alphabet and five vowels (a, e, i, o, and u). You need to create a structure in the back of your commonplace book to accommodate 130 lines ($5 \times 26 = 130$). Take time to do this in an orderly way. When in doubt, use extra space and avoid scrunching the index on to the page. When in doubt, continue a new page.
- 2) **REFLECT AND IDENTIFY THEMES AND TERMS OF INTEREST:** What makes this exercise meaningful is your intellectual return to earlier entries to understand the themes that have emerged in your choice of passages, your questions about those passages and your reflections. What have you learned? What are the topics and terms that catch your eye? How can you make the entries accessible? Pick fifteen to twenty themes for indexing. You can do more, of course.
- 3) **FIND THEMES IN YOUR NOTES AND CREATE THE INDEX CONTENT:** Let's say one theme is alienation. Alienation starts with A and the word's first vowel after the first letter is i. (I have bolded the first vowel in each word in the sample index below just to show the principle at work. You do not need to bold them in your entries.) So now you enter the word on the proper line and identify the pages where it occurs in your commonplace book. Complete this process for your choice of fifteen to twenty themes. You certainly can choose political theory terms and themes, but there should also be ones that are particular to your interests. Don't be shy: Softball? Mafia movies? Love? Summer jobs? Family?

See sample index on next page.

SAMPLE INDEX

A	a	
	e	
	i	alienation 45-47, 52
	o	
	u	
B	a	
	e	beauty 32-45; being 1-5
	i	
	o	
	u	
C	a	
	e	
	i	civility 2-7, 10, 21; citizenship 19-22, 34, 40
	o	community 12, 34, 46
	u	
D	a	
	e	death 6, 10, 38
	i	
	o	dogma 10, 21, 33
	u	duty 8,12, 20
E	a	estrangement 45-49
	e	enemy 56
	i	
	o	
	u	equality 4, 7, 17, 26, 39-41