

**THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

HIEU 391  
Spring 2000  
TU TH 11:00-12:15  
CAB B026

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Off. hour TU 2-4

**POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL THOUGHT IN EUROPE II: 1300-1700**

**SYLLABUS**

This is the second half of a two-semester course designed to introduce students to the historical background behind the principles of political order that governed the European and American worlds from the eighteenth until the twentieth century; principles such as sovereignty, subjectivity, national identity, constitutional government, individual rights, toleration, and the trinity of natural, international, and positive law. The structure of the course is therefore both thematic and historical. It is designed to clarify what is typical and what is unique about political order in the modern West; what is genuinely modern, and what is owed to traditions of long standing; what may be expected to be easy to change, and what will most likely prove enduring.

The course presupposes a fundamental distinction between modern industrial societies and those large scale agro-literate societies (as Ernest Gellner called them) or great world civilizations (as they are often called in textbooks) that populated the world for about five millennia prior to the industrial revolution and that have now all but disappeared. We will focus on the youngest of those large scale agro-literate societies—the one that developed about a thousand years ago in the western-most part of the Eurasian continent—because it was this most recent addition to the club of such societies that first managed to develop the features we are accustomed to consider modern and has since gone on to spread them across the globe. Accordingly, even though we will pay no explicit attention to regions of the world other than Europe, this course is implicitly comparative in design, and for three separate reasons: first, because pre-industrial civilization in Europe was in many ways similar to pre-industrial civilizations elsewhere. Second, because the notions that the ruling elites of Europe developed about the right way to go about organizing society have proved remarkably attractive to ruling elites elsewhere. And third, because much of the anthropological work that has been done on other regions of the world, especially in the areas of law and politics on which this course focuses, is founded on categories originally developed for the study of ancient and medieval Europe.

Students are encouraged, but not required, to take both semesters in sequence.

The second semester will deal with the reconfiguration of European politics in the age of Renaissance and Reformation that led to the overt abandonment of medieval universalism and its tacit continuation in those principles of sovereignty, subjectivity, and individual rights that became dominant in the Enlightenment and have shaped the course of modern politics ever since. The guiding theme of this semester is the process of laicization by

which control over the normative realm of social and political organization was taken from the clergy and transferred into the hands of the laity. This process began in the Italian City States, transformed Northern Europe in the Reformation, and culminated in the distinction between a private realm of conscience and a public realm of civil affairs that came to serve as the foundation of modern political order. We shall take a broad view of the setting within which that process took place and by which it was shaped. We are going to spend a good deal of time on subjects usually considered to belong in the realm of intellectual history or the history of ideas, but we shall refuse to treat that realm in isolation from general history. We shall rather insist on treating it as but one aspect, albeit an important aspect, of the historical development of Europe as a whole.

Lectures will alternate with discussion, and primary sources will alternate with secondary literature. Pride of place will be given to primary sources, because these offer the clearest evidence for the ways in which the lay elites of Europe articulated their changing understanding of the fundamental principles of right political and social order. Readings will include selections from the writings of Machiavelli, Thomas More, Luther, Calvin, Jean Bodin, and John Locke. The secondary literature will be limited to Quentin Skinner's detailed survey of European political thought from the high middle ages to about 1600. Students who need more background in general history than Skinner provides are strongly encouraged to read the relevant sections in an introductory account of European history. I recommend H. G. Koenigsberger, Medieval Europe, 400-1500 (London: Longman, 1987) and H. G. Koenigsberger, Early Modern Europe, 1500-1789 (London: Longman, 1987).

The readings average out to about 150 pages per week. I have tried to assign roughly equal amounts of reading for each class, but that has not always been possible. For some classes you will have to read a great deal, and for others you will have to read much less. In case you prefer to work at an even pace, I have given you detailed assignments below, so that it will be easy for you to read the heavier assignments ahead of time, or to spread them out over several days.

The following books, listed in the order in which we are going to read them, contain all of the required readings, as indicated in the schedule of classes below. They have been ordered at the University of Virginia Bookstore and are also on course reserve in the library.

- Skinner, Quentin. The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- Cochrane, Eric and Julius Kirshner, eds. The Renaissance. University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization, vol. 5. Eds. John W. Boyer and Julius Kirshner. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
- Machiavelli. The Prince. Trans. with an Introduction by Harvey Mansfield, Jr. 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- More, Thomas. Utopia. Eds. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams. Cambridge texts in the history of political thought. (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- Höpfl, Harro, ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- Bodin, Jean. On Sovereignty: Four Chapters from Six Books of the Commonwealth. Ed. and trans. Julian H. Franklin. Cambridge texts in the history of political thought. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- Stephanus Junius Brutus, the Celt. Vindiciae contra tyrannos: Or, Concerning the Legitimate Power of a Prince over the People, and of the People over a

- Prince. Ed. and trans. George Garnett. (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Locke, John. Political Writings. Ed. and with an introduction by David Wootton. Mentor Books. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993).

### Requirements

- 1) Completing the assigned readings
- 2) Attending class
- 3) A mid-term examination in class on Thursday, March 9. This will count for 20% of your grade.
- 4) A paper of 8-15 pages on a topic suggested or approved by me. Details will be announced in class. The due date is Thursday, April 13. The paper will count for 40% of the grade.
- 5) A final examination on Monday, May 8, from 9-12. The exam will draw on all of the material covered during the semester and will count for 40% of the grade.

### Schedule of classes and readings

#### **PART ONE: THE RENAISSANCE**

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>1. Purpose and design of the course</b>                                                                                      | <b>1/20</b> |
| <b>2. The Medieval Background</b>                                                                                               | <b>1/25</b> |
| Skinner, "Preface," <u>Foundations</u> , 1:ix-xv                                                                                |             |
| Skinner, "The Origins of the Renaissance," <u>Foundations</u> , 1:3-66                                                          |             |
| <b>3. Bartolus of Sassoferrato</b>                                                                                              | <b>1/27</b> |
| Bartolus of Sassoferrato, "On the Tyrant," in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. <u>The Renaissance</u> , 7-30                  |             |
| <b>4. The Florentine Renaissance</b>                                                                                            | <b>2/1</b>  |
| Skinner, "The Florentine Renaissance," <u>Foundations</u> , 1:69-112                                                            |             |
| <b>5. Alberti</b>                                                                                                               | <b>2/3</b>  |
| Leon Battista Alberti, "On the Family," in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. <u>The Renaissance</u> , 78-104                   |             |
| Leonardo Bruni, "On the Constitution of the Florentines," in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. <u>The Renaissance</u> , 139-44 |             |
| <b>6. The Age of Princes</b>                                                                                                    | <b>2/8</b>  |
| Skinner, "The Age of Princes," <u>Foundations</u> , 1:113-138                                                                   |             |
| Skinner, "The Survival of Republican Values," <u>Foundations</u> , 1:139-190                                                    |             |
| <b>7. Machiavelli A</b>                                                                                                         | <b>2/10</b> |
| Machiavelli, <u>The Prince</u> , chapters 1-18                                                                                  |             |
| <b>8. Machiavelli B</b>                                                                                                         | <b>2/15</b> |
| Machiavelli, <u>The Prince</u> , chapters 19-26                                                                                 |             |

- 9. Machiavelli C** 2/17  
 Niccolò Machiavelli, "Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius,"  
 in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. The Renaissance, 185-210
- 10. The Spread of Humanism to the North** 2/22  
 Skinner, "The Diffusion of Humanist Scholarship," Foundations, 1:193-212  
 Skinner, "The Reception of Humanist Political Thought," Foundations, 1:213-243  
 Skinner, "The Humanist Critique of Humanism," Foundations, 1:244-262
- 11. Thomas More A** 2/24  
 Thomas More, Utopia, book I, pp. 3-41
- 12. Thomas More B** 2/29  
 Thomas More, Utopia, book II, pp. 42-111
- PART TWO: REFORMATION AND RELIGIOUS WAR**
- 13. Lutheranism** 3/2  
 Skinner, "The Principles of Lutheranism," Foundations, 2:3-19  
 Skinner, "The Forerunners of Lutheranism," Foundations, 2:20-64  
 Skinner, "The Spread of Lutheranism," Foundations, 2:65-108
- 14. Luther on the State** 3/7  
 Luther, "On Secular Authority," in: Harro Höpfl, ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority, 1-43
- Thursday, March 9: MID-TERM EXAMINATION**
- 15. Luther and Resistance** 3/9  
 "Twelve Articles of the Peasants," in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. The Renaissance, 333-338  
 Martin Luther, "Admonition to Peace," in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. The Renaissance, 339-57
- 16. Calvin on the State** 3/21  
 Calvin, "On Civil Government," in: Harro Höpfl, ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority, 45-86
- 17. Catholicism** 3/23  
 Skinner, "The Background of Constitutionalism," Foundations, 2:113-134  
 Skinner, "The Revival of Thomism," Foundations, 2:135-173  
 Skinner, "The Limits of Constitutionalism," Foundations, 2:174-184
- 18. The Huguenot Revolution** 3/28  
 Skinner, "The Duty to Resist," Foundations, 2:189-238  
 Skinner, "The Context of the Huguenot Revolution," Foundations, 2:239-301
- 19. Jean Bodin A** 3/30  
 Jean Bodin, On Sovereignty, book 1, chapter 8, ed. and transl. Julian H. Franklin, pp. 1-45

- 20. Jean Bodin B** **4/4**  
 Jean Bodin, On Sovereignty, book 1, chapter 10, ed. and transl. Julian H. Franklin, pp. 46-126
- 21. Montaigne** **4/6**  
 Michel Montaigne, "Of Cannibals" and "Of Books," in: E. Cochrane and J. Kirshner, eds. The Renaissance, 285-308
- 22. The Right of Resistance** **4/11**  
 Skinner, "The Right to Resist," Foundations, 2:302-348  
 Skinner, "Conclusion," Foundations, 2:349-358
- Thursday, April 13: The paper is due**
- 23. The Huguenot Defence of Liberty A** **4/13**  
Vindiciae contra tyrannos, ed. and trans. George Garnett, pp. 5-66
- 24. The Huguenot Defence of Liberty B** **4/18**  
Vindiciae contra tyrannos, ed. and trans. George Garnett, pp. 67-187
- PART THREE: THE MODERN SETTLEMENT**
- 25. The Public and the Private** **4/20**  
 John Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration," in: Political Writings, 390-436
- 26. Life, Liberty, and Estate** **4/25**  
 John Locke, "The Second Treatise of Government," chapters 1-8, in: Political Writings, 261-324
- 27. Resistance** **4/27**  
 John Locke, "The Second Treatise of Government," chapters 9-19, in: Political Writings, 324-387
- 28. Review and Conclusion** **5/2**

**FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 8, 9-12 am**