

PHIL 6710: Survey of Early Modern

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30, or by appointment

This course will look at the rise of early modern conceptions of the relationship between individuals and society. Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft are all central voices in this period, who grappled with questions of human nature, equality, moral responsibility and the relationship of individuals to the state. We will look, especially, at the responsibility individuals to self-perfect in the interests of social welfare and political stability. These ideas, as developed in the three thinkers we will be reading, capture an important emerging conception of the moral agent, and their social responsibilities, that marks the early modern period. These thinkers captured a *zeitgeist*, if you will, such that reading them offers an important insight into the moral and political issues that motivated many thinkers in this period.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. *understand* the degree to which the intellectual traditions of the West have shaped modern culture, society, politics, and education
2. *identify and critically evaluate* central philosophical claims made by canonical philosophers of the early modern period
3. clearly and accurately *communicate complex issues* and *argue successfully* for one's own view.
4. *identify and question* the often implicit presuppositions that inform various viewpoints, and gain the confidence to propose novel and creative solutions.

Required Texts:

John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and Of the Conduct of the Understanding*. Ed. Ruth W. Grant and Nathan Tarcov. Hackett, 1996.

---*Second Treatise of Government*. Ed. C.B. MacPherson. Hackett, 1980.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*. 2nd Edition. Ed. Donald A. Cress. Hackett, 2011.

---*Emile, or On Education*. Ed. Barbara Foxley. The Floating Press, 2009. *This book is available as a digital text through the university library.*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindications: The Rights of Man and The Rights of Women*. Ed. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. Broadview, 1997.

Assessment:

Weekly Write-ups (20%)

When: Weekly beginning January 15th

1 -2 pages. Each write-up is worth 2%. You will bring one to every class in which you are not presenting (you do not have to do a write-up for the week you present). The write-up is an opportunity for you to offer to raise interpretive points and critical observations of the text. What point or points struck you as particularly interesting (i.e. that raises some interesting ideas that you think are relevant or innovative in some way), troubling (i.e. implying something worth worrying about), or problematic (perhaps inconsistent with other aspects of the text,).

You may be asked to contribute your ideas to the class, as a way of opening up some discussion.

Weekly write-ups will be graded on the basis of the following three criteria: 1. How well you've understood the text; 2. The clarity of your writing; 3. The quality of your critical engagement with the text.

Presentation (40%)

When: TBD (we will determine presentation dates in the first class)

Prepare for 45 minutes presenting time for Graduate Students. Presentations must do more than merely expository work. You must aim to explore what you take to be key points in the reading, and to present and defend your interpretation of the text. You must make clear how you are reading the text—that is, what you take the author to be saying—you must defend that reading with reference to the text.

You are encouraged to engage with secondary literature on the issues you choose to focus on. You will be expected to consult secondary sources (articles or books by major scholars in the field) and show how your interpretation is not only defensible against other interpretations, but offers something others do not. If you are going to defend the 'standard' interpretation, then you need to explain why it is superior as an explanatory approach to divergent views.

Expect that presentation will be discussion-oriented. I will encourage questions and discussion on various points made in the course of your presentation. In this way, presentations will run more as a kind of seminar discussion than as a straight, uninterrupted lecture.

Presentations will be graded on the basis of three criteria: 1. Understanding of the text and attention to interpretive points; 2. Clarity and organization of the presentation; 3. Attention to secondary literature and/or critical engagement with the text.

Final Paper (40%)

When: TBA (it will be due during the April exam period)

15-20 pages. The paper will be on a topic of your own choosing (and you can use your presentation as the basis for this paper). The paper must take an interpretive position. You are encouraged to address secondary literature by way of defending your reading of the text. Ideally, you should think of this paper as something that could be presented at a conference or worked up into a publishable paper. Thinking of it in this way will force you to come up with something original to say about the issues you have chosen to focus on, and to defend that original view. Think of yourself as contributing in some way to the scholarship on this issue/thinker

You must make an appointment to come see me about your papers. I will want to hear what you are working on, how you are approaching the topic, and what secondary literature, if any, you are planning to use. If you do not meet with me at least two weeks prior to the paper deadline, 3% will be deducted from your paper grade.

A grading guideline will be made available on our course website.

Reading Schedule:

Tue, Jan 8: Introduction

Tue, Jan 15: Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*
Chapters I-VIII (pgs. 7-51)

Tue, Jan 22: Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*
Chapters VIII-XI; XIV-XV; XVIII-XIX (pgs. 52-75; 83-91; 101-124)

Tue, Jan 29: Locke's *On the Conduct of the Understanding*
Pgs. 167-227

Tue, Feb 5: Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*
Parts I & II (pgs. 45-92)

Tue, Feb 12: Rousseau's *On the Social Contract*
Books I & II; Book III, Chapters 1-3 (pgs 156-198)

Tue, Feb 19: Winter Break

Tue, Feb 26: Rousseau's *On the Social Contract*
Book III, Chapter 4 - end of Book IV (pgs. 198-252)

Tue, Mar 5: Rousseau's *Emile*
Selections TBA

Tue, Mar 12: Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*
Introduction and Chapters I-II (pgs. 109-148)

Tue, Mar 19: Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*
Chapters III-IV (p.149-196)

Tue, Mar 26: Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*
Chapter V (section I); VI; VIII (p. 198-216; 244-251; 265-276)

Tue, Apr 2: Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women*
Chapters IX; XII-XIII 277-288; 298-343

University Statements:

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the fortieth class day; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester.

The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

More information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs. Academic Calendars: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>