

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
CONVERSATIONS OF THE WEST
ANTIQUITY AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Fall 2005

V.55.-0403-001
 Tuesday, Thursday 2:00 – 3:15
 Room: Silver 408

Professor Bernard Manin (bm20@nyu.edu)

Preceptors: Paul Ngomo (pngomo@yahoo.com), Peter Northup (peter.northup@nyu.edu)

I. Reading list. The following books should be purchased. They are available at NYU Book Center.

- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. by M. Coogan, Oxford University Press, 2001
- Sophocles, *Antigone*, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies, Sophocles I*, ed. by D. Grene and R. Lattimore, The U. of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, transl. by S. Lattimore, Hackett, 1998
- Plato, *The Republic*, transl. by A. Bloom, New York: Basic Books, 1991.
- Aristotle, *Politics*, transl. by E. Barker, Oxford: Oxford U.P./World's Classics, 1995.
- Hobbes, T., *Leviathan* [1651], ed. by E. Curley, Hackett, 1994
- Locke, J., *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, [1679-1683], [1689], ed. by I. Shapiro, Yale U.P., 2003
- Rousseau, J.-J., *The Basic Political Writings, (Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts, [1750], Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, [1754], Discourse on Political Economy, [1755], On the Social Contract, [1762])*, ed. by D.A. Cress, Hackett, 1987.

II. Course description and goals:

We will study selections from the major texts that have shaped the Western tradition of thought, focusing primarily on social and political thought. Our first goal will be to understand the meaning and significance of these texts. We will also critically discuss a number of claims made in these works.

We will pursue two lines of investigation. First, we will explore the place of religion and that of reason in the Western tradition, going back to the Ancient roots of the religious perspective –the Judeo-Christian legacy--, and to the origins of the rationalist outlook –the Greek heritage.

Second, we will explore how the key principles of Modern social and political thought both arose from, and broke with the two legacies from the Antiquity. We will highlight the pivotal importance of the Wars of Religion in the formation of the Modern outlook.

When necessary, we will pay particular attention to the historical context in which our materials were written.

III. Course requirements:

Classes will be devoted to lectures and discussions of the readings. Readings will consist of selections from the works listed above. For each lecture students should bring to class the book that is assigned for reading that day. Mandatory recitation sessions are also offered, and are an integral part of the course. Attendance to both lectures and recitation sessions is mandatory.

Final grades will be based on: 1/ a mid-term in-class examination (20%), 2/ a final in class examination (25%), 3/ short writing assignments (2 to 3 pages long, double spaced), roughly one every other week over the course of the semester (35%, with special consideration of effort and improvement), 4/ attendance and participation (20%).

Students are reminded that plagiarism is strictly prohibited.

IV. Extra support:

Additional assistance for this class is available to students free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: <http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc/index.html>

Help with writing may also be found at the Writing Center, located on the 3rd floor of 411 Lafayette. The website for the Writing Center is here: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

V. Schedule of lectures and reading assignments

6 Sept.: **General introduction**

Part 1: The Judeo-Christian source: Supremacy of the divine

8 Sept.: ***The Hebrew Bible, Genesis, chs. 1-17***

- 13 Sept.: *The Hebrew Bible, Exodus, chs. 1-5, 13-14, 20-24, 40*
- 15 Sept.: *The New Testament, The Gospel according to Matthew, chs. 5-7*
- 20 Sept.: *The New Testament, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, (the letter in its entirety)*

**Part 2: The Greek source:
Reason, human agency, politics and democracy**

- 22 Sept.: **The Greek inventions in historical context**
- 27 Sept.: **Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War***
Reading: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Bk. I, § 1, §§ 20-23, §§ 66-85; Bk. II, §§ 34-46.
- 29 Sept.: **Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War***
Reading: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Bk. III, §§ 36-50; Bk. V, §§ 84-116
- 4 Oct.: **Sophocles, *Antigone* (the play in its entirety)**
- 6 Oct.: **Plato, *Republic***
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Bks. I, II, down to 368b
- 11 Oct.: **Plato, *Republic***
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, Bk. III, 412 b – 417 b; Bk. IV, 419 a – 433 c; Bk. V, 449 a – 464 c
- 13 Oct.: **Aristotle, *Politics***
Reading: Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk. I, chs.1-7; Bk. II, chs. 1-5
- 18 Oct.: **Aristotle, *Politics***
Reading: Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk. III, chs. 1-8
- 20 Oct.: **In class exam**
- 25 Oct.: **Aristotle, *Politics***
Reading: Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk. III, chs. 9-13; Bk. III, chs. 15-17; Bk. VI, ch. 2

**Part 3. Principles of Modern Political and Social Thought:
individual rights, social contract, the place of the people in government**

- 27 Oct.: **The rise of a new conception of society and government in**

historical context: the wars of religion

- 1 Nov.: **Hobbes, *Leviathan***
Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 11, 13, 14
- 3 Nov.: **Hobbes, *Leviathan***
Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 17-19
- 8 Nov.: **Hobbes, *Leviathan***
Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chs. 21, 30
- 10 Nov.: **Hobbes, *Leviathan***
Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 29, "Review and conclusion"
- 15 Nov.: **Locke, *Second Treatise of Government***
Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 1-4
- 17 Nov.: **Locke, *Second Treatise of Government***
Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 5, 7-9
- 22 Nov.: **Locke, *Second Treatise of Government***
Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chs. 11-13, ch. 14, §§ 159-162, ch. 19, §§ 211-225
- 24 Nov.: **No classes**
- 29 Nov.: **Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration***
Reading: Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (in its entirety)
- 1 Dec.: **Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality***
Reading: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (in its entirety)
- 6 Dec.: **Rousseau, *On the Social Contract***
Reading: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Bk.I, chs. 1-8
- 8 Dec.: **Rousseau, *On the Social Contract***
Reading: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Bk. II, chs.1-3; Bk. III, ch. 15; Bk. IV, chs.1, 2
- 13 Dec.: **Overview**