

**Critics of Modern Liberalism  
Government 351G  
CTI 322  
Spring 2024**

Nicholas Anderson

Class Time: MWF 12pm-1pm

Location: PAR 304

Office Hours: Wednesday, 2-4 PM; Thursday 10-11:30, or by appointment

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### **Course Description**

In this course, we will study two of the most radical critics of the Enlightenment or the modern rationalist project of reforming politics and society—Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Nietzsche. Together we will read Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* and *Emile* and Nietzsche's *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* and selections from *Beyond Good and Evil*. Our study of these two thinkers will be separated by a brief study of Kant, a great reader of Rousseau and a critical *defender* of liberalism, and a reading of Goethe's *Faust, Part One*, which offers one of the greatest portraits of the modern soul. The major theme of the course will be an exploration of the character of the liberal-democratic citizen or what is often called the bourgeoisie. We will also consider such topics as the role of history in politics and morality; the question of theodicy and the place of religion in society; the role of romantic love, marriage, and the family in a fulfilling life; the question of the goodness of morality, pity, and compassion; and the relationship between reason and the passions. Throughout the course, we will reflect on the impact that the revolutionary teachings of these philosophers have had on the political culture in which we live.

This course carries the Ethics flag. Ethics courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your assignments and readings to involve ethical questions and the process of applying ethical reasoning to real-life situations.

### **Required Texts**

Please bring physical copies of all readings to class. It is highly recommended that you get a copy of the suggested translations. We will often be reading passages aloud in class and it will be helpful if we all have the same page numbers and translation.

1. Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), ISBN 0312694407.
2. Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Bloom. (Basic Books 1979), ISBN 9780465019311.
3. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Hackett Publishing Company), ISBN 087220166X.
4. Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History* (Yale University Press), ISBN 9780300110708.
5. Goethe, *Faust I & II*, trans. Stuart Atkins (Princeton University Press), ISBN 9780691162294.

6. Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, trans. Preuss (Hackett Publishing Company), ISBN 0915144956
7. Nietzsche, *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Kaufmann (Modern Library), ISBN 9780679783398

## Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Attendance and Participation 10%

Reading Responses and Outlines 15%

Midterm Paper (1500 words) due on Friday, March 8, 25%

Final Paper (1500 words) due on Monday, April 22, 25%

Final Exam on May 3, 25%

**Participation:** Regular attendance, preparing the reading for class, having questions about the reading and being ready for discussion. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Your attendance and participation grade can be improved by active participation both in discussion and in office hours. It will fall by one percent for each unexcused absence after the second absence.

**Reading Responses:** Two reflections are required for two different units of the course (Rousseau's *Second Discourse*, Kant/Goethe). Reading responses should be 2 pages in length, and will address a prompt distributed a week before the reflections are due.

**Reading Outlines:** Two outlines of class readings are required. Students will choose one book or section from Rousseau's *Emile* and write an outline that maps out the argument. The second outline will be chosen from Kant's *Grounding* or *TPP*, Goethe's *Faust*, or Nietzsche's *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History of Life*. The outlines should be no more than one page and must be turned in by March 8 and April 29 respectively.

**Midterm Paper:** This paper (1500 words) on Rousseau's *Emile* will be due Friday, March 8. Students will be given a choice of three writing prompts 14 days in advance. Students may write on a topic of their own choosing but must clear it with me first.

**Final Paper:** This paper (1500 words) will be due on Monday, April 22. Students will be given a choice of three writing prompts that will either ask students to consider some aspect of Nietzsche's thought or will ask students to compare the thought of two thinkers on the syllabus. Students may write on a topic of their own choosing but must clear it with me first.

**Examination:** The final exam consists in identifying select quotations, short essays, and one long essay. A study guide will be circulated to the students on April 19 (14 days in advance).

**Rewriting Papers:** Students can rewrite both their midterm and final papers. The final grade will be calculated by finding the average of the original paper grade and the second paper grade counted twice. (Example, if your original score is an 85 and your second score is a 95, then your final grade will be 91.6).

**Paper formatting:** Papers should be 12-point font, double spaced and 1 inch margins.

### Grading Scale:

A: 93.5-100; A-: 90-93.5; B+: 87-90; B: 83-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-80; C: 73-77; C-: 70-73; D: 60-70; F: below 60.

**Please note: grades will not be rounded up! You need a 93.5 average to get an A.**

## Other Policies

**Students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

**Academic dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty will be treated seriously. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. The university's Honor Code is found at the following website: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/>

**Accommodations for religious holidays:** If anyone needs to miss class for a religious observance, I will hold a make-up session for you and the absence will be excused.

**Electronics:** No electronic devices are allowed in class.

## Schedule of Readings:

### *Week 1:*

January 17: Introduction

January 19: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 78-98

### *Week 2:*

January 22: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 101-115 (through footnote *i*).

January 24: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 115-141

January 26: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 141-161

### *Week 3:*

January 29: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 161-End.

January 31: Rousseau, *Emile*, Preface and Book 1, 33-53

February 2: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 1, 53-74

### *Week 4:*

February 5: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 2, 77-107 (**First reading response due**)

February 7: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 2, 107-135

February 9: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 2, 135-163

### *Week 5:*

February 12: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 3, 165-187

February 14: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 3, 187-208

February 16: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 4, 211-236

### *Week 6:*

February 19: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 4, 236-261

February 21: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 4, 261-286

February 23: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 4, 286-311

*Week 7*

February 26: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 4, 311-336

February 28: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 4, 336-355

March 1: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 5, 357-388

*Week 8*

March 4: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 5, 388-420

March 6: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 5, 420-450

March 8: Rousseau, *Emile*, Book 5, 450-480. (**First Paper Due**)

*Spring Break*

*Week 9:*

March 18: Kant, Selections from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (The “A Preface” and “The Discipline of Pure Reason with Regard to its Polemical Use”) (Canvas); *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?*, 17-23.

March 20: Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface, Part I

March 22: Kant, *Grounding*, Part II; *Critique of Practical Reason* (“Preface,” “Introduction,” and “Conclusion”) (Canvas)

*Week 10*

March 25: Kant, *Idea for a Universal History*, 3-16; *Critique of Judgment* §83-84, 37-43.

March 27: Kant, *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, 24-36; *On the Miscarriage of all philosophical trials in theodicy* (Canvas).

March 29: Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, 67-109 (focus especially on 85-92, 94-104).

*Week 11*

April 1: Goethe, *Faust, Part One*, 1-40

April 3: Goethe, *Faust, Part One*, 40-82

April 5: Goethe, *Faust, Part One*, 82-119

*Week 12:*

April 8: Goethe, *Faust, Part One*, cont.

April 10: Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History of Life*, §1-5

April 12: Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History of Life*, §6-10

*Week 13:*

April 15: Nietzsche, The Prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; Selections from *The Gay Science*, (Aphorisms 340-341) (Canvas).

*Optional:* “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” in *Ecce Homo*, 751-765. (**Second reading response due**)

April 17: Nietzsche, “Preface” and “What is Religious” in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 192-194, 249-266;

*Optional:* “Beyond Good and Evil” in *Ecce Homo*, 766-767.

April 19: Nietzsche, “The Natural History of Morals” in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 287-308. Selection from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “Old and New Tablets” (Canvas)

*Week 14*

April 22: Nietzsche, “We Scholars” in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 311-331; “How the True World Became a Fiction” from *Twilight of the Idols* (Canvas). **(Final Paper Due)**

April 24: Nietzsche, “What is Noble” in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 391-427 (Canvas).

April 26: Nietzsche, Selections from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (The Spirit of Gravity; Zarathustra to his Disciples).

*Week 15:*

April 29: Leo Strauss, “Liberal Education and Responsibility;” Hannah Arendt, “The Crisis in Education.” (Canvas).

Final Exam: TBD