

Liberalism and Its Critics
YSS3326
Course Syllabus, Winter 2022

Professor: Christina Tarnopolsky
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Class Times: Tuesdays and Fridays, 14:30 – 16:00
Class Location: Programme Room 2
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2-4 pm via Zoom

Course Description:

The course will build upon the knowledge of early modern liberalism that students learn in PPT 2. We will begin with an examination of John Locke's classic work of liberalism, *The Second Treatise of Government*. We will then examine Jean-Jacques Rousseau's critique of liberal state of nature theories in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Here we will study a number of concepts central to classical liberalism: justice, virtue, rights, duties, consent, sovereignty, liberty, equality, the state of nature, and the social contract. We will also be concerned to understand 1) the relationship between nature or natural law and politics; 2) the relationship between morality and politics; 3) the relationship between the individual and the state; 4) the equality or inequality of human beings. After that we turn to twentieth-century critiques of liberalism offered by Virginia Woolf, Sigmund Freud, Malcolm X, and Michel Foucault. Here we will study how liberalism relies on masculine (Woolf), rationalist (Freud), racist (Malcolm X) or disciplinary (Foucault) mechanisms and examine the political alternatives offered by these thinkers. The aim of the course is not to convince you of the validity or invalidity of either the liberals or their critics. Rather, the aim is to get you to see and understand that there are important disagreements about the very first principles the structure our political lives and that it is possible to engage in reasoned debate about these things.

Required Texts:

- (Students must get the proper translation of these works. No student may write a paper using a different translation.)
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett Publishing Co. Ltd., 2005) ISBN = 9780915144860
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Hackett Publishing Co. Ltd., 1992) ISBN = 9780872201507
- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (Harper Collins Publishers, 2015) ISBN = 9780007558063
- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co Inc, 2010) ISBN = 9780393304510
- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Random House USA, Inc.) ISBN = 9780679752554

Method of Evaluation:

1. First Paper (2500 words, 7 pages, due February 13th)
2. Second Paper (3000 words, 8 pages, due April 24th)
3. Participation (Questions Sets/Class Participation)

Grade Distribution:

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| First Paper | 35.0% |
| Second Paper | 45.0% |
| Participation | 20.0% |

Description of Assignments:

5% of the classroom participation grade will consist of 10 questions or reflections generated by the students throughout the semester. 15% of the classroom participation grade will consist of participation in the classroom discussions.

Policies:**Late Assignment Policy:**

Your assignment will be considered late if it misses the deadline without a VR note or Medical Certificate from a Doctor. For every late assignment, you will pay a penalty, as your grade will go down by 1/3 of a letter grade per 24 hours after the deadline. Students are expected to plan and manage their workloads, and to ensure they do not lose work through IT malfunction. Students are expected to submit work on or before the **deadlines specified in the syllabi or as advised in class.**

Canvas Page Usage Policy:

A discussion will be generated for each seminar. If students are submitting questions for the seminar, they are expected to post it to the discussion for that seminar.

Attendance:

1. Students are expected to attend all classes. Students must request the permission of the professor to be absent from classes.
2. Students are generally entitled to miss one class session of the course for the purposes of required fieldwork for another course. Students must nevertheless still request permission for this absence from the professor for the session of the course for which they will be absent.
3. Permission to be absent from class for reason of extra-curricular activities is not automatic and is at the discretion of the professor.

4. Students are allowed to take one unauthorized absence during the semester.
5. Penalties for unauthorized absence is 2% off the participation grade per unauthorized absence.

Process of grade appeal on assignments:

If you are unsatisfied with a grade-assessment, you can submit the assignment to me, along with a two-page note explaining why you think a re-evaluation is justified. I will then re-evaluate the paper, but reserve the right to raise *or lower* the grade, and this second decision is final.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Yale-NUS College expects its students to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity as a matter of personal honesty and communal responsibility. Acting with academic integrity requires that (a) students do their own work, (b) students not interfere with the work of others, (c) students accurately and honestly represent the content of their work, and (d) students properly attribute others' work. Violations of the College's academic integrity standards undermine both the community and the individual growth of students. Accordingly, they will be addressed with the utmost seriousness and sanctions ranging from grade penalties to expulsion. Examples of violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, copying or sharing homework answers, submitting work completed for one course as 'new' work for another course, or fabricating or falsifying research data. For more information please visit the Student Services website, Policies and Procedures section: <https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/policies/academic-integrity/>

The Yale-NUS Library provides resources on citations and plagiarism here: <http://library.yale-nus.edu.sg/plagiarism/>

Non-discriminatory Language and Conduct:

This course encourages non-discriminatory language and conduct. Students should not use racist, sexist or other discriminatory language in class discussions or written work.

Health and Wellness Contacts:

If you are experiencing undue stress or feel you might benefit from private counselling, please contact the Yale-NUS Health and Wellness Centre. The wellness center also offers a wide range of enriching workshops and events. You may also wish to reach out to Vice Rector within your residential College. For this and other kinds of support. <https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/wellness/>

Disability Policy:

If you have a disability please contact me to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact your Vice Rector as well.

Grading Criteria:

To do excellent work on the papers in this course, you need to do more than just reiterate what was said in the sections. An **A** indicates that you not only understand and comprehend the material, but have understood all of the subtleties and implications of the argument, and that you are able to creatively develop and support your arguments with passages that we discussed in section, but also with some that were not discussed in the section. Originality in these papers means original thinking that goes beyond the analyses offered by either the professor or other students. An **A-** indicates a similarly excellent paper that has captured *some but not all* of the subtleties and implications of the argument. A **B+** paper reflects an above-average understanding of the material, organization of the paper, and written expression of ideas but without the analytical rigor or depth of understanding of an **A** range paper. A **B** range paper reflects average work with no errors or problems of written expression. However, it usually fails in one of two respects: 1) it fails to capture the complexity of the issues and/or 2) it summarizes rather than analyses what has been read or said in class. A **B-** paper is a paper that usually fails in both respects 1) and 2) above OR that contains substantive errors or problems of written expression. A **C** range paper suggests a more significant struggle with the material. It reflects comprehension of some of the pertinent issues, but with significant misunderstandings or errors. A **D** indicates very little comprehension of the material with a large portion of it being misunderstood. An **F** indicates no comprehension of the material at all.

Course Schedule and Readings:

WEEK 1: Jan. 10th – 14th

Tuesday Jan. 11th:

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 1-4, pp. 7-18.

Friday Jan 14th:

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 5-6, pp. 18-42.

WEEK 2: Jan. 17th – 21st

Tuesday, Jan 18th:

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 7-8, pp. 42-65

Friday, Jan 21st:

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 9-14, pp. 65-88.

WEEK 3: Jan. 24 – 28th

Tuesday, Jan. 25th:

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapter 15-19, pp. 88-124.

Friday, Jan 28th

BE SURE TO READ THE ENDNOTES!

- Rousseau, *Discourse on Origin of Inequality*, pp. 1-26.

WEEK 4: Jan. 31 – Feb. 4th

Tuesday, Feb. 1st

- No Class, Chinese New Year.

Friday Feb. 4th:

- Rousseau, *Discourse on Origin of Inequality*, pp. 27-50.

WEEK 5: Feb. 7th – 11th

Tuesday, Feb. 8th

- Rousseau, *Discourse on Origin of Inequality*, 51-71.

Friday, Feb. 11th

- Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, pp. 117-169.

WEEK 6: Feb. 14 – 18th

Tuesday, Feb. 15th:

- Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, pp. 170-221.

Friday Feb 18th

- No Class.
- **FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18th, 11:59 pm**

WEEK 7: February 19th – February 27th

- **BREAK WEEK: No Classes**

WEEK 8: Feb. 28th – Mar. 4th

Tuesday, March 1st:

- Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, pp. 222-274

Friday, March 4th:

- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 23-65.

WEEK 9: Mar. 7th – 11th

Tuesday, Mar. 8th:

- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 66-107.

Friday, Mar. 11th:

- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 108-147.

WEEK 10: Mar. 14th – 18th

Tuesday, Mar. 15th:

- Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” and “After the Bombing” in *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 23-44, pp. 157-177.

Friday, Mar 18th:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 1, Chapter 1, pp. 3-31

WEEK 11: Mar. 21st – 25th

Tuesday, Mar. 22nd:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 1, Chapter 2, pp. 41-63.

Friday, Mar. 25th:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 2, Chapter 1, pp. 73-94, 101-103.

WEEK 12: Mar. 28th – Apr. 1st

Tuesday, March 29th:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 2, Chapter 2, pp. 104-116, 120, 126-131

Friday, Apr. 1st

- No Class.

WEEK 13: Apr. 4th – 8th

Tuesday, Apr. 5th:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 3, Chapter 1, pp. 135-148, 155-156, 164-169

Friday, Apr. 8th:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 3, Chapter 2, pp. 170-184, bottom 191-194, Chapter 3, pp. 195-228.

WEEK 14: Apr. 11th – 15th

Tuesday, Apr. 12th:

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Part 4, Chapter 1, pp. 231-235, 254-256, Chapter 2, pp. bottom 264-285, Chapter 3, pp. 293-3-0

Friday, Apr. 15th

- No Class. Good Friday

SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 24th, 11:59 PM.