PS 502: The Development of Modern Western Political Thought:  
Sociability and its Discontents

MW 2:25-3:15  
2535 Engineering

Course Instructor: Professor Daniel Kapust  
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 10:00-11:00, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Katelyn Jones

I. Scope and Purpose

The title of the course suggests the problem that frames it: tensions are inherent in living with others. Humans live in groups, and it is hard to imagine us living outside of groups and being recognizably human. Yet living in groups requires compromises and poses obstacles to our happiness – be they conscious or subconscious. Whether it’s the pressure to conform to images held by one’s employer, peers, or family, to social roles more broadly, to different expectations based on race or gender, or the frustrations over our inability to tame our own mortality, living together in political associations entails a number of potential and potent sources of unhappiness.

We will encounter a wide array of diagnoses of the tensions inherent in living together, and a wide array of solutions to them, be they rooted in human nature (Hobbes), commercial society (Rousseau), capitalism (Marx), conventional morality (Nietzsche), or racism (Mills), to name but a few. We will explore a wide array of questions: when, why, and how do humans cooperate? Under what conditions does cooperation break down? Which elements of human psychology allow us to be sociable? Which elements of human psychology pose obstacles to sociability? What sort of power does society exercise over its members, and how does it do so? What limits should there be to social power? How does race or gender affect our social existence?

II. Evaluation

A. Section (20%)

Section will count for 20% of your overall grade, and Katelyn Jones, the course TA, is in charge of evaluation and allocation. She will provide you with a section syllabus. This component of your grade may include pop quizzes, to be held at Katelyn’s discretion.

B. Papers (50%)
All students in this class will write 3 short (6-8 pages, 1500-2000 word) papers. These papers are to be analyses of a work of creative art through the lens of one of the course readings. As such, you can write a paper about a novel, song, album, television show, film, play, poem, opera, painting, or other similar works of art or literature. Your papers must develop readings of the selected works that focus on their psychological, political, ethical, or social implications in light of a particular course reading. There are three different due dates for these papers. You must turn in one paper on or by Wednesday, February 20; this paper can be written on Cicero, Hobbes, or Mandeville. The second paper will be due on or before Wednesday, March 20, and can be written on Rousseau, Smith, or Marx. The third and final paper will be due on or before Wednesday, May 1, and may be written on Mill, Nietzsche, Freud, Beauvoir, Butler, or Mills.

Detailed guidelines on the papers will be handed out in class.

C. In-Class Response Papers (5%)

Participants in this class will write a short response to a question that will be written on the board at the beginning of class. This question is to help you think about the reading for that particular lecture and to prepare you for the lecture itself; it might also ask you to briefly reflect on a song or image shared at the beginning of the class. If you are not in the classroom when I collect these responses, you will get a zero. If you miss 2 of these papers, you will get 4 out of 5 percentage points; if you miss 3, you will get 3 out of 5; if you miss 4, you will get 2 out of 5; if you miss 5, you will get 1 out of 5, and if you miss 6 or more, you will get 0 out of 5. That is, if you are late to class more than 5 times, your overall course grade will be lowered by a half-letter.

D. Final Exam (25%)

Participants in this class will take a final exam worth 25% of the course grade, to be held on 5/12/2013 from 5:05 to 7:05 pm. The exam will be written, and will consist of two essay questions.

III. Class Expectations

You can expect me, as your instructor, to come to class prepared, to be available for assistance during office hours or by mutually convenient appointment, to answer email and phone correspondence in a reasonable amount of time (provided your email uses proper punctuation, grammar, spelling, appellation, and is signed), to provide feedback on your performance, to hand back written work in a reasonable amount of time, and to provide clear instructions and guidelines.

I expect you, as students, to come to class prepared to engage in the material and on time, to be attentive and respectful in class, to check your university-registered email regularly, to read and understand the syllabus and other course guidelines, in addition to adhering to all university policies and policies stated in the syllabus. Students may not use laptops in this class.
IV. Grading

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

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\begin{align*}
A & \geq 93.5 \\
AB & = 87.5-93.4 \\
B & = 82.5-87.4 \\
BC & = 77.5-82.4 \\
C & = 69.5-77.4 \\
D & = 60-69.4 \\
F & \leq 59.9
\end{align*}
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V. Materials

There are six required books for this course, listed below in the order that we will be reading them; the ISBNs can be found at my.wisc.edu.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan Parts I and II*, edited by Martinich (Broadview)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings* (Hackett)

Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (Prometheus)

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Hackett)


Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Cornell)

In addition, the materials for several days can be accessed online (and free) via the links provided in the syllabus, or else in PDF form via the PS 502 course page on Learn@UW.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with severely.

This syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may occur.
Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Wednesday, January 23: No reading; course introduction

Monday, January 28: Cicero, *On Friendship*  

Wednesday, January 30: Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Introduction, Chapters 1-6)


Wednesday, February 6: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, cont’d (Chapters 14-17)

Monday, February 11: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, cont’d (Chapters 18-19, 21, 29)


Monday, February 18: Mandeville, *A Search into the Nature of Society*  

Wednesday, February 20: Rousseau, *First Discourse*

**First Paper Due**

Monday, February 25: Rousseau, *First Discourse*, cont’d; *Second Discourse*

Wednesday, February 27: Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, cont’d

Monday, March 4: Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (selections to be announced)  

Wednesday, March 6: Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (selections to be announced)  
Monday, March 11: Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (selections to be announced)


Wednesday, March 13: Marx, *1844 Manuscripts* (selections to be announced)

Monday, March 18: Marx, *1844 Manuscripts*, cont’d

Wednesday, March 20: Mill, *On Liberty* (selections to be announced)

**Second Paper Due**

March 25-29: Spring break; no class

Monday, April 1: Mill, *On Liberty*, cont’d (selections to be announced)

Wednesday, April 3: Nietzsche, *Genealogy* (available via Learn@UW)

Monday, April 8: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, cont’d (available via Learn@UW)

Wednesday, April 10: Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*

Monday April 15: Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, cont’d

Wednesday, April 17: Mills, *The Racial Contract*


Wednesday, April 24: Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (available at Learn@UW)

Monday, April 29: Butler, “Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir’s Second Sex” (available via Learn@UW)

Wednesday, May 1: Extra Day

**Third Paper Due**

Monday, May 6: Extra Day

Wednesday, May 8: No reading; course conclusion