

**THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF POLITICS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE**

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA: HISTORY 4960/7510

Autumn, 2018-Winter 2019

Erik Thomson  
Fletcher Argue Building, 452  
[Erik.Thomson@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Erik.Thomson@umanitoba.ca)

Mondays, 2:30-5:15

This course examines the theory and conduct of politics in Europe during the early modern period, from roughly 1450-1789. Many fundamental changes in the nature of European political organization – including printing, the Reformation, the expansion of extra-European relations and empire, shifts in the style and scope of warfare, and changes in the methods of financing and supporting war – occurred during this period. At the same time, there were profound changes in the manner in which people debated and discussed “politics”, as different authors responded to the challenges of the age by making creative use of arguments, examples, and ideas to react to events, justify positions, or try to make sense of the changes they were experiencing. Some of these authors – such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Montesquieu – have gained the status of “classics”, and are still referred to and even read.

We will combine the close reading of a corpus of primary sources that suggest the complexity and diversity of European political thought and government during the period, but yet permit us to observe some of the major shifts over the period. At the same time, we will consider some of the rich historiography about the history of political thought, the writing of history, and the practices of government.

Books: Available for Purchase at the University of Manitoba Bookstore

John Fortescue, *On the Laws and Governance of England*. Shelley Lockwood, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), ISBN: 0521589967

Niccolo Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings*. David Wooton, ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett publishing, 1994), ISBN: 978-0-87220-274-4.

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* N.W. Bawcutt, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press/World Classics, 2008), ISBN: 978-019953842

*Readings in Western Civilization, 6: Early Modern Europe: Crisis of Authority*. Eric Cochrane, Charles Gray, & Mark Kishlansky, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), ISBN: 0-226-06948-6.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. J.C.A. Gaskin, ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP/World Classics, 1998), 978-0192834980

David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*. (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2008), 9780674030329

Students will be expected to have copies of other readings that are available in class.

### Assignments & Marking

#### **Class Participation: 20%:**

This course is a discussion course. This format places much of the burden of learning on you and your fellow students. If you do not prepare, they, and you, will suffer. I do not plan to lecture, but to direct discussion, pose questions, and emphasize general themes. I expect you to read, to think, to question, and to discuss. Naturally, you cannot discuss if you are not present, so attendance is expected. Naturally, also, you should read the assigned readings, but it might be more useful to think of needing “to prepare to discuss” the assigned readings than merely planning “to read” them. Reading primary sources is a tricky business. Understanding them always demands careful and often laborious reading, questioning, research, and rereading. I recommend taking notes on passages you find particularly difficult, as the process of taking notes demands active thinking. I may ask you to write a few short, in class reaction papers as a part of this mark.

**Paper #1: Due in class 19th November 2018, worth 15% of the year’s mark. 8 pages for undergraduate students, 12 pages for graduate students.**

Write a paper that analyzes the manner in which scholars have treated a particular author, work, theme, or problem in the history of European politics or political thought in the early modern period. Please discuss with me what is an appropriate reading list for the paper, as different subjects have had different amounts of scholarship devoted to them, and thus may require different sorts of reading. For suggestions of topics and an appropriate number of readings, students may consult the Cambridge University Faculty of History Tripos reading list for Part I, Paper 19, “History of Political Thought to c. 1700”, units A5, A6, A7, A8, or B15, B16, B17, B18, B19, and B20 available at <https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/hist-tripos/part-i/part-i-papers-2017-2018/paper19>. Of course, these topics are not exclusive.

**Paper #2: Presentations and Research Paper: Presentations in classes of 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 (10% of final mark on presentation and responses), and Papers due 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2019. (25% of Final mark) 12 pages for undergraduates, 20 pages for graduate students.**

This will be a research paper on a topic of the history of politics and political thought in early modern Europe. Students should aim at producing an argument that combines the analysis of a primary source or primary sources with historiographical argumentation, although for some topics historiographical debate is possible. While I do not require it, I hope that all students will come and see me to discuss their topics before the winter/ Louis-Riel/reading week break.

Students will first present their work in conference paper style, preparing a 15 minute – roughly 7 page – version of their work, which will be presented for the class. Students are expected to respond to the presentation, and ask helpful and constructive questions. Conference papers, at their best, present an argument clearly, and limit their examples so that historians understand the importance of their work, how it relates to previous work on the topic, and why they are interpreting their materials in the manner that they are.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, students should submit a paper that treats their topics. Here, a greater degree of precision and comprehensiveness of reference is required.

**Final Exam: During final exam period. 25% of year mark.**

**A note on academic honesty:** Education and scholarship depends upon a certain sort of basic honesty. I expect that when you claim to have done work, you will actually have done it. Work done for another course should not be used in this course. When you use the work or ideas of another scholar or student, you should respect them by treating their work fairly and accurately, and give them public credit by citing them openly. Always err on the side of giving too much credit to others than too little. In formal essays, I prefer citations in footnotes using the form known as the Chicago humanities style; see the quick guide at:

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

The University cares about academic honesty as well, because it has to maintain a standard of fairness and equity. You can find its mandate in the section on “Academic Integrity” of the General Academic Regulations in the online Academic Calendar and Catalog and the Faculty of Arts regulation (online at: [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/student\\_responsibilities.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/student_responsibilities.html)), but the Faculty of Arts requires me to repeat it here, as well.

*“The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.*

*The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.*

*The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty. For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty."*

**Marking:** I will make every effort to return papers within a week, and you will thus have considerable feedback before the voluntary withdrawal (VW) date of January 18, 2019. I normally hand out marked work in class. The comments on your work are supposed to help you improve, so I encourage you to look at them when you pick up your work in class. (The Faculty of Arts wants me to warn you that if you do not pick up your work for four months after the course ends, the work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts. Once it belongs to the Faculty, it will "be subject to confidential destruction.") I will take into account the quality and diligence of research, the creativity, strength, and coherence of thought and argument, and the correct use of grammar, usage, proofreading and citation.

4% a day may be deducted for unexcused lateness.

#### *Marking Scheme*

A+, 90-100 %: Exceptional: Astonishingly excellent work, which demonstrates originality and a singular command of the subject.

A, 80-89 %. Truly excellent work, free from errors. A strong thesis, well organized paragraphs, and substantial evidence of close reading on single source papers or broad research in the research paper. In research papers, some awareness of the development of historiographical traditions. Excellent and error free citations, and in the research paper a large and intriguing bibliography.

B+, 75-79 %. Very good work, but with some errors.

B, 70-75 %. Good, with evidence of hard work. Certainly must have a suitable thesis. Errors in grammar and usage, and less creativity and coherence in argument and interpretation. Sporadic references to the literature.

C+, 65-69 %. Satisfactory, but little coherence in argument and poor writing, and in the research paper, little evidence of creativity and diligence in research.

C, 60-64 %. Poorly written, and with little evidence of being familiar with the subject about which they are writing, and little evident effort placed into finding material for research.

D, 50-59 %. Poorly organized, without a useful thesis. Many errors in editing, sloppy writing, and little sign of diligent research or close reading.

F, 0-49 %. Unacceptable work. Demonstrates little knowledge of the history of the early modern period or of the historian's craft.

The Faculty of Arts also asks me to remind you that "Students who wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them."

### USEFUL RESOURCES

You have access to several important resources to help you navigate your classes and university life more generally. There are writing tutors available to help you with your essays through the Academic Learning Centre (ALC):

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/> The ALC page also has resources to help you with study skills, organization, as well as assistance for students using English as an Additional Language (EAL). Other issues, including accessibility services, workshops, and tips about academic integrity are addressed at the Student Advocacy Services webpage ([http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student\\_advocacy/](http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/)). The History department will also make a writing tutor available exclusively to History students in the department on one day a week. More information about scheduling, etc., TBA. All of the above services can also be accessed through this link:

<http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/student-resources.html>

History students can also take advantage of the huge range of academic materials (including primary and secondary sources, as well as pages to help with writing and referencing) made available by the History subject librarian, tailored just for you! They are available on the Libraries page at this link:

<http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/content.php?pid=219304>

### USEFUL REFERENCES FOR HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 2 vols.

J.H. Burns, ed. *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political thought, c. 350-c. 1450*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie, eds. *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler, eds. *The Cambridge History of eighteenth-century political thought*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

### *Other student resources*

#### Student Counseling Centre

Contact SCC if you are concerned about any aspect of your mental health, including anxiety, stress, or depression, or for help with relationships or other life concerns. SCC offers crisis services as well as counseling. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/index.html>

#### Student Support Case Management

Contact the Student Support Case Management team if you are concerned about yourself or another student and don't know where to turn. SSCM helps connect students with on and off campus resources, provides safety planning, and offers other supports, including consultation, educational workshops, and referral to the STATIS threat assessment team. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/case-manager/index.html>

#### University Health Service

Contact UHS for any medical concerns, including mental health problems. UHS offers a full range of medical services to students, including psychiatric consultation. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/health/>

#### Student Advocacy

Contact Student Advocacy if you want to know more about your rights and responsibilities as a student, have questions about policies and procedures, and/or want support in dealing with academic or discipline concerns. <http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy>

#### UM History Student Association (UMHiSA)

UMHiSA is a history undergraduate student run organization that seeks to establish a sense of community for students studying all facets of history, and provide support for them in their academic career. Students interested in fun times, spirited debate, new opportunities, a community of like-minded students, or all of the above, check out UMHiSA on our instagram account [www.instagram.com/umhisa\\_undergrad](http://www.instagram.com/umhisa_undergrad) / or by emailing [umhisau@gmail.com](mailto:umhisau@gmail.com) .