

# Liberalism and Its Critics

## Gov 2220 Fall 2019

Professor: Michael Hawley

Office: 209C Hubbard Hall

Office Hours: Mon 4:30-5:30, Tu 1:30-3:30 PM, or by apt.

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### Course Description:

Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, liberalism—a doctrine that prioritizes individuals and their rights—has been a powerful force in world politics. In this course we will examine a number of responses to liberal democratic doctrine in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, coming from a variety of perspectives—conservative (Burke), liberal-progressive (Mill), radical left (Marx), and what might be called radical right (Nietzsche). In addition to Marx's and Nietzsche's radical critiques of liberalism, we will also consider Tocqueville's more sympathetic critique.

### Course Aims:

The primary aims of this class are those that go into determining your grade for the course. Most basically, you will gain an understanding of the questions and problems that surround modern liberalism. You will hone your skills at reading difficult texts carefully and evaluating arguments. You will also improve your abilities in constructing your own written arguments, demonstrating your analytical skills, and expressing your ideas clearly and persuasively.

But there is another kind of aim for this course, one that will not be reflected in your grade. The thinkers we read in this class wrote not merely for their own contemporaries but for all time. They are, in a sense, addressed to you. They make claims about human nature, the human good, and the possibilities of politics. It is my hope for this class that our encounters with the authors we read will help you to think more deeply about these questions and to become more reflective citizens.

### Course Books:

The following books are required reading and are available for purchase or rent through Bowdoin's textbook partner or online. You may of course purchase books from other sources, provided you use the same editions and translations. It truly is important to get the same editions and translations; it helps keep all of us on the same page (literally) as we discuss the readings and when it comes time to write papers. All other texts will be posted on the Blackboard site.

1. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke (Penguin Classics)
2. *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville (translated by Mansfield and Winthrop)
3. *On Liberty and Other Writings*, John Stuart Mill
4. *Marx: Selected Writings*, Karl Marx (edited by Lawrence Simon)
5. *Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche (translated by Walter Kaufmann)

## Course Requirements:

You will be required to write three papers (5-6 pages, double-spaced) on assigned topics. These are not research papers. The only texts you will need to write them will be what we read for this course. I will discuss the expectations and requirements for these papers at greater length in class. This class will also have a final exam. Finally, there is a participation component to your grade—which is composed both of in-class contributions as well as posts on the discussion forum on Blackboard. For the latter, you are required to post 8 reading responses (roughly 150 words each) over the course of the semester. This averages out to roughly one such response for every three class meetings, but you may distribute them however you like throughout the semester. These responses must not exceed 200 words. In them, you should raise a question, pose an objection, or make an argument about some aspect of the next day's reading. You are encouraged also to respond to posts by your fellow students. In order to count, you need to post by midnight of the day before class is to meet—I will read them before class and may incorporate some of them into our discussion.

With all of your work, be sure to follow Bowdoin standards of conduct regarding academic honesty and plagiarism. Violations of these standards will be referred to the appropriate dean.

Course grade will be determined as follows:

Three Papers:	60%
Class participation	15%
Final	25%

## Reading assignments:

### Part 1: Revolution and Reaction

Sept 4	Introductory Discussion
Sept. 9	Declaration of Independence, Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, selections from Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i> (all on Blackboard)
Sept. 11	<i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> , Burke: pp. 84-117
Sept. 16	<i>Reflections</i> , Burke: pp. 117-154
Sept. 18	<i>Reflections</i> , Burke: pp. 154-195
Sept. 23	<i>Reflections</i> , Burke: pp. 195-214, 227-231, 263-285, 373-377
Sept. 25	<i>Rights of Man</i> , Paine (selection on Blackboard)

### Part 2: Liberal Democracy's Critical Friends

Sept 30	<i>Democracy in America</i> , Tocqueville, pp. 3-15, 27-45 45-65
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Oct. 2	<i>Democracy in America</i> , Tocqueville, pp. 45-65, 165-180
Oct. 7	<i>Democracy in America</i> , Tocqueville, pp. 180-190, 212-214, 225-229, 231-249
Oct. 9	<i>Democracy in America</i> , Tocqueville, pp. 275-288, 403-410, 417-428
Oct. 14	Fall Break!
Oct. 16	<i>Democracy in America</i> , Tocqueville, pp. 479-484, 489-492, 500-509, 521-522, 640-645, 661-673
Oct. 21	<i>On Liberty</i> , Mill: ch. 1, ch. 2 (pp. 19-36)
Oct. 23	<i>On Liberty</i> , Mill: pp. 37-55
Oct. 28	<i>On Liberty</i> , Mill: chs. 3-4
Oct. 30	<i>On Liberty</i> , Mill: ch. 5
Nov. 4	<i>Subjection of Women</i> , pp. 119-139, 146-149, 159-161, 195-211

### Part 3: Marx's Attack from the Left

Nov. 6	<i>Marx's Selected Writings</i> , "On the Jewish Question" (pp. 2-21)
Nov. 11	<i>Selected Writings</i> , "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" (pp. 58-79)
Nov. 13	<i>Selected Writings</i> , "The German Ideology" (pp. 103-112, 115-131)
Nov. 18	<i>Selected Writings</i> , "The German Ideology" (pp. 133-153)
Nov. 20	<i>Selected Writings</i> , "Communist Manifesto" (pp. 158-186)

### Part 4: Nietzsche's Attack from the Right

Nov. 25	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Nietzsche: preface and Part 1
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving
Dec. 2	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Parts 2-3
Dec. 4	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Parts 5 and 9 (sections 257-260 only)
Dec. 9	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Parts 6 and 8
Dec. 11	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> , Part 7, Part 9 (parts 261-274, 296)

Dec. 21 (8:30 AM): Final Exam

### Paper Due Dates:

**Paper 1:** Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Paper 2:** Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>  
**Paper 3:** Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>