

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Government 3210

Spring 2019

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Office Hours:
MTW 4:30-5:30
or by appt.

“We have never seen in our own generation—indeed the world has not seen more than once or twice in all the course of history—a literature which has exercised such prodigious influence over the minds of men, over every cast and shade of intellect, as that which emanated from Rousseau between 1749 and 1762.”

—Henry Sumner Maine, *Ancient Law* (1861)

In this course, we will examine the multifaceted and revolutionary thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, including his critique of the Enlightenment, his rejection of classical liberalism, his defense of democracy, his relationship to the French Revolution, his contribution to Romanticism, and his views on freedom, equality, education, religion, art, economics, women, the family, love, and the self. We will proceed by reading Rousseau’s major works—the *First and Second Discourses*, *The Social Contract*, the *Emile*, and *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*—and considering a portion of the voluminous secondary literature that has been devoted to his philosophy. The course will culminate in the writing of major research paper on some specific aspect of Rousseau’s thought.

Books (available for purchase at <https://bowdoin.ecampus.com/>)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*. Edited by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. Edited by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*. Translated by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979.

Requirements

1. Regular and active class participation (15% of grade)
2. Two papers: a shorter one, approximately 7-8 pages (25%); and a longer one, approximately 18-20 pages (60%).

Reading Assignments

Jan. 28	<i>Discourse on the Sciences and Arts</i> (pp. 1-28); <i>Preface to "Narcissus"</i> (pp. 92-106)
Jan. 30	<i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> (pp. 124-41 plus notes)
Feb. 4	Part 1 (pp. 141-60 plus notes)
Feb. 6	Part 2 (pp. 161-88 plus notes); "Epistle Dedicatory" (pp. 114-23)
Feb. 11	Selections from Montesquieu, <i>Spirit of the Laws</i> (Blackboard)
Feb. 13	<i>Discourse on Political Economy</i> (pp. 3-38)
Feb. 18	<i>Social Contract</i> , Bk. I
Feb. 20	Bk. II, chaps. 1-6
Feb. 25	Bk. II, chaps. 7-12
Feb. 27	Bk. III
March 4	Bk. IV; Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns" (Blackboard)
March 6	<i>Emile</i> , Preface and Bk. I
March 9-24	Spring Break
March 25	<i>Emile</i> , Bk. II, pp. 77-126
March 27	Bk. III
April 1	Bk. IV, pp. 211-60
April 3	Bk. IV, pp. 260-313
April 8	Bk. IV, pp. 313-55
April 10	Bk. V, pp. 356-410
April 15	Bk. V, pp. 410-80
April 17	<i>Reveries</i> , Walks 1-3, 5 (Blackboard)
April 22	No class, work on presentations/papers
April 24-May 8	Presentations

Writing Assignments

Feb. 22	Short paper due
April 5	Research paper proposal due
April 19	Secondary literature review due
May 14	Research paper due

Supplemental Reading (on reserve)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts: Letter to D'Alembert on the Theatre*, trans. Allan Bloom (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960).

_____, *Julie, or the Nouvelle Heloise*, trans. Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997).

_____, *The Confessions*, trans. Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995).

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Anne Cohler, Basia Miller, and Harold Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Maurice Cranston, three volume biography of Rousseau (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991/1999).

Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstacle*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

Robert Wokler, *Rousseau* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).