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**Classics of Ethics, Politics and Economics**  
**Thursdays 3.30-5.20pm**  
**31 Hillhouse Ave**  
**Spring 2018**

This course explores some influential texts in the Western intellectual tradition, selected to promote reflection on three deceptively simple topics: What is ethics? What is politics? What is economics? As well as situating authors in their historical contexts and considering their engagements with their predecessors, we will keep a special eye on the following inquiry. How did ancient Greek *oikonomia*, the science of household management, 'turn into' modern economics, the master discipline of our time, which claims to illuminate choice-making under any and all conditions of scarcity—and what changing ethical and political presuppositions did this transformation involve?

Requirements are a weekly forum post reflecting on the readings (10%, starting Jan 25), class engagement (10%) and two papers which between them total 20-25 pages of writing (weighted 35/45%).

Texts marked with an asterisk will be made available as pdfs online. Please print them out and bring them to class. Suggested editions of other texts are given in the 'Course Policies' section below.

Jan 18. Introduction

No required reading, but I will distribute and discuss the following in class.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1-3, 13 (pp. 2-11, 60-9 tr. Rackham).\*

Aristotle, *Politics* I.1-4 (pp. 2-17 tr. Rackham).\*

Aristotle, *History of Animals* I.1.487b30-488a25 (pp. 12-17, tr. Peck).\*

Jan 25. Plato (c. 427-347 BC)

*Republic* 368a-376c, 427d- 449a, 471c-502d (pp. 53-66, 130-56, 189-225 tr. Lee.)

*Meno* (pp. 870-97, tr. Grube).\*

Feb 1. Aristotle (384-22 BC)

*Nicomachean Ethics* I-III.5, V-VI (pp. 1-63, 106-58 tr. Ross).

*Politics* I, III.1-9, IV.3-4 (1-25, 65-82, 104-111 tr. Reeve).

Feb 8. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1649)

*Elements of Law* (1640), II.10.8 (Gaskin ed.)\*

*On the Citizen* (1642/1647), parts I and II (pp. 3-167 Tuck ed.)

*Leviathan* (1651), 'Introduction' (Tuck ed.)\*

Feb 15. Nicole (1625-95), Locke (1632-1704), Mandeville (1670-1733)

Pierre Nicole, 'On Charity and Self-Love' (1674) (pp. 1-9 Hundert ed. *Fable of the Bees*).

John Locke, *Second Treatise* (1690), chs. I-V, XIX (pp. 267-302, 406-28 Laslett ed.)\*

Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* vol. I (1723): text and remarks F, G, L.

Feb 22. David Hume (1711-76)

*Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), text and appendix III.

Mar 1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78)

*Discourse on Political Economy* (1755) (pp. 3-38 tr. Gourevitch).

*The Social Contract* (1762), books I and II.1-3 (pp. 41-60 tr. Gourevitch).

'Government of Poland' (1772), section 11 (pp. 224-9 tr. Gourevitch).

Mar 8. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785).

'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent' (1784).

'To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch' (1795).

March 9: Paper 1 due.

[Mar 29. No class]Apr 5. Smith (1723-90) and Constant (1767-1830)

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Introduction and chs. 1-8 (pp. 10-104, Campbell and Skinner ed).

Benjamin Constant, 'Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns' (1819) (pp. 307-28, tr. Fontana).\*

Apr 12. Bentham (1748-1832) and Mill (1806-73)

Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), chs. 1-4 (pp. 1-32 Dover ed.)

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (1861), chs 2 and 5 (pp. 136-58, 176-201, Gray ed.).

John Stuart Mill, *On Representative Government* (1865), chs. 3 and 5 (pp. 238-56, 269-84 Gray ed.).

Apr 19. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95)

Karl Marx, 'Human Relations as Complementarity', from the *Paris Notebooks* (1844) (pp. 93-6, J. O'Malley ed.)\*

Karl Marx, 'Estranged Labour' and 'Private Property and Communism' from the *Paris Notebooks* (pp. 70-93 Tucker ed.).

Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (1857-8) excerpts A1, C, H, I in Tucker ed. (pp. 221-6, 247-50, 291-3).

Karl Marx, 'The Civil War in France' (1871), Engels' 1891 introduction and part III (pp. 618-42 Tucker ed.)

Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Program' (1875) (pp. 525-41 Tucker ed.).

Friedrich Engels, 'Review of *Capital*, Vol. 1', in *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*, Nos. 12 and 13, March 21 and 28, 1868.\*

Apr 26. Jevons (1835-82), Edgeworth (1845-1926), Pareto (1848-1923), Robbins (1898-1984)

W. Stanley Jevons, *Theory of Political Economy* (1871), 'Introduction', pp. 1-27.\*

Francis Edgeworth, *New and Old Methods of Ethics* (1877), pp. 35-9.\*

Vilfredo Pareto, *Manual of Political Economy* (1906), pp. 18-21, 46-9, 100-1, 190-3, 450-3.\*

Lionel Robbins, *Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, pp. 12-17, 136-158.\*

Apr 30 (tbc). Amartya Sen (1933-) and Conclusion

'Rational Fools: a critique of the behavioural foundations of economic theory', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6 (1977), pp. 317-44.\*

'The Possibility of Social Choice', *American Economic Review* 89 (1999), pp. 349-78.\*

May 9: Paper 2 due.

### Course Policies Expectations

- Attendance at all meetings is required.
- I'd prefer no laptops or other electronic devices in class. Speak to me if in any week you're using an electronic text.
- I'd like to see everyone for a 15 minute meeting at some point in the first 3 weeks of the semester (preferably in office hours, but if you can't make it then we can set up another time). A sign-up sheet will be available in class.

### Forum responses

- Using the Canvas 'Discussions' feature, please submit a brief (1-2 paragraphs), relatively informal response to the reading assignment no later than 10am on the day of class, starting Thursday, January 25.
- You should use this as an opportunity to draw attention to anything you have found striking, puzzling or intriguing about the texts; raise any questions you'd like us to discuss; and/or try out ideas you may wish to write about at greater length.
- I will use these responses to help shape our time together. Be prepared for me to ask you to elaborate on any points you raise, and aim to read others' offerings before we meet.

### Texts

You have various options when it comes to sourcing texts. I recommend that you buy or borrow your own print copies of Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, Hobbes' *On the Citizen*, Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, Hume's *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Rousseau's later writings, Kant's *Groundwork* and essays, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Mill's essays, and the *Marx-Engels Reader*. Suggested editions are given below, but if you already have others, feel free to use them. It may well be helpful to have alternative translations or editorial material available in class. The only exception to this is the Tuck/Silverthorne edition of *On the Citizen*, which is significantly better than the alternatives, since they are based on an unauthorized and sometimes misleading English translation of the original Latin text.

Many of these texts are also available online, e.g. the Greek authors at [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu) or the Loeb Digital Library (access through Orbis) and others at the Online Library of Liberty, <http://oll.libertyfund.org>, [www.econlib.org](http://www.econlib.org), or [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org). These are fantastic resources and we are lucky to have them. However, I hesitate to recommend them for course purposes as I'm keen to minimize the use of electronic devices in class.

### Suggested editions

Plato, *Republic* tr. D. Lee (Penguin 2003/2007)

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. D. Ross (Oxford 1998)

Aristotle, *Politics* tr. C.D.C. Reeve (Hackett 1998)

Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen* ed. R. Tuck, tr. M. Silverthorne (Cambridge 1998)

Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees and other writings*, ed. E.J. Hundert (Hackett, 1997)

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* ed. J. Schneewind (Hackett 1983)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings* ed. V.

Gourevitch (Cambridge 1997)

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (vol. I) ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Liberty Fund, 1981)

Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* tr. M. Gregor (Cambridge 1997)

Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* ed. T. Humphrey (Hackett 1983)  
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* ed. J. Gray (Oxford 1991)  
*The Marx-Engels Reader* ed. Robert C. Tucker (Norton 1978)

**Plagiarism**

Yale faculty are required to make a statement about academic integrity on their syllabi, so here is mine. I take my responsibilities as a teacher and researcher very seriously and will hold you to the same standard. Passing off others' work as your own, even inadvertently, is a betrayal of your position as a member of the scholarly community and moreover inhibits you from developing your own positions, which is what you are here to do. Yale's guidelines are available at <https://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources>; if you have any doubts or queries about how to make appropriate use of others' ideas, just ask me and I'll always be happy to help.