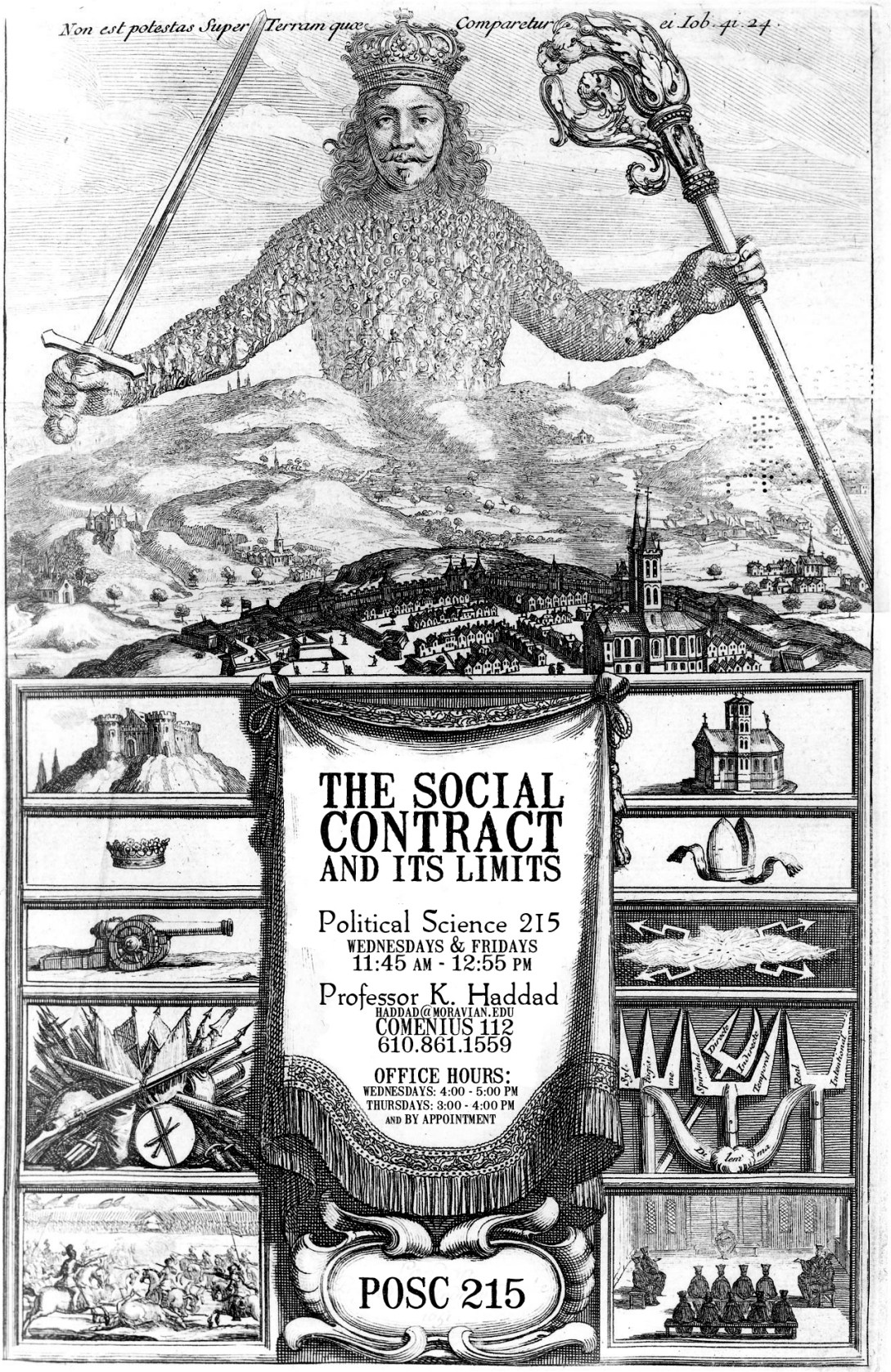


THE SOCIAL CONTRACT AND ITS LIMITS

Political Science 215

WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS

11:45 AM - 12:55 PM

Professor K. Haddad

HADDAD@MORAVIAN.EDU

COMENIUS 112

610.861.1559

OFFICE HOURS:

WEDNESDAYS: 4:00 - 5:00 PM

THURSDAYS: 3:00 - 4:00 PM

AND BY APPOINTMENT

POSC 215

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE

Some political theorists regard this question as the most important of all. Against the traditions of divine right monarchy, they claim that political foundation requires a contract among would-be subjects. John Locke, for example, argues that only explicit consent on the part of the future subject makes political order legitimate and creates an obligation to obey the law. For others, such as Marx and Mill, considering political order through the perspective of a founding contract alone is of limited value because important aspects of shared lives remain invisible, intractable, or uncontested. We will ask: What makes the state legitimate? Why should I obey the law? When do political subjects face conflicts about what they should do? How do various theorists conceptualize power? What aspects of life should be considered politically relevant? And, finally, what are the limits of the social contract perspective?

OUR LIVES TOGETHER?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

to understand the social contract as a model of political life

to secure foundations necessary to the study of contemporary democratic theory

to identify pre-political claims (human nature, for example) and their implications

to appreciate the merits of different theories through critical comparison

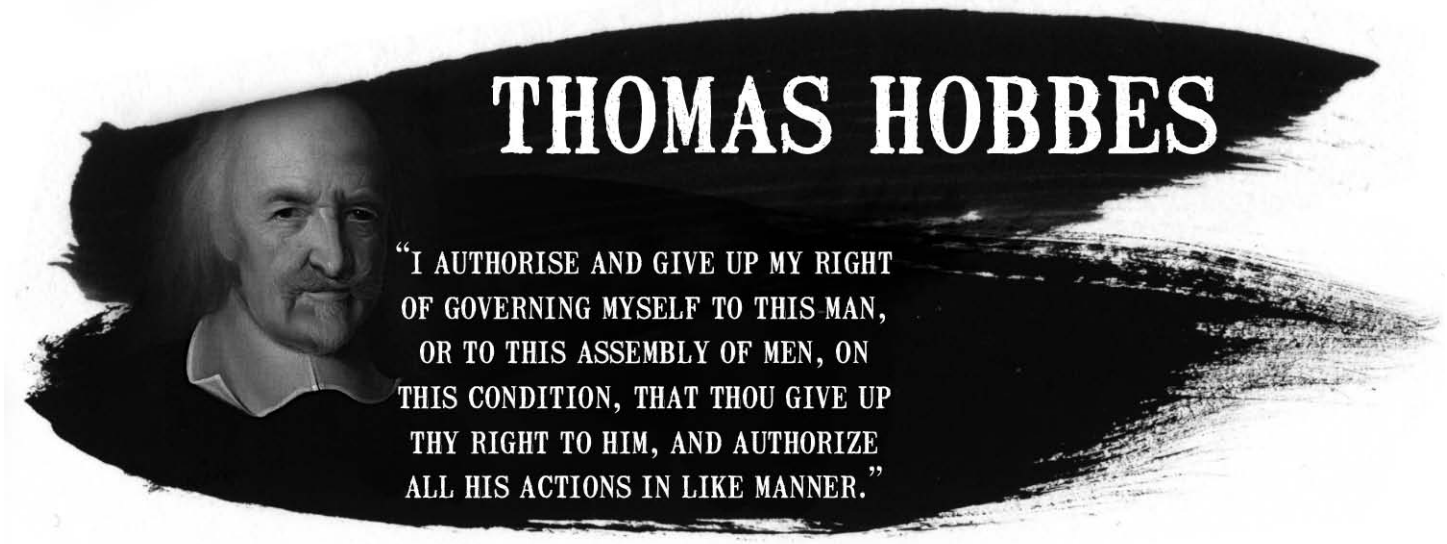
to use political language carefully, correctly, and self-consciously

to improve verbal and written expression with reference to textual evidence

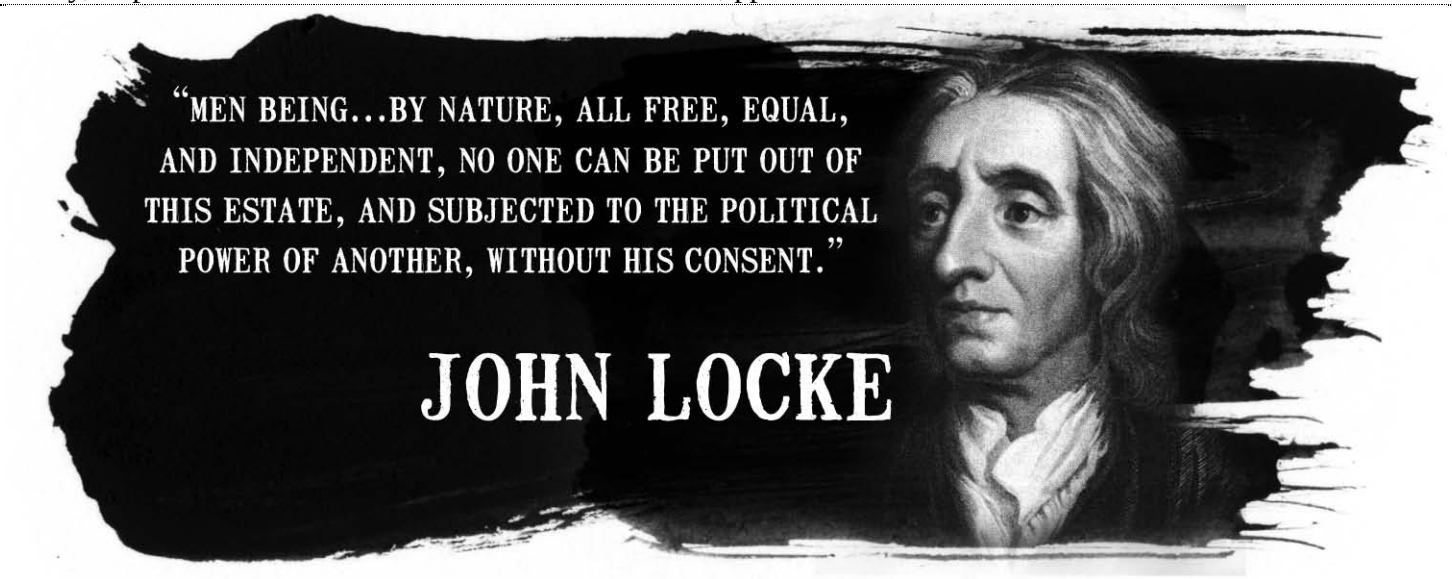
AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE AT THE MORAVIAN BOOKSTORE:

1) Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Hackett)
2) John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett)
3) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Prometheus)
4) Robert Tucker (editor), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton)
5) John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Cambridge)

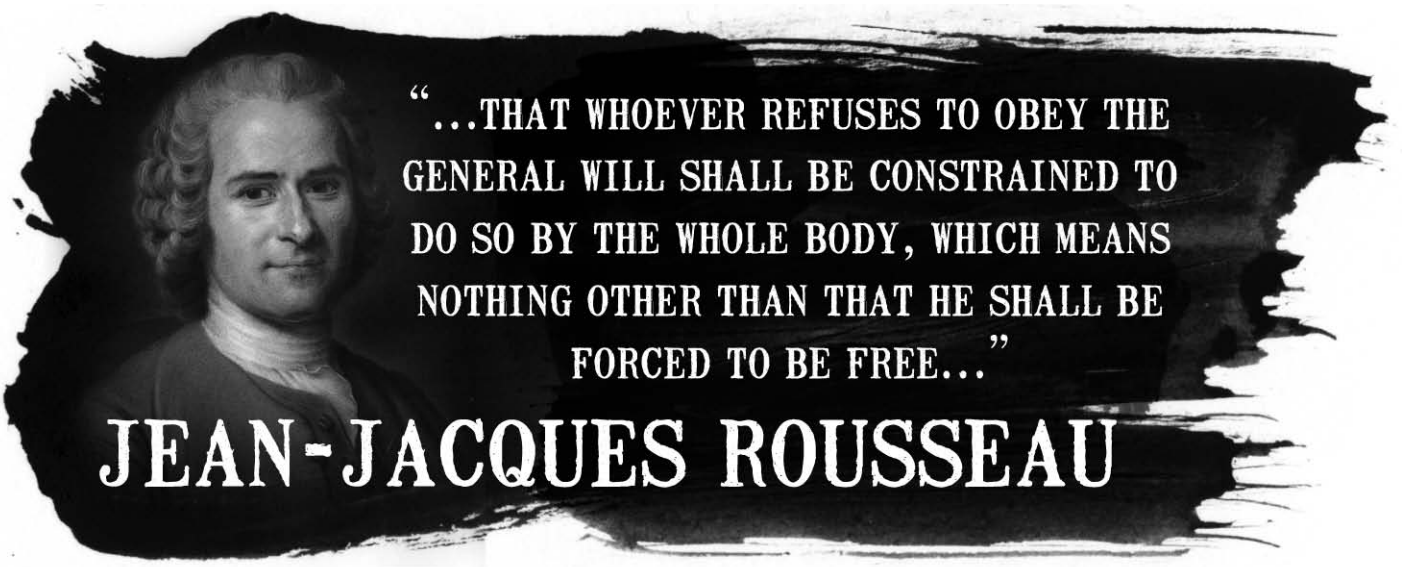
Wednesday, September 1	Introduction



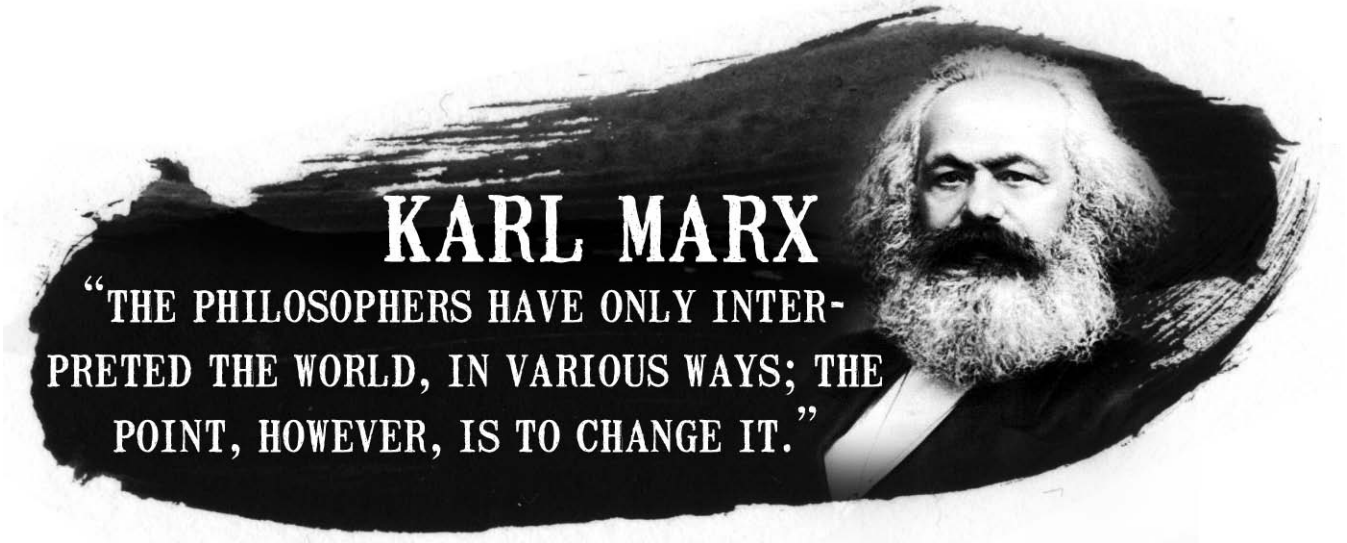
Friday, September 3	Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 1-35
Wednesday, September 8	*Leviathan*, pp. 47-50 and 63-78
Friday, September 10	*Leviathan*, pp. 79-105
Wednesday, September 15	*Leviathan*, pp.106-145
Friday, September 17	*Leviathan*, pp. 210-219 and 477-497



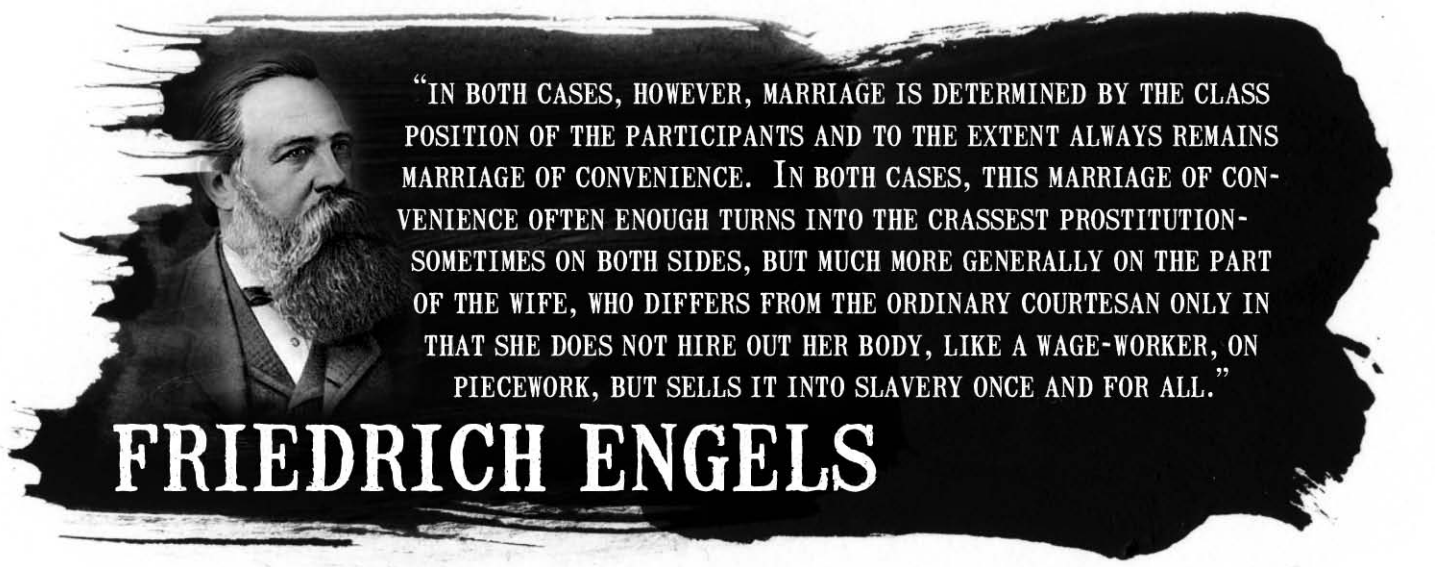
Wednesday, September 22	John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, pp. 2-42
Friday, September 24	*Second Treatise*, pp. 43-83
Tuesday, September 29	*Second Treatise*, pp. 83-124
Friday, October 1	Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, Chapter Nine: "Liberalism and the Decline of Political Philosophy," pp.257-314 (Blackboard)
Wednesday, October 6	**Midterm examination**
	Fall Recess



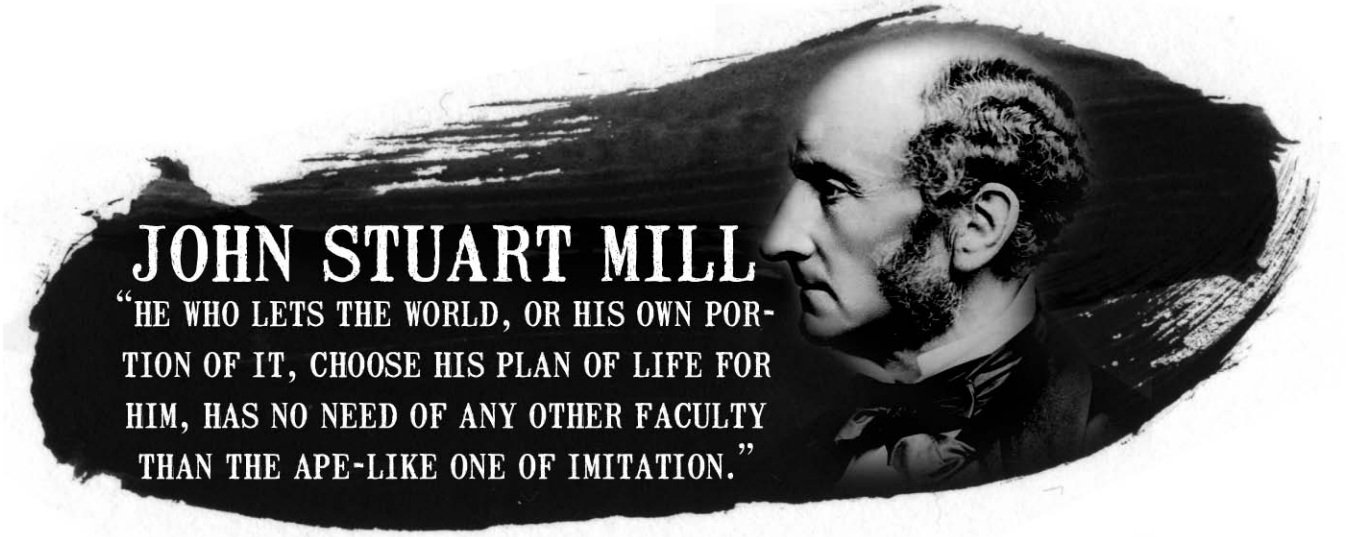
Wednesday, October 13	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
Friday, October 15	*The Social Contract*, Book I to Book II, Chapter 4
Wednesday, October 20	*The Social Contract*, Book II, Chapter 5 to Book III, Chapter 2
Friday, October 22	*The Social Contract,* Book III, Chapter 3 to Book IV, Chapter 1



Wednesday, October 27	Chronology of the lives of Marx and Engels, Karl Marx, "The German Ideology, Part I " pp. 146-200, and "Theses on Feuerbach," pp.143-145
Friday, October 29	Reading to be chosen by the group
Monday, November 1	**Paper due by 4 p.m. to Mrs. Ortiz in Comenius 206**
Wednesday, November 3	Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 66-93
Friday, November 5	Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 94-125



Wednesday, November 10	Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," pp. 734-759



Wednesday, November 17	John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 1: "Introductory"
Friday, November 19	*On Liberty*, Chapter 2: "On the liberty of thought and discussion"
	Thanksgiving Recess
Wednesday, December 1	*On Liberty*, Chapter 3: "Of individuality as one of the elements of well-being"
Friday, December 3	*On Liberty*, Chapter 4: "Of the limits to the authority of the society over the individual"
Wednesday, December 8	*On Liberty*, Chapter 5: "Applications"
Monday, December 13 at 1:30	**Final Examination**

MY IDEAL SOCIAL CONTRACT

HOBBES

LOCKE

ROUSSEAU

Assignments and evaluation	Calendar	%
Quality of engagement in and preparation for class meetings	Semester	25%
Examination (midterm)	Wednesday, October 6	25%
Paper	Monday, November 1	25%
Final Examination	Monday, December 13	25%

"THE MENTAL AND THE MORAL, LIKE THE MUSCULAR POWERS, ARE IMPROVED ONLY BY BEING USED."

- JOHN STUART MILL

What does an engagement grade represent?

A Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; careful engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.

B Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.

C Incomplete or superficial readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.

D Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.

F Persistent, vegetative state; low-level trance; slightly elevated body temperature

General Course Information

1) I invite you to visit my office hours. Please be in touch with any questions and thoughts you may have about our work together. I am happy to help you with difficulties relating to your reading of our texts as well as challenges that may arise with regard to assignments. In general, please make use of my office hours. It is my pleasure to help you improve your enjoyment of and performance in this course.

2) Be diligent in your studies and attend class. Undocumented absences beyond the first will harm your engagement grade at the rate of 5% of your total course grade (per absence).

3) This is an academic setting in which the goal is thoughtful discourse. Neither food consumption, nor mobile phone noise, nor phone activity (texting or searching) of any kind is permitted. Students who disturb the contemplative and discursive atmosphere of learning will be asked to leave the room for the rest of class.

4) Expect to work six hours on average outside of class per week. The workload varies, and the texts can be challenging. Give yourself plenty of time to read, review, and take notes on texts. Our interest is in deep readings and in gaining a solid toolkit of political theory questions, concepts, and arguments.

5) In order to pass this course, you must submit all assignments.

6) We will discuss written assignments two weeks in advance. I will offer instructions on how to prepare for examinations in the class preceding the examination date.

7) I strongly discourage late assignments, except in appropriately documented emergency situations. For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment. Late work is penalized at 50% of the assignment grade.

8) Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment in this class. Please see Moravian College Student Handbook for an account of academic honesty. See http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm

9) Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a learning disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

10) Please also note that this syllabus is subject to change.

PLEASE SUPPORT A CULTURE OF INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION.