

Government Department Fall 2008 Topics Course Descriptions

GO 351B: The French Liberal Tradition

4 credits

Prerequisite: GO 103. GO 303 and 304 recommended but not necessary

Professor Flagg Taylor

After the elaboration of the foundations of liberal democracy in the 17th century by thinkers such as Hobbes and Locke, there would seem to be two dominant paths in political philosophy. On one hand, thinkers like Voltaire or Adam Smith appear committed to the furthering of these principles. On the other, thinkers like Rousseau and Nietzsche undertake thorough-going critiques of liberal democratic life. Less noticed is a train of thinkers including Montesquieu, Benjamin Constant, and Tocqueville, who, while remaining sympathetic to ideas like constitutional democracy, also bring out some problematic elements of modern political life. This is a truly unique strain of thought in 19th century France, where the dominant intellectual forces were two: those promoting a more radical, proto-socialist agenda, and those seeking a restoration of the ancient regime. In addition to the well-known triad of Montesquieu, Constant, and Tocqueville, we will examine three contemporary French thinkers who kept this tradition of friendly critique alive in an atmosphere dominated by Marxism and post modernism: Bertrand de Jouvenel, Raymond Aron, and Pierre Manent.

GO 251D: The Scottish Enlightenment

3 credits

Prerequisite: GO 103

Professor Flagg Taylor

TU/TH 9:40 – 11:00am

We will examine the writings of David Hume and Adam Smith, with an eye toward such themes as sympathy, moral judgment, human affections, commercial life, and the ground of political association. These thinkers are noteworthy for their distinctive contributions to modern political philosophy, offering a critique of some aspects of the teachings of early modern thinkers such as Hobbes and Locke. We will also explore the contributions of Hume and Smith to modern conservatism and classical liberalism.

GO 364A: Arab Political Discourse

1 credit

Yorum Meital, Greenberg Middle East Scholar-in-Residence

TU/TH 12:40 – 2:00pm

The course focuses on the theoretical, historical, and cultural contexts of *Arab Political Discourse* in a period of political uncertainty, a result of dynamic internal and external factors. Since September 11, 2001 America's Middle Eastern policy has crucially changed. Although the state systems in Arab societies remain intact, there are strong movements challenging the existing order. Domestically, pressures for significant political reforms have become yet another phenomena in the contemporary Middle East. Whilst, some governments are experimenting within these limited political openings, Islamist political activists are seeking to challenge the existing order, other governments resist any meaningful steps toward political reform. Meanwhile, the Iraq war continues to have ramifications throughout the region. The Arab-Israeli peace process is in tatters, and a perpetual fear of severe confrontation is shared by many Arabs and Jews. Exploring the political discourse on all these "hot button" issues is the prime goal of the course.

GO 367: Campaign Management

4 credits

Patrick Lanne

Mondays 6:00 – 9:00pm

This course will begin by addressing basic campaign strategy – message development, media relations, fundraising, organization, polling, etc. Guest speakers will be joining the course to cover some of these topics.

To facilitate these discussions, at the beginning of the class, each student will be assigned a top US Senate or Gubernatorial campaign to track. This will involve researching past voting trends, reporting on the press coverage, tracking the advertising by the campaigns and various groups, and reviewing the public polling. After the overview of campaign 101, class material will be drawn from the various races students are covering – dissecting the decisions being made by the campaigns, the messages they are trying to convey and the tactics they are employing. During each class meeting, each student will report on the "happenings" in his or her race and be prepared to answer questions from myself and their peers on the race. Post-election, we will review the election results and exit polling data and each student will write, present and defend a critique of their campaign. They will assess the overall strategy, the message, role of third party groups, etc. Hopefully, students will be able to conduct some interviews with key players to help with this final project. Students will be evaluated on their weekly work following campaigns, their presentation of that work weekly in class, and their final paper.