Philosophy 576: Topics in Social and Political Philosophy  
Winter 2012
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Angell Hall 2239  
Office Hours: MW 2-3 and by appointment  
Course Webpage at CTools:  [https://ctools.umich.edu/](https://ctools.umich.edu/)

Course Description
The theme of this offering of PHIL 576 is egalitarianism, with an emphasis on foundational issues (on what basis can we be said to be equals?) and on the relations of equality to freedom and bondage. In the historical portion of this course we will read important but largely neglected works, focusing on the origins and legacies of the "radical enlightenment," beginning with the Levellers and culminating in a study of the Haitian revolution, which established the first state founded on radical enlightenment principles of universal freedom and human rights. We will also consider critics of egalitarian thought. The second part of the course will turn to various contemporary egalitarians and their critics.

Course Readings
Most required readings are available online at CTools, which will also contain the syllabus, announcements, and other materials relevant to the course. However, some books are not available in online form and should be ordered:

- Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006).

In addition, although the following texts are available online, you may find it convenient to obtain hard copies of the following:

- William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883).

Course Requirements
As this is a seminar, all students must come prepared to discuss the readings each week. Each student will be responsible for making at least one oral presentation introducing the readings for each week. All students must turn in 30 pages of writing that engages the readings for this course. You may write a single 30 page paper, but any combination of papers totaling at least 30 pages and including at least 1 paper at least 10 pages long will be accepted for credit at any time in the term. I encourage you to exercise the multi-paper option and to turn in at least one paper before the end of the term.
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Jan. 10: Levellers

*An Agreement of the People* (1647).

*The Putney Debates* (3 days of debates were recorded; read the last 2 days--Oct. 29 and Nov. 1, 1647. Rainsborough, Sexby, Everard, Wildman, Petty, and Cowling represent the Levellers. Cromwell and Ireton represent the Grandees.). Look [here](#) for background on the debates.

John Lilburne, "The Freeman's Freedom Vindicated" (postscript) (written from Newgate Prison, 1646).

Richard Overton, "An Arrow Shot at All Tyrants" (1646).

*Petition of Women, Affecters and Avprovers of the Petition of Sept. 11, 1648* (1649). (Although the editor of this 1938 edition, Arthur Woodhouse, doubted that this petition was written by women, recent scholars suggest that its author was Katherine Chidley.)

For comparison, consider


*The Heads of the Proposals Offered by the Army* (1647) The Grandees' conservative position, to contrast with the Levellers' *Agreement of the People*.

Jan. 17: Spinoza and Spinoism

Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670), Preface, ch. 16-20.


Samuel Clarke, “A discourse concerning the being and attributes of God, the obligations of natural religion . . . In answer to Mr. Hobbes, Spinoza, . . . and other deniers of . . . religion,” Boyle Lectures (1705).

Recommended Additional Reading:


Jan. 24: Feminism


*Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, 26 August 1789.

Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791).

*Women’s Petition to the National Assembly* (1791).

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Ch. IX: "Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions in Society."

**Recommended Additional Reading:**


**Jan. 31: French Revolution 1: Sieyès, June 17, 1789 (National Assembly Formed) and August 4, 1789 (Abolition of Feudalism)**

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, *An Essay on Privileges* (1788) in *Political Writings*.

Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* (1789) in *Political Writings*.

*Decree of the National Assembly Abolishing the Feudal System, August 11, 1789*.

**Recommended Additional Reading:**


**Feb. 7: French Revolution 2: Radicals vs. Counter-Enlightenment**


**Recommended Additional Reading:**


**Feb. 14: Enlightenment, Imperialism, and Bondage**


Abbé Raynal [and Denis Diderot], *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (1770), [selection](#).


*Recommended Additional Reading:*


**Feb. 21: The Haitian Revolution (1)**

Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006).

*Recommended Additional Reading:*


C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (Vintage, 1963 [1938]).


**Mar. 6: The Haitian Revolution (2)**


Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, § 57 (1821) (the link is to a longer section, but § 57 is the critical one for our purposes).

*Recommended Additional Reading:*

Mar. 13: Critique of Egalitarianism (1): Sumner

William Graham Sumner, *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883).

*Recommended Additional Readings:*


Nassau Senior, *Poor Law Commissioners' Report of 1834.*

Herbert Spencer, "*The Proper Sphere of Government,*" in *The Man versus the State, with Six Essays on Government, Society, and Freedom* (1884), *letters 2-4.*

Herbert Spencer, "*From Freedom to Bondage,*" in Thomas Mackay, ed., *A Plea for Liberty: An Argument Against Socialism and Socialistic Legislation* (1891) (predicting that social democracy would inevitably degenerate into totalitarianism).

Mar. 20: Critique of Egalitarianism (2): Kekes (+ talk)

**First ½ session: 2:30-4:00**


*Recommended Additional Readings:*

Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944) (modern version of Spencer's "From Freedom to Bondage").


**Second ½ session: Phyllis Rooney, “Feminist Interventions in the Sciences and in Epistemology: Significant Parallels” 4-5:30 Lane Hall 2239**

Mar. 27: Luck Egalitarianism and Left-Libertarianism as Replies to Conservative Critiques of Equality


*Recommended Additional Readings:*

**Left-Libertarianism:**

Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879).


**Luck Egalitarianism:**


**Apr. 3: Critique of Luck Egalitarianism and Left-Libertarianism**


**Recommended Additional Readings:**


Apr. 10: Critique of Egalitarianism (3): Equality: Irreducibly Diverse, Valueless, or Eliminable?


Recommended Additional Readings:


Apr. 17: Equality and Dignity


Recommended Additional Readings:

