

Early Modern Political Philosophy

Spring 2013

GOV 335 M / CTI 335 – Unique Number 38791

TTH 12:30 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. JES A215 A

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Course Description

The bulk of this course will consist in close readings of Thomas More's *Utopia*, Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*. Despite being works of fiction, all three of these modern utopias employ the literary genre of what Bacon called "imaginary commonwealths" ultimately in an effort to cover with a veil of sweetness their at times harsh treatment of problems such as the aims and limits of politics, the status and end of philosophy, and the dangers and promises of religion – problems whose treatment constitutes the field of activity of "Early Modern Political Philosophy." In a spirit of friendly irony, the consequences of early modern utopianism are criticized by Jonathan Swift, whose *Gulliver's Travels* will navigate the course to a haven where harsh and sweet seem to meet.

Required Textbooks (available at the University Co-op)

Thomas More: *Utopia: Latin Text and English Translation* (ed. George M. Logan et al.), Cambridge UP, 2006 (ISBN: 0521024978)

Francis Bacon: *New Atlantis and the Great Instauration* (ed. Jerry Weinberger), Wheeling Il.: Harlan Davidson Inc., Revised edition, 1989 (ISBN: 0882951262)

Tommaso Campanella: *La Città del Sole: Dialogo Poetico / The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue* (ed. Daniel J. Donno), Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1981 (ISBN: 0520040368)

Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels* (ed. Albert J. Rivero), Norton Crit. Ed., 2001 (ISBN: 0393957241)

Schedule of Readings

Introduction and overview

Jan. 15 and Jan. 17

Part 1 *Utopia*

Jan. 22, Jan. 24, Jan. 29, Jan. 31, Feb. 5, Feb. 7, Feb. 12

Part 2 *New Atlantis*

Feb. 14 (first paper due), Feb.19, Feb. 21,
Feb. 26, Feb. 28, March 5, March 7 (Midterm exam),
March 19

Part 3 *City of the Sun*

March 21, March 26, March 28, April 2, April 4

Part 4 *Gulliver's Travels*

April 9 (second paper due), April 11, April 16,
April 18, April 23, April 25, April 30

General Review

May 2 (final paper due)

Requirements and Grading

Grade Calculation

Papers will be given letter grades, to be translated into number grades as follows: A: 97; A-: 91; B+: 88; B: 84.5; B-: 81; C+: 78; C: 74.5; C-: 71; D: 65; F: 30. Final grades are calculated numerically, then translated into number grades on the basis of the following scale: 93-100: A; 90-92: A-; 87-89: B+; 83-86: B; 80-82: B-; 77-79: C+; 73-76: C; 70-72: C-; 60-69: D; below 60: F.

Attendance and participation: 10 %

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. The student's attendance and participation mark will fall by one letter grade (10%) for each absence. Five or more unexcused absences will result in the student failing the course. There will be no penalty for reasonably unavoidable absences, absences verifiably due to illness, or absences due to religious holidays, provided that I have been notified at least 14 days in advance. Active participation will improve the student's grade.

Quizzes: 10 %

Unannounced quizzes will be taken on a regular basis at the beginning of class. Their purpose is stimulate the student to do the assigned readings in the future by testing whether he has done them in the past.

Papers: 60 %

Students are required to write three papers, the first focusing on Thomas More (appr. 2000 words – 15 %), the second concentrating on Campanella (appr. 2500 words – 20 %), and the third centring upon Swift (appr. 3000 words – 25 %). As appears from the grading policy, the student will have to meet higher requirements for the second paper than for the first, and for the third than for the second. This finds its justification in the fact that in writing the second and third papers the student will have the opportunity to demonstrate his ability to benefit from critical remarks on his earlier work. Papers will be graded for the quality of the writing (grammar, vocabulary, and style) as well as for their content (structure of the text; strength and development of the argument). For advice on writing papers in political philosophy, please go to <https://webspace.utexas.edu/lsp226/lorrainepangle/advice.html>. For individual help with paper writing, please consult Tom van Malssen during office hours, or visit the Undergraduate Writing Center (info at <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>). Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 3 % + 2 % for each calendar day they are late, unless their being handed in late is caused by an emergency.

Midterm Exam: 20 %

The midterm exam will take the text of Bacon's *New Atlantis* as a starting point for a series of general multiple choice and short essay questions that have presented themselves during the first half of term. It will test both the student's mastery of the text and his level of insight into the questions treated in it.

Extra Credit

Students can earn extra credit by attending public lectures and writing short responses. Lectures that come into question will be announced in class.

Policies

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>, 471-6259.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty (plagiarism, etc.) are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university. These policies will be strictly enforced. For further information visit the Student Judicial Services website: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Laptops are prohibited, unless explicitly authorized or necessary due to disability.