

POL484H1S/POL2026H1S

Rousseau's Constitutional Projects

Winter-Spring 2011, Tuesday 10 to 12, UC 248.

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Objectives: There are two interrelated objectives to this course. The first objective is to help you, the student, develop a reading or interpretation of what could be considered to be a more practical side of the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, by considering some of his better known works (esp. The Social Contract and Discourse on Political Economy) in conjunction with a couple of his lesser known works devoted to the constitutional design and functioning of modern republics (especially The Plan for a Constitution for Corsica and Considerations on the Government of Poland and on its planned reformation). The second objective is to juxtapose and show the value of interweaving three distinct approaches in textual interpretation: textual exegesis, recourse to relevant secondary sources, and recourse to relevant contextual considerations.

Structure: The course will begin with a presentation of three recent but different attempts in the secondary literature to come to terms with the meaning of Rousseau's constitutional writings and to give them more solid political and institutional content. From this basis, we will revisit some of the key primary texts in these debates, looking for continuity and contrast in these writings. In the course of this work of textual exegesis, we will have a class in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in order to build into our investigation a sense of how we can deepen our understanding of the problems and framing of the texts and the concepts developed there through an examination of relevant juridical, political and literary 18th century texts and references. Students can choose to do a twenty minute presentation on the week of their choice, apart from the session scheduled for Feb. 8th. This presentation is meant to serve as an opportunity for you to try out some of the ideas that will inform your final paper.

Course Requirements:

Conceptual paper (3-4 pp., instructions below) due March 1st ^h	15%
Seminar Presentation (20 minutes)	20%
Term Paper (Undergrads 15-20 pp., Grad students 20-25 pp.) due April 4 th	50%
Participation	15%

Conceptual paper instructions: The purpose of this paper is to help you begin to build an understanding of a concept invoked in Rousseau's work as it was understood (or its competing meanings) in the 18th century context. Based on our work and the resources consulted in the Rare Books Library and through Eighteenth Century Collections Online (accessed through the U of T website) or Gallica (accessed through the site of the Bibliothèque nationale de France), you should select a concept that resonates in the work of Rousseau and research the meaning/s or uses of that concept in the 18th century through consultation with various references or textual sources in use in that century. This should give you a preliminary basis for judging the orthodoxy of Rousseau's use of juridical language in the writings we are studying in this course. Examples of possible terms to research include: law (*la loi, les loix*); natural law (*la loi naturelle*); censor/censorship; will (*volonte*); government (*le gouvernement*); people (*le peuple*); sovereignty (*la souveraineté*), referendum, equality, corruption. If you can read French then I would recommend doing your research at least partly if not thoroughly through the French sources. For this paper, please use a standard format of citation and document your sources fully. If you access your source online, then you also need to acknowledge that in your bibliography again in the proper format.

Required Readings:

Rousseau. The Social Contract and other later political writings, ed. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge, CUP, 1997 (this is available second hand through abebooks.com) OR Rousseau. The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland and other writings on history and politics. Vol. 11 of the Collected Writings of Rousseau. Ed. Christopher Kelly, Hanover, Dartmouth University Press, 2005. (This can also be ordered online although I suspect that you will have to buy it new through Amazon) [Please note, students who order the Gourevitch edition listed above will need to find an alternate source for Rousseau's work on Corsica, and students who order the Kelly edition will need to supplement with a good translation of The Social Contract and Discourse on Political Economy. I will try to post links to copies of available and reliable Internet sources in translation on the Blackboard site.]

Rousseau. Letters Written from the Mountain, copies to be provided.

[Please note that if you are planning to do further work on Rousseau I recommend that you work on his writings in the original French and for this the best existing edition is his Ecrits politiques, vol. 3 of Oeuvres completes, Bibliotheque de la Pléaïde, Paris, Gallimard, 1964 although you should also know that another definitive French edition of his collected works is being worked on, I imagine with the hope of publishing some or all in time for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of his birth in 2012]

Ethan Putterman. Rousseau, Law and the Sovereignty of the People. Cambridge, CUP, 2010.

Joshua Cohen. Rousseau. A Free Community of Equals. Oxford, OUP, 2010. Please order a copy of this book online asap. We will be discussing it the third week of class (hopefully) and you will need to have read it by then.

Helena Rosenblatt. Rousseau and Geneva. Cambridge, CUP, 1997.

Course Outline and Weekly Readings:

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| Week 1 (Jan.11) | -Introduction. In the first few weeks I recommend that you reread the <u>Social Contract</u> if you have not done so recently so that you can remind yourself of some of the basic parameters of Rousseau's constitutional discussions. |
| Week 2 (Jan. 18 th) | - Ethan Putterman. <u>Rousseau, Law and the Sovereignty of the People</u> |
| Week 3 (Jan. 25 th) | - Joshua Cohen. <u>Rousseau. A Free Community of Equals</u> |
| Week 4 (Feb. 1 st) | - Helena Rosenblatt. <u>Rousseau and Geneva</u> |
| Week 5 (Feb. 8 th) | -class in the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library to discuss research with 18 th century sources |
| Week 6 (Feb. 15 th) | - Rousseau's <u>Discourse on Political Economy</u> |
| Week 7 (Feb. 22 nd) | - no class. Reading Week! |
| Week 8 (March 1 st) | - Rousseau's <u>Social Contract</u> |
| Week 9 (March 8 th) | -Rousseau's <u>Letter Written from the Mountain</u> |
| Week 10 (March 15 ^h) | - Rousseau's <u>Plan for a Constitution of Corsica</u> |
| Week 11 (March 22 nd) | - Rousseau's <u>Plan for a Constitution of Corsica</u> , con't |
| Week 12 (March 29 th) | - Rousseau's <u>Considerations on the Government of Poland</u> |

Week 13 (April 5th)

- Rousseau's Considerations on the Government of Poland,
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