

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

POLITICAL SCIENCE 402Y1S/2011Y1S

PROBLEMS IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE
SOCRATIC SCHOOL

WINTER SESSION 2011-12

Professor C. Orwin (clifford.orwin@utoronto.ca)

The theme of the course is tyranny as a way of life, or more precisely, the comparison between two ways of life, that of tyranny and that of philosophy or wisdom. In the right hands (and there could be no better ones than those of Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève) these questions raise the further ones of the character of modern politics and its transformation of the relationship of theory and practice (and for that matter of philosophy and wisdom). So *On Tyranny* in its expanded edition offers a rare example of a fundamental (if long neglected) document of classical wisdom commented upon by two titans of modern thought, one of whom sustains the classical position and the other his own distinctive brand of Hegelianism.

In the *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, on which we'll spend the final two sessions of the year, we'll encounter an enigmatic critique of tyranny by an author immersed in Xenophon who also happened to be the closest friend of that icon of modernity Michel de Montaigne.

COURSE READINGS

Primary Readings

Strauss, Leo. *On Tyranny*, Revised and expanded edition, including the Strauss-Kojève correspondence. Edited by Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 [1991]. Available at the Bob Miller Book Room.

This edition includes Xenophon's *Hiero, or on Tyranny*, translated by Marvin Kendrick and revised by Seth Benardete; Strauss's commentary, and the Strauss-Kojève debate as well as their relevant correspondence.

La Boétie, Estienne de. *Discours de la servitude volontaire, ou Contre l'Un*. Stay tuned for further information as to the edition that we'll be using.

Required Secondary Readings, available as indicated.

Chiaromonte, Nicola. "On Modern Tyranny." *Dissent*, March-April 1969, 137-150. Reprinted in Chiaromonte, *The Worm of Consciousness and Other Essays*, ed. Miriam Chiaromonte. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1977. AC45C525 **THIS ARTICLE IS NOT AVAILABLE ON LINE SO A COPY WILL BE PLACED ON COURSE RESERVE AT ROBARTS.**

Gourevitch, Victor. "Philosophy and Politics." *Review of Metaphysics*, 1968, 58-84, 281-328.

Part 1: <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/221300>

Part 2: <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/221301>

Grant, George. "Tyranny and Wisdom: A Comment on the Controversy Between Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève." *Social Research*, 1964, 45-72).

<http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/221302>

Pippin, Robert B. "Being, Time, and Politics: The Strauss-Kojève Debate." *History and Theory*, 1993, 138-161. Reprinted in Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/221298>

Tarcov, Nathan S. "Preface to the Japanese Translation of *On Tyranny*."

<http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/221305>

Voegelin, Eric. "On Tyranny." *The Review of Politics*, 1949, 241-244). <http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/221299>

Suggested Secondary Readings

Rasmussen, Paul J. *Excellence unleashed : Machiavelli's critique of Xenophon and the moral foundation of politics*. Lanham, MD and Toronto: Lexington Books, 2009. JA79 .R37 2009X

Originally a dissertation written at Toronto under the supervision of Thomas L. Pangle and me.

Nichols, James H., Jr. *Alexandre Kojève: Wisdom at the End of History*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. Currently on order.

These books will be on course reserve at Robarts.

READINGS ON LA BOÉTIE WILL FOLLOW.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND MARKING SCHEME

POL 402Y (the undergraduate course). One essay of 1375 words due Monday, February 6;

one of 2000 words due Monday, February 27; one of 2000 words due Monday, April 2; a take-home exam to be distributed the afternoon of Friday, March 22, due by 2 PM on Monday, March 25. The first essay will be worth 10% of the final mark, the second and third 30% each, and the take-home exam 25%. There will be a participation component of 5%.

POL 2011Y (the graduate course). One essay of 2000 words due Monday, January 30, one of 3000 words due Monday, February 27; one of 5000 words due May 1; a take-home exam to be distributed the afternoon of Friday, March 30, due by 2 PM on Monday, April 2. These essays will be worth 15%, 20%, and 35% of the final mark, respectively; the take-home exam will be worth the remaining 30%.

In each of your essays you must remain within the prescribed word limit; surplus words will go unread.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR ESSAYS ELECTRONICALLY, TO _
Clifford.Orwin@utoronto.ca **THEREBY SPARING CANADA'S FORESTS.**

N.B. In the graduate course as in the undergraduate one, no extensions will be granted on written work except for good cause. In keeping with Nietzsche's theory of punishment, however, according to which every crime has its price and punishment was originally nothing more than an exaction of that price (cf. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay), extensions will be readily available to those willing to purchase them. The price will be 3 points, plus 2 additional points per day beginning with the first, off your mark for that assignment. (If you are one day late you will lose 5 points; two days late, 7; etc.). This proviso does not apply to the take-home exam, which will not be accepted if late.

You are responsible for informing yourself of and abiding by the University's policies on plagiarism and other academic offenses. These are available at the Department of Political Science or from the instructor.

MR ORWIN'S OFFICE HOURS

Thursdays, from 4:10 to 6:00 at Alumni Hall 323 (416-926-1300, ext. 3277) or by appointment. You may also leave voice messages at that number, though it's better to contact me by e-mail.