

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Department of Political Science
Fall 2013

POL 461H/2061H: STUDIES IN CIVIC REPUBLICANISM: HOBBS & HARRINGTON

Instructor: Prof. Ronald Beiner

Class time: Fridays 10-12 am

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If one judges the intellectual relationship between Thomas Hobbes and James Harrington on the basis of Quentin Skinner's Hobbes and Republican Liberty, one will assume that there could be no possible connection between them, other than a purely antagonistic relation between Harrington's republicanism and Hobbes's anti-republicanism. However, if one reads the relationship through the prism of recent books like Jeffrey Collins's The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes, Eric Nelson's The Hebrew Republic, and Paul Rahe's Against Throne and Altar, a completely different relationship between them comes into view. The purpose of this seminar is to explore, within the space created by this recent scholarship, these interesting Hobbes-Harrington affinities, especially in regard to what Harrington called "priestcraft" and the challenges of combatting it.

This is intended to be a research seminar. That is, I share with you some of my recent research, and then you undertake a research project which you share with me and share with fellow students. In the first class I sketch relevant themes, & then I lecture on Harrington for at least the next 2 (or more likely 3) classes. That should give you a little time to familiarize yourself with what the course is about, then you present on a topic of your choice, & eventually turn your seminar into a final essay. I fully realize that the topics sketched below are extremely ambitious (whether for undergrads or for grad students). I'm a mere mortal just as you are. So I'm entirely realistic about what one can expect to do in a single course in one short semester. I'm not asking for PhD theses (though I don't doubt that these topics, pursued comprehensively, could easily require that). The idea, rather, is to begin on a path of research that, in principle, could probably occupy one for a whole lifetime. Above all, this syllabus is intended as a resource for possible research (now as well as later) on Hobbes & the republican tradition. It's certainly not intended to scare the wits out of you by suggesting in any way that you're expected to master all the texts & all the topics included in the syllabus!

Course Requirements

Undergrads:

Proposal for final essay 10 % (3 pages; due Oct. 18th)

Seminar presentation: 25 %

Class participation: 20%

Final essay: 45 % (12 pages double-spaced; due Nov. 29th)

Penalty: 1% per day

Grads:

Seminar presentation: 30 %

Class participation: 20%

Final essay: 50 % (15 pages double-spaced; due Nov. 29th)

Topics for seminar presentations & topics for final essays are not mutually exclusive. If giving a seminar helps you (as it should do) to write a final essay on a particular topic (by, for instance, getting feedback both from me & from fellow students on what is in effect a draft essay), so much the better! In fact, I'd urge you to coordinate the seminar & the final research essay in a way that allows for the latter to build on the former.

Don't do anything that has the remotest chance of appearing to fall under the University's definition of plagiarism. If you do that, you will come to bitterly regret it later. The norms are spelled out very clearly at the end of this syllabus. If you have any doubts or questions about what is or isn't plagiarism, consult me. In particular, don't claim later that you did something that looked like plagiarism through sloppy note-taking, etc. That kind of lame story will not help you in the slightest. It's your job as a responsible student not to be sloppy about something that could cause you to get accused of something as deadly serious as plagiarism!

TEXTS

I've ordered for purchase at the U of T Bookstore both Richard Tuck's edition of Leviathan (Cambridge) & Pocock's edition of The Commonwealth of Oceana* (also Cambridge). I assume everyone interested in political theory already owns a copy of Leviathan, but Tuck's version, if you don't already own it, is worth having.

SOME OTHER RELEVANT TEXTS:

1. The Political Works of James Harrington, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1977).* This is newly available as a print-on-demand 2-volume set available via Amazon. Although I haven't required purchase, I'd certainly recommend purchase, since this edition (including the long commentary by Pocock) is a must for anyone seriously interested in Harrington. The Amazon price of \$74 is actually a pretty good deal (I paid a fortune for a 1-volume used copy of the original edition). Harrington's relationship to Hobbes is mainly visible in the three important works (Pian Piano, The Prerogative of Popular Government, and The Art of Lawgiving) available in Pocock's edition & pretty much nowhere else.

2. Henry Neville, Plato Redivivus, in Two English Republican Tracts, ed. Caroline Robbins (Cambridge).*

3. Marchamont Nedham, The Excellencie of a Free-State, ed. Blair Worden (Liberty Fund).*

4. John Milton, The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth. This text is available online. Here is the relevant link:

http://files.libertyfund.org/files/272/Milton_1293_EBk_v6.0.pdf

This work is also available in another online version that can be accessed via the Robarts library catalogue.

SOME RELEVANT COMMENTARIES

1. Quentin Skinner, Hobbes and Republican Liberty (Cambridge).*

2. J.G.A. Pocock, "Time, History, and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes," in Pocock, Politics, Language, and Time (Chicago).

3. Jeffrey Collins, The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes (Oxford).*

4. Eric Nelson, The Hebrew Republic (Harvard).*
5. Paul A. Rago, Against Throne and Altar (Cambridge).*
6. Ronald Beiner, Civil Religion (Cambridge).*
7. Justin Champion, The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken (Cambridge).
8. Noel Malcolm, Aspects of Hobbes (Oxford).
9. The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes, ed. Tom Sorrell (Cambridge).
10. The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan, ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge).
11. Leo Strauss, Hobbes's Critique of Religion and Related Writings, ed. Gabriel Bartlett & Svetozar Minkov (Chicago).

I've sought to put on 3-hour loan reserve at Robarts Library all works listed above followed by an asterisk. However, depending on availability, I can't guarantee that all of them will in fact be on reserve. Getting access to the resources you need will probably require not a little exertion and ingenuity on your part.

SOME POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR SEMINARS AND/OR FINAL ESSAYS

1. Was it Hobbes's purpose to turn Christianity into a civil religion? (For a negative answer to this question, see Matthew Rose, "Hobbes as Political Theologian," Political Theology, Vol. 14, no. 1 [Feb. 2013]: 5-31. For positive answers, see Collins, The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes; Beiner, Civil Religion; and the Travis Smith chapter in Civil Religion in Political Thought, ed. Weed & Von Heyking; as well as various articles by Richard Tuck.)
2. Consider any of the late texts by Hobbes in which he analyzes the meaning of heresy (discussed by Patricia Springborg in section 2 of her essay, "Hobbes on Religion" in Cambridge Companion to Hobbes, ed. Sorrell; & by Noel Malcolm, "Summary Biography of Hobbes," same volume, pp. 35-36). One of these texts, for example, is "Historical Narration Concerning Heresy," available in English Works, Volume 4, pp. 385-408.
3. Consider Collins's interpretation of Hobbes and Independency. Was Hobbes (paradoxically) more of a Cromwellian than Harrington was?
4. What does Harrington reject in Hobbes? What does he embrace and reaffirm in Hobbes?

5. Why is 1 Samuel 8 such a crucial Biblical text for both Hobbes and Harrington? (Nelson's The Hebrew Republic is extremely helpful on this topic .)
6. How is the project of Harringtonian republicanism carried forward in Henry Neville's Plato Redivivus? (Note that in some later editions of John Toland's famous 1700 edition of the works of Harrington, the publishers chose to include Plato Redivivus as a natural complement to Harrington's works.)
7. Compare Shaftesbury's critique of priestcraft in Characteristics, Miscellany 2, Chap. 1, with Harrington's critique of priestcraft. What does it mean to be a critic of "priestcraft," and how does it relate to (or even define) the republican project of Harrington and later Harringtonians such as Neville and Toland?
8. Compare Harrington's republicanism and that of Milton in The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.
9. Compare Harrington's republicanism and that of Marchamont Nedham in The Excellencie of a Free-State.
10. Consider Skinner's interpretation of Hobbes in relation to 17th-century republicanism. In what ways might it be necessary to revise Skinner's interpretation in light of the themes of this seminar?
11. Consider Pocock's interpretation of Hobbes and (especially) Harrington.
12. Consider Strauss's interpretation of Hobbes's critique of religion. What is "Straussian" about Paul Rahe's interpretation of Harrington in Chap. 11 of Against Throne and Altar?
13. Consider Eric Voegelin's interpretation of Hobbes in Chaps. 5 and 6 of The New Science of Politics. Extrapolating from that interpretation, what might Voegelin have said about Harrington?
14. How would Harrington have responded to Spinoza? In what ways do Hobbes, Harrington, and Spinoza form a "common front"?

I aim to be very flexible with respect to topics for seminars & research essays. So you are not in any way restricted to the 14 topics sketched above. On the contrary, I welcome your own ideas. But if the project you'd like to undertake is not one of these 14 suggested (i.e., merely suggested) topics, please run your idea by me in advance so I can confirm its relevance to the themes of the seminar as I've conceived them.

A WARNING ABOUT PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an academic offence with a severe penalty.

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. In essence, it is the theft of the thoughts or words of others, without giving proper credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words. Plagiarism is unacceptable in a university. What the university calls "plagiarism", non-university institutions might call "fraud".

The University of Toronto provides a process that faculty members must initiate when they suspect a case of plagiarism. In the Department of Political Science, suspected evidence of plagiarism must be reported to the Chair; in most cases, the Chair passes the case on to the Dean.

A faculty member may not mark an assignment or assess a penalty if he or she finds evidence of plagiarism – the matter must be reported. Penalties are assigned by the Chair, by the Dean or by the University of Toronto Tribunal.

The following are some examples of plagiarism:

1. Submitting as your own an assignment written by someone else.
2. Quoting an author without indicating the source of the words.
3. Using words, sentences, or paragraphs written by someone else and failing to place quotation marks around the material and reference the source and author. **Using either quotation marks or reference alone is not sufficient. Both must be used!**
4. Adapting an author's ideas or theme and using it as your own without referencing the original source.
5. Seeking assistance from a friend or family member in respect to work you claim as your own.

Ignorance of the rules against plagiarism is not a defence; students are presumed to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Students are especially reminded that material taken from the web **must** be quoted and cited in the same manner as if it came from a book or printed article.

If you are not sure whether you have committed plagiarism, it is better to ask a faculty member or teaching assistant than risk discovery and be forced to accept an academic penalty.

Plagiarism is **cheating**. It is considered a **serious offence** against intellectual honesty and intellectual property. Penalties can be **severe**, ranging from a mark of "0" for the assignment or test in question, **up to and including expulsion from the university**.

Some website listed below on avoiding plagiarism:

'How to Use Sources and Avoid Plagiarism' - available at:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Other Advisory Material available at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/home>