

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Department of Political Science
Spring 2019

**POL 461S/2061S: STUDIES IN CIVIC REPUBLICANISM: MOSES & POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY**

Instructor: Prof. Ronald Beiner

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No one can deny that the Moses story has been a crucially important trope in the history of political thought, at least from Machiavelli to Freud. The purpose of this seminar is to do a close reading of the original source of this story/trope, namely the Book of Exodus -- as well as Numbers and Deuteronomy -- and then relate that source to some of its subsequent iterations and appropriations in the history of Western political thought and vice versa. In principle, this is a project of enormous scope. We obviously can't do it exhaustively, but we can at least begin the process of tracing interesting links between the Moses story as it is made available to us in the Hebrew Bible and the various uses made of that story -- that is, its incorporation in dramatically different political philosophies throughout the centuries. My initial lectures (which I expect will cover most of the time up until Reading Week) will be a first attempt in that direction, and seminar presentations to follow will pick up the baton from there.

No later than January 25th, send me an e-mail letting me know your preferred topic for your seminar, so I can plan the schedule for seminar presentations.

REQUIRED TEXT: The Five Books of Moses, trans. Everett Fox (New York: Schocken Books, 1995)

RECOMMENDED TEXT: Reframing Politics in the Hebrew Bible: A New Introduction with Readings, ed. Mira Morgenstern (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017)

The Fox edition of the Five Books of Moses looks imposing. It is much quicker to read than it looks. The bulk of it is scholarly apparatus and commentary, and we basically skip Genesis and Leviticus. I've selected this edition because I want to give students a sense of the distinctiveness of the Hebrew Bible, relative to the "Old Testament" within a Christian Bible. Having said that, if some people in the course are determined to stick with the King James Version (or other versions of the Biblical text), I'll tolerate that.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING, Short list:

Jan Assmann, Moses the Egyptian (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Petrus Cunaeus, The Hebrew Republic (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2006).

Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism: various editions.

Bonnie Honig, Democracy and the Foreigner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), Chapter 2.

Eric Nelson, The Hebrew Republic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Thomas L. Pangle and Timothy W. Burns, The Key Texts of Political Philosophy: An Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Chapter 4.

Political Hebraism: Judaic Sources in Early Modern Political Thought, ed. Gordon Schochet, Fania Oz-Salzberger, and Meirav Jones (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2008).

John Toland, "Two Problems Concerning the Jewish Nation and Religion," in Nazarenus, ed. Justin Champion (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999), pp. 235-240.

Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

Aaron Wildavsky, Moses as Political Leader (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2005).

Eli Zaretsky, Political Freud: A History (New York: Columbia University Press 2015), Chapter 3.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING, Long list:

Abraham Anderson, The Treatise of the Three Impostors and the Problem of Enlightenment (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

Jan Assmann, The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in the Book of Exodus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Donald Harman Akeson, Surpassing Wonder (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

Ronald Beiner, Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Ronald Beiner, "James Harrington on the Hebrew Commonwealth", Review of Politics, Vol. 76, No. 2, Spring, 2014, pp. 169-193.

Martin Buber, Moses (Oxford: East & West Library, 1946).

Martin Buber, Kingship of God (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

Justin Champion, "Mosaica respublica: Harrington, Toland, and Moses," in Perspectives on English Revolutionary Republicanism, ed. Dirk Wiemann and Gaby Mahlberg (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2014).

Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes, The Beginning of Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

Graham Hammill, The Mosaic Constitution: Political Theology and Imagination from Machiavelli to Milton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

James Harrington, The Prerogative of Popular Government and The Art of Lawgiving in The Political Works of James Harrington, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Yoram Hazony, The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Josephus, The Jewish War (New York: Dorset Press, 1981).

Joseph de Maistre, On God and Society (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1959).

Noel Malcolm, Aspects of Hobbes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), Chapter 12: "Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible."

Thomas L. Pangle, Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

Thomas Paine, The Age of Reason: various editions.

Robert A. Paul, Moses and Civilization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

Thomas Römer, The Invention of God (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

John Toland, "Hodegus: Or, The Pillar of Cloud and Fire not Miraculous," in Tetradymus (1720), pp. 3-60; reprint available from Kessinger Publishing's Legacy Reprints.

Philo, Volume VI, Loeb Classical Library.

Tacitus, The Histories (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Book Five.

Eric Voegelin, Order and History, Vol. 1: Israel and Revelation (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956).

Michael Walzer, In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Max Weber, Ancient Judaism (New York: Free Press, 1952).

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Freud's Moses (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

Irving M. Zeitlin, Ancient Judaism (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, Moses: A Life (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

Also: all issues of Hebraic Political Studies, a very useful journal that commenced publication in the fall of 2005 and unfortunately shut down with Vol. 4, no. 4 in the fall of 2009. The whole run of the journal is available electronically via the University of Toronto Library.

I don't expect people to read all the books in these two lists. That would be a stupendously ambitious project extending far beyond the compass of a single seminar course. Rather, these two lists are intended as a resource that students can draw upon when they determine the topic for their seminar presentations and final research essays.

I more or less assume a basic acquaintance with the standard Western theory canon.

As would be the case with any such advanced seminar in political theory, priority should be given to primary texts, which is why Fox's edition of The Five Books of Moses is the only required reading. Other readings (which will obviously be necessary) will be determined by your choice of topic for a seminar presentation. For instance, you can't do a seminar on Moses and Rousseau without reading The Government of Poland; you can't do a seminar on Freud and Moses without reading Moses and Monotheism. And so on. To repeat: I offer two lists of suggested readings: a short one and a long one. Both are being offered strictly as resources in thinking about possible seminar topics and possible supporting reading. Neither is a list of required reading; you can draw freely from both lists as you work your way into the topic. I'm confident that everything on both lists is worth reading, but it would take many years (would take me many years, anyway!) to read all of them. I'm 100% sure that even the longer of the two lists barely scratches the surface, and one could easily assemble a list of readings on the problem of Moses many times as long. The purpose of this course is merely to make a start on this vast topic.

Topics for seminar presentations: it's your choice. One possibility is some political aspect of the story of Moses as recounted in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., the division of authority between Moses and Aaron). Another possibility would be Mosaic themes in one of the canonical thinkers of the theory tradition (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Harrington, Spinoza, Rousseau, etc.). I'll be doing a bit of both of these two things in my introductory lectures. Freud's Moses would be another good topic. Or you could do a seminar presenting a stand-alone book like Wildavsky's Moses as Political Leader or Walzer's Exodus and Revolution. But I'm open to any interesting ideas of your own for which you can make a decent case.

Course Requirements

Undergrads:

Proposal for final essay 10 % (3 pages; due Feb. 25th, 2019)

Seminar presentation: 25 %

Class participation: 15%

Final essay: 50 % (12 pages double-spaced; due April 1st, 2019; late penalty: 2% per day)

Grads:

Seminar presentation: 30 %

Class participation: 20%

Final essay: 50 % (15 pages double-spaced; due April 1st, 2019)

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.

A WARNING ABOUT PLAGIARISM

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 in what follows. 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!

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 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>

Equity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.