

Rousseau to Revolution

PHL 324, PSC 292

Fall 2007
TuTh 9:40-10:55
Morey Hall 501

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In 1750, Jean-Jacques Rousseau published the “Discourse on the Arts and Sciences” began a controversial literary and philosophical career that upturned many of the accepted views of the Enlightenment and inspired the revolutionaries of 1789. But his works are an odd combination of romanticism, republicanism, and resignation. We will look at some of Rousseau’s most important works, and then we will look at the reactions to Rousseau’s message in the political thought surrounding the French Revolution itself. We will read some of the important figures of the Revolution, but we will also look at the debates about the Revolution in England, which inspired three of the greatest works of English political philosophy: Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man*, and Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

The upheavals of the Revolution precipitated a general crisis in Europe of the legitimacy of existing governments and, more generally, of the authority of existing social structures. What constitutes a good society, or a good government? What are the foundations of government and society, and what is the role of the individual? These debates in the late eighteenth century about rights and traditions, democracy and privilege, and virtue and commerce still, I think, frame the political debates of the twenty-first century. By seeing these debates in a different political context, we will, I hope, come to a better understanding of contemporary politics.

Required Texts:

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Penguin)
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Hackett)
Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (Penguin)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings* (Hackett)
_____, *The Government of Poland* (Hackett)
Michael Walzer, ed., *Regicide and Revolution* (Columbia)
Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Penguin)
Readings on Blackboard

Supplemental text:

D.G. Wright, *Revolution and Terror in France, 1789-95* (Longman)

Course Requirements:

Class participation is worth a significant portion of your grade. The class is based on student discussions, not on lectures. You are expected to come to class, and you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings – if only to ask relevant questions about them. Each week, you will be expected to write a brief one-page reaction to the week’s reading and send it by e-mail to each of the teachers by 9:00 p.m. on Monday. In addition, at least once during the term, I will be showing a video to supplement the readings.

The major assignments in this course will be done using the tutorial system. Twice during the term, I will give you a series of questions about particular texts. You will choose one question and write a 6-8 page analytical paper. You and another student will then meet with me in my office to discuss and hand in your papers. Classes will be cancelled during the tutorials. I will explain the tutorial method in detail later.

For your final assignment, you will write an 8-10 page paper. This paper can be a third tutorial paper on a topic I give you, or on a subject of your own choosing. The latter option gives you the opportunity to explore an issue of particular interest to you. Before beginning such a paper, however, you must talk to me, so that I can make sure that the topic is suitable, and also so that I can help you with resources.

The course grade is divided into 13 parts, apportioned as shown:

First tutorial	3 parts
Second tutorial	3 parts
Final assignment	4 parts
Participation	3 parts

Schedule of Readings:

This schedule is tentative; “BB” indicates a reading that can be found through a link on the Blackboard page for this course.

I. Rousseau

Sep 4-6	Charles Loyseau, <i>A Treatise on Orders</i> (BB) <i>Supplemental</i> : D.G. Wright, <i>Revolution and Terror in France, 1789-95</i> , Introduction Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Arts and Sciences,” in <i>Basic Political Writings</i> , 1-21 David Hume, “Of Refinement in the Arts” (BB) <i>Supplemental</i> : Hume, “A Concise Account of the Dispute between Mr. Rousseau and Mr. Hume”
Sep 11-13	Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men,” in <i>Basic Political Writings</i> , 23-109 Adam Smith, <i>Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations</i> , Book I, chs. i-ii (BB)
Sep 18-20	Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Books I-II, in <i>Basic Political Writings</i> , 139-72
Sep 25-27	Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i> , Book III-IV, in <i>Basic Political Writings</i> , 173-226
Oct 2-4	Rousseau, <i>The Government of Poland</i>

- Oct 9 • First tutorial (No classes, Oct 9)
- II. Revolution*
- Oct 11 Beaumarchais, *The Marriage of Figaro*
--Movie: "La Nozze de Figaro" (Oct 11?)
- Oct 16-18 Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of Rue Séverin" (BB)
Abbe Sieyes, "What is the Third Estate?" (BB)
"The Tennis Court Oath" (BB)
"Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens," in Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, 110-12
Richard Price, "Discourse on the Love of Our Country" (BB)
Supplemental: Wright, Revolution and Terror, chs. 2-3
- Oct 23-25 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 3-99
- Oct 30-Nov 1 Burke, *Reflections*, 109-11, 144-54, 173-80, 213-18.
Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, part one
- Nov 6-8 Paine, *Rights of Man*, part two
- Nov 13-15 • Second tutorial
Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, intro and chs. 1-4 (79-122)
- Nov 20 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, chs. 3-4 (123-72)
Thanksgiving break (Nov 21-23)
- Nov 27-29 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, chs. 7-8, 10-12, 13.6 (227-51, 264-99, 316-18)
"Constitution of 1791" (BB)
Speeches by Jean-Baptiste Mairie, Charles-François-Gabriel Morisson, Louis-Antoine-Léon Saint-Just, Thomas Paine, and Maximilien Robespierre, all in Michael Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, 93-138
Supplemental: Wright, Revolution and Terror, ch. 4
- Dec 4-6 Speeches by Marquis de Condorcet, Jean-Paul Marat Saint-Just, Robespierre, Pierre-Victournien Vergniaud, and Paine, in Walzer, 139-214
Supplemental: Wright, Revolution and Terror, chs. 5-7
- Dec 11-13 Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns" (BB)
• Final assignment due, Dec 14

SUPPLEMENTAL AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Other important writings by the authors covered in this course:

Beaumarchais, Pierre-Augustin Caron de. *The Barber of Seville* (1775). The first of Beaumarchais's plays about Figaro and his masters. This one became an opera by Rossini.

Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense* (1776). Paine's pamphlet that helped galvanize the Americans for independence.

Rousseau, Jean-Jaques. *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1750). Rousseau's groundbreaking essay that argues that the arts and sciences have led to the decay of morality

_____ *Discourse on the Foundations of Inequality among Men* (1752). Rousseau's famous argument that the invention of property destroyed natural man and led to the moral decay of the species

_____ *La Nouvelle Heloise (Julie or the New Heloise)* (1761). Rousseau's sentimental epistolary novel. It was probably the mostly widely-read of Rousseau's works during his lifetime.

_____ *Emile* (1762). Rousseau's major work on education. It traces the ideal education of a boy, Emile, until he is ready to become both a man and a citizen. It also briefly offers an educational program for his perfect mate, Sophie.

_____ *Confessions* (1770). Rousseau practically invented the modern autobiography in this extremely popular and controversial account of his life through 1765.

Other major political works of the late eighteenth century:

Bentham, Jeremy. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780). The classic statement of utilitarian moral theory.

Godwin, William. *Enquiry concerning Justice* (1793). This work is the first major anarchist tract, and it greatly influenced Percy Shelley. He was also, of course, Mary Shelley's father.

Hume, David. *Political Discourses* (1752). Now published as part 2 of Hume's *Essays*, the essays here are the best of Hume's more popular works on politics, it was more famous in his lifetime than his more strictly philosophical works, like the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) Hume's *History of England* (1754-62) was also highly influential, and it was the most widely read history of Britain for 100 years. Louis XVI was said to have read it before his own trial.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781). Jefferson, of course, wrote many famous speeches and reports and the main elements of the Declaration of Independence. But this work, an overview of his native state, gives a good summary of his views.

Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays* (1784-95). The political works of the great German philosopher, who is better-known for his metaphysical and metaethical views (and with good reason), in particular the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785).

Maistre, Joseph de. *Considerations on France* (1796). De Maistre was an ultra-conservative Catholic. These are his reflections on the Revolution.

Montesquieu, Charles Secondat, Baron de. *The Persian Letters* (1721) present a tolerant view of the world as it satirizes social life in France through the eyes of Persian visitors to Paris. His

Spirit of the Laws (1748) offers a systematic account of government that inspired the American Founding Fathers.

Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith's justly famous defense of capitalism, it is less *laissez-faire* than modern conservatives suppose. In addition, his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) presents a moral theory that sharply conflicts with the standard interpretations of *The Wealth of Nations*.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America* (1835). Tocqueville's insightful examination of American life and institutions.

_____. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (1856). Tocqueville's take on the Revolution, with an emphasis on the continuities between the Ancien Régime and the post-Revolutionary era.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). The first great work of feminism, it argues that women should have the same rights as those declared for men. She was also, of course, Mary Shelley's mother (though she died shortly after her daughter was born).

Books about the Enlightenment:

Becker, Carl. *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment*. New York: Norton, 1969.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*. New York: New American Library, 1979.

Outram, Dorinda. *The Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995

Spencer, Samia, ed. *French Women and the Age of Enlightenment*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984.

Books about the Revolution:

Balzac, Honoré de. *Un épisode sous la Terreur* (1830). Paris: Ed. du Caroussel, 1999.

---. *Les chouans* (1829). Paris: Gallimard, 1972.

Furet, François. *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880*. Trans. Antonia Nevill. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*. New York: New American Library, 1979.

Hugo, Victor. *Quatre-vingt-treize* (1874). *Ninety-Three*. Trans. Lowell Bair. Intro. Ayn Rand. New York: Bantam, 1962.

Hunt, Lynn. *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*. Berkeley: U Cal P, 1992.

Landes, Joan. *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

Schama, Simon. *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*. New York: Knopf, 1989.