

MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT (POLS*3230)

Department of Political Science
University of Guelph

Fall 2019

Course Description

This course examines thinkers designated as modern in the history of Western political thought, covering a time span of about two centuries that began in the late seventeenth century. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, the period was marked importantly by the birth of modern liberalism, which remains the normative mainstay of political structures and practices in the Western world today. Against this background, the course focuses on selected original writings of four thinkers from this period – John Locke (1632-1704); Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859); John S. Mill (1806-1879); and Karl Marx (1818-1883). Through the works of these thinkers, features that are essential to contemporary liberal democracy will be explored. These include constitutionalism, democracy, representative government, civil liberty, civic engagement, relation between liberalism and capitalism.

Course Requirements

1. Two essays (1250 to 1500 words per essay; 25% each)
2. General Participation (15%)
3. Final examination (35%)

Required Texts

De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*, edited by Sanford Kessler. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2000.

Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*, edited by C. B. Macpherson. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980.

Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*, edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994.

Mill, John S. *On Liberty and Other Essays*, edited by John Gray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991 (reissued 2008).

Instructor – Professor Theresa Lee