Renaissance, Reformation and Reason of State: political thought from Machiavelli to Locke

Ronan SHARKEY

Syllabus

1. The Renaissance and the decline of Aristotelianism
   a. Introduction to early-modern political thought
   b. Pre-modern politics: Aristotelian moral psychology and political community
   c. Pre-modern politics: Aquinas
   d. The breakdown of the Aristotelian synthesis
   e. Ciceronian virtues and the realities of politics

   **Reading:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics, Politics*; Aquinas, *Political Writings*; Cicero, *On duties*

2. Humanism and politics I: Erasmus and More
   a. Erasmus on the education of Princes
   b. More’s *Utopia* and the modern state

   **Reading:** More, *Utopia*; Erasmus, *On the education of a Christian prince*

3. Humanism and politics II: Machiavelli
   a. The rise of the Italian city-republics
   b. Florence, the Medici and the tragedy of Savonarola
   c. Guicciardini and Machiavelli on Florentine history
   d. Machiavelli the diplomat
   e. Vice and virtù: Machiavelli’s subversion of humanist morality
   f. Armies and mercenaries
   g. Political leadership
   h. Corruption and political liberty in the *Discorsi*
   i. Machiavelli and modernity

   **Reading:** Machiavelli, *The Prince; Discourses*; Black 2013

4. Reformed politics I: Luther and after
   a. Luther’s theological development
   b. Luther’s conservatism
   c. Luther on secular power
d. Luther on education, authority and the church

e. The Radical Reformation


5. **Reformed politics II: from Calvin to Bodin**
   a. Calvin on Civil Government
   b. The republic of Geneva and the execution of Michael Servetus
   c. Calvinism and Puritanism in later 16th century Europe: Knox
   d. The Monarchomachs and Bodin
   e. Bodin on sovereignty


6. **Methodological interlude: understanding (in) the history of political ideas**
   a. Texts, acts and individuals
   b. Whiggism and liberalism
   c. Straussianism, positivism and the death of political philosophy
   d. The contextualist approach I: Collingwood and MacIntyre
   e. The contextualist approach II: the Cambridge school
   f. Questions for contextualism

**Reading:** Strauss 1958, 1988; Laslett 1956; Collingwood 1978; Dunn 1968; Skinner 2002, vol. I; Pocock 2009; Tully 1988; Goldie 2006; Philp 2008; Bevir 2011

7. **Grotius, Hobbes and the New Natural Law**
   a. Tacitism and Neo-Pyrrhonian scepticism
   b. Grotius’s simplification of natural law
   c. Hobbes, humanism and Galilean science
   d. The political context of Hobbes’s political thought:
      i. Absolutism and the Civil War
      ii. The Republic and the Levellers
      iii. Hobbes, preceptor to princes


8. **Hobbes, political authority and the state**
   a. Hobbes’s philosophical anthropology
   b. The redefinition of the virtues: prudence
   c. The redefinition of the virtues: justice
   d. Negative liberty and violence
   e. The laws of nature
   f. The “compact”:
   g. Hobbes on religion and theology

**Reading:** Hobbes, *Leviathan* (various editions); Oakeshott 1975; Skinner 2007, 2007
9. **Hobbes, Harrington and the question of liberty**
   a. Hobbes’s “confusing clarity”
   b. The neo-Roman tradition of popular sovereignty
   c. Milton and Harrington on popular freedom
   d. Peace or freedom?
   e. Liberty and political obligation


10. **The genesis of Locke’s political philosophy**
   a. Locke’s life and intellectual development
   b. Science, scepticism and puritanism
   c. Locke on toleration: from the *Essays on the Law of Nature* to the *Epistola de tolerantia*
   d. The epistemology of toleration
   e. Filmer’s absolutism

   **Readings:** Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature* in Political Writings; *Two Treatises of Government; Letter on Toleration*; Dunn 1969a; Sommerville 1991

11. **Locke and Filmer on patriarchy and property**
   a. The textual history of the *Second Treatise*
   b. The politics of trust
   c. The natural condition of mankind and natural rights
   d. Property and “self-ownership”
   e. MacPherson on Locke on property
   f. Legitimacy and sovereignty
   g. Tyranny and liberty

   **Reading:** Filmer, *Patriarcha*; Locke, *Two Treatises*; MacPherson 1962; Tully 1980, 1993; Sommerville 1991

12. **Liberalism, ideology and history after Locke**
   a. Locke, the Scottish Enlightenment and the American Revolution
   b. The liberal tradition: 19th and 20th centuries
   c. Undoing liberal historiography
   d. Historical method and social criticism
   e. Can liberalism be transcended?
   f. After liberalism?


**Présentation des modalités d’évaluation**

A. Continuous assessment (in the seminars): 60% comprising:
(i) Essay (“term paper”): refer to seminar programme; (ii) Oral presentations: refer to seminar programme; (iii) “grade modifying mark” (at the discretion of the seminar teacher)

B. Final examination (4h): 40%

Références bibliographiques:

Classical texts (in roughly chronological order)

- Aristotle, *Ethics* (numerous editions)
- Aristotle, *Politics* (numerous editions)

Secondary literature (alphabetical order)

- BOCK, Gisela, SKINNER, Quentin and VIROLI, Maurizio, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Cambridge, 1990
- BURKE, Peter, “Tacitism, scepticism and reason of state” in Burns and Goldie 1991
• ———, ed., The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, Cambridge, 1988
• ———, and GOLDIE, Mark, eds., The Cambridge History of Modern Political Thought 1450-1700, Cambridge, 1991
• CARGILL-THOMPSON, W.D.J., The Political Thought of Martin Luther, Brighton, 1984
• COLEMAN, Janet, “Property and Poverty” in Burns 1988
• DUMONT, Louis, From Mandeville to Marx. The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology, Chicago, 1977
• ———, “The politics of Locke in England and America in the eighteenth century” in Yolton 1969 (also in Dunn 1980)
• ———, The Political Thought of John Locke, Cambridge, 1969a
• ———, Political Obligation in its Historical Context, Cambridge, 1980
• ———, The History of Political Theory and Other Essays, Cambridge, 1996
• ELLIOTT, John H., Europe Divided 1559-1598, Fontana, 1968
• ELTON, Geoffrey, Reformation Europe 1517-1555, Fontana, 1963
• FIGGIS, J.N., Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625, Cambridge, 1916
• FRANKLIN, Julian H., “Sovereignty and the mixed constitution: Bodin and his critics” in Burns and Goldie 1991
• GILBERT, Felix, Machiavelli and Guicciardini, Princeton, 1965
• GOLDIE, Mark, “The Context of the Foundations” in Brett and Tully 2006
• ———, “Absolutism” in Klosko 2011
• GRAFTON, Anthony, “Humanism and political theory” in Burns and Goldie 1991
• HALE, J.R., Machiavelli and Renaissance Italy, Pelican, 1972
• ———, Renaissance Europe 1480-1520, 2nd ed., Blackwell, 2000
• HILL, Christopher, The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution, Penguin, 1975
• ———, The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714, Routledge, 1991
• MANSFIELD, Harvey C., Machiavelli’s Virtue, Chicago, 1988
• OAKESHOTT, Michael, Hobbes on Civil Association, Blackwell, 1975
• OAKLEY, Francis, “Christian Obedience and authority, 1520-1550” in Burns and Goldie 1991
• PAGDEN, Anthony, ed., The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe, Cambridge, 1987
• PHILLIPSON, Nicholas and SKINNER, Quentin, eds., *Political discourse in early modern Britain*, Cambridge, 1993
• ———, *Political Thought and History. Essays on Theory and Method*, Cambridge, 2009
• RUBINSTEIN, Nicolai, “Machiavelli and Florentine republican experience” in Bock, Skinner and Viroli, 1990
• ———, “Italian political thought, 1450-1530” in Burns and Goldie 1991
• RYAN, Alan, *Property and Political Theory*, Blackwell, 1984
• SKINNER, Quentin, “The ideological context of Hobbes’s political thought”, *The Historical Journal*, ix, n° 3 (1966), pp. 286-317
• ———, “Machiavelli’s Discorsi and the pre-humanist origins of republican ideas” in Bock, Skinner and Viroli, 1990
• ———, “Hobbes on Persons, Authors and Representatives” in Springborg, 2007
• SOMMerville, Johann P., “Absolutism and royalism” in Burns and Goldie 1991
• STRAUSS, Leo, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, Chicago, 1958
• ———, “On the spirit of Hobbes’s political philosophy” in Brown 1965
• ———, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chicago, 1988
• ———, “Scepticism and Toleration in the seventeenth century” in Mendus, 1988
• ———, “The civil religion of Thomas Hobbes” in Phillipson and Skinner, 1993a
• TULLY, James, A Discourse of Property. John Locke and his adversaries, Cambridge, 1980
• ———, An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts, Cambridge, 1993
• VIROLI, Maurizio, “Machiavelli and the republican idea of politics” in Bock, Skinner and Viroli, 1990
• ———, From Politics to Reason of State: the acquisition and transformation of the language of politics 1250-1600, Cambridge, 1992
• WARRENDER, Howard, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, Oxford, 1957
• WORDEN, Blair, “Milton’s republicanism and the tyranny of heaven” in Bock, Skinner and Viroli, 1990
• ———, “English republicanism” in Burns and Goldie, 1991
Seminar Program

1. **Methodological Introduction**  

2. **Humanism and politics I**  

3. **Humanism and politics II**  

4. **Humanism and politics III**  

5. **Reformed politics: Luther and after**  

6. **Methodological interlude: understanding (in) the history of political ideas**  

7. **Grotius, Hobbes and the New Natural Law**  

8. **Hobbes, political authority and the state**  
9. **Hobbes, Harrington and the question of liberty**

10. **The genesis of Locke’s political philosophy**

11. **Locke and Filmer on patriarchy and property**

12. **Liberalism, ideology and history after Locke**

**Evaluation:**
1. **Written**
   Critical assessment of an academic article (40%): 1500 words max. (references and footnotes/endnotes included), 1,5 Line Spacing, Font: 12 Garamond. The students will receive the article on March 6, 2015 and will have to hand in the critical assessment on March 27, 2015, by midnight.
   N.B. The paper will be presented in a hard-copy version and sent to the following electronic address: ovidius.stanciu@sciencespo.fr

2. **Oral**
   1. Two (critical) text presentations during the semester (30% each): 10’-15’/presentation
   2. Overall oral participation: +/ - 1.5 points of the final seminar grade