

PHL 383 - Reason and Revolution
Montana State University / Herrick Hall 313
Spring 2023 / MWF 1:10-2PM

Prerequisites: At least one course in Philosophy or consent of instructor.

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Course Description

Since the 18th century, the concept of “revolution” has played an immense role in both philosophical and everyday thinking. In the United States, we think of ourselves and of the country we live in as products of revolution, and the promise or threat of subsequent revolutions (or “insurrections”) continues to play an animating role in social thought. More generally, we moderns are creatures of revolution. In this course, we will trace the history of the concept “revolution” since the 18th century, especially in the context of *political* and *social* revolutions. We will consider a variety of competing perspectives on the topic, pursuing questions like the following: When, if ever, is a revolution justified or reasonable? What conditions must obtain in order for revolution to be possible? To what extent, if any, does revolution change our human nature? Are all revolutions historically progressive or are some regressive in character? By engaging with philosophical reflections on revolution, as well as with select contributions by political writers and social scientists, students will familiarize themselves with key concepts in social thought and grapple with our shared condition as modern “creatures of revolution.”

Course Materials

It is required that you obtain the following books. Please ensure that you have the same translation and edition of each item. All other materials will be distributed in PDF format on the course D2L site.

- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987). ISBN 0872200205.
- G. W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History, with an Appendix from The Philosophy of Right*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988). ISBN 0872200205.
- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978). ISBN 9780393090406.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998). ISBN 9780872202832.
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, Reprint edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). ISBN 019955546X.

Assignment & Grade Breakdown

Quantity	Assignment Type	Grade Impact
2 x	Prompt Response, writing assignment (1-3 pgs.)	10% (5% each)
4 x	Reading Reflection, writing assignment (4-5 pgs.)	40% (10% each)
1 x	Final Paper, writing assignment (10-12 pgs.)	30%
	Attendance & Participation & Possible Extra Assignments	20%

Course Learning Outcomes

- **Mastery of Material** – Successful students will demonstrate comprehension of assigned materials both through their contributions to in-class discussion and through written assignments. This mastery extends not just to recitation of ideas defended by individual philosophers, but also to the history of the concept “revolution” and understanding of the philosophical and political stakes of the debate concerning the meaning of “revolution.”
- **Mastery of Concepts** – Successful students will demonstrate command of key technical concepts and distinctions involved in the modern debate about revolution. These include the following, among others: alienation (or estrangement) vs. flourishing, aristocracy, aristocratic radicalism, base vs. superstructure, bureaucracy, capitalism, communism, conservatism, education, enlightenment, essence, feudalism, forces of production vs. relations of production, genealogy, ideology, liberalism, managerialism, managerial class, materialism vs. idealism, material conditions, mode of production, nobility, political revolution vs. social revolution, prejudice, productive activity, progressivism, reason, resentment, revolution vs. reform, slavery, slave revolt in morality, socialism, universal history, vocation, working vs. ruling class.
- **Mastery of Methods** – Successful students will demonstrate technical competency in writing closely argued reflections on assigned texts and formal philosophical research papers. This will require clear identification of theses, clear presentation of reasons and evidence, identification and avoidance of fallacies of reasoning, accurate summary and citation of views from assigned texts, accurate definitions of key terms, careful distinction between opinions and reasoned conclusions, and recognition of and response to likely objections to defended views.

What You Can Expect from Me

- **Instruction** – I will honor class sessions and meeting times. Unless an emergency arises, I will arrange cancellations and adjustments in advance and with prior notice. I will conduct course meetings around open discussion, encouraging interactivity, while also providing guidance in interpreting the materials we engage with throughout the course.
- **Advising & Guidance** – I will be available in my office during scheduled office hours. Meetings during office hours are first come, first served. In most cases, meetings will not exceed 15 minutes. If you are unable to meet during my scheduled office hours, I will do my best to meet with you at another time, either on campus or by video call. I will seek to respond to any emails from students within 24 to 48 hours of receiving them.
- **Feedback** – I will respond to assignments in a timely and thorough manner with grades and constructive feedback. You should expect to receive very thorough feedback on early assignments, and to receive slightly less on later assignments. Since this is a philosophy course, I am more likely to offer feedback on arguments and comprehension than grammar or diction. If needed, I will discuss concerns about grades and feedback with you on an individual basis.
- **Flexibility** – If necessary, I will adjust my teaching plan to the needs of the course. For more information about how this might look in practice, see the Assignment Overview.

What I Will Expect from You

- **Honest Engagement** – You will be expected to engage philosophically with assigned texts and with one another. This means (1) taking the ideas we discuss seriously as attempts to get things right about human beings and the world we live in; (2) offering arguments for or against the views we consider, both in class discussions and in your written work; and (3) allowing that respectful disagreement, sometimes about sensitive matters like politics and religion, is an essential part of the process. Philosophical discussion only works when everyone involved

feels able to contribute their special insights. It is necessary, therefore, that we maintain a civil classroom environment, free of needlessly alienating language, bullying, or personal attacks.

- **Active Participation** – This course requires active participation—physical and mental attendance—from all students. Since course meetings will be organized around open discussion, the success of the course depends on your reading assigned materials and coming to class with ideas to share. If I notice that in-class discussion slows considerably, I may add reading quizzes or discussion question assignments to encourage closer reading.
- **Access to Materials** – You will need to secure access to the assigned readings for the course and bring them with you when you attend class. I do not care whether you have physical or digital copies of the assigned materials. Some of the materials will be made available on the course D2L site. You are welcome to bring a laptop or tablet to meetings to take notes or access digital copies of course materials. If your technology prevents you from contributing to discussions, however, I will notice, and it will affect your Attendance & Participation grade.
- **Attendance** – Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. Missing more than two or three meetings during the semester will affect your final grade. If you expect to miss a meeting, please contact me to let me know you will not be present.
- **Communication** – You will be expected to check your D2L messages (or associated email address) regularly to receive communications from me, as course instructor, and notices about the plan for the course. I will expect responses to individualized emails within 24 to 48 hours.
- **Respect for Deadlines** – I will expect all assignments to be submitted to me via D2L (or, in special cases, some other previously agreed upon submission method) by the deadlines specified on the Course Roadmap. Exceptions will be granted only in exceptional cases. If you will not be able to submit any assignment by its deadline, contact me at least 24 hours prior to the deadline to request an extension. I am not likely to grant multiple or repeated extensions.
- **Workload** – A typical three-credit course assumes roughly two hours of work outside of class for each hour spent in class, so you should expect to spend an average of six hours on homework and reading each week during this course. This will fluctuate somewhat throughout the semester, especially when written assignments come due.
- **Compliance with University Policies** – You will be expected to comply with the policies laid out in the University Policies section of this syllabus as well as with those enumerated elsewhere in the MSU Code of Conduct. This is true in all areas of university study.

University Policies

- **Academic Misconduct** – You will be expected to abide by MSU’s policies on collaboration and plagiarism. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to the following offenses: copying the work of others (in whole or in part), without appropriate recognition and documentation; reusing work that you completed for another course (in whole or in part), without correct documentation (i.e. self-plagiarism); inventing or fabricating quotations; and cheating on quizzes, exams, or other assessments. In philosophy, it is not usually considered plagiarism to, e.g., repurpose another philosopher’s argument (e.g. Wilfrid Sellars repurposes G.E. Moore’s open question argument in “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” but applies it to epistemological reductionism instead of moral reductionism). Even in like cases, it is best to acknowledge the original source of your argument, if only in passing, to avoid any suggestion of plagiarism. If you choose to engage in academic misconduct, you will be subject to university disciplinary jurisdiction. A variety of sanctions may be imposed: you will fail the assignment, you may fail the course, you may be denied the opportunity to repeat the course, and you may be referred to the Dean of Students. For more information on MSU’s code of

conduct regarding academic misconduct, see www.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct (§330.10). If you are unsure about how to correctly document sources, consult the handouts “Guidelines for Reading Reflections” and “Guidelines for Final Papers” on the course D2L.

- **Students with Disabilities** – Students with disabilities are entitled to certain accommodations at MSU. Accommodations are approved through the Office of Disability Services (ODS), located in SUB 174. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation during this course, please bring your ODS-provided Accommodation Notification (or “Blue Card”) and discuss the matter with me after class early in the semester.
- **Diversity & Inclusion** – “Montana State University is committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based upon race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran’s status, sex, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Such an environment is necessary to a healthy learning, working, and living atmosphere because discrimination and harassment undermine human dignity and the positive connection among all people at our University.” See catalog.montana.edu/code-conduct-policies-regulations-reports/nondiscrimination-policies-and-procedures for more information.
- **Student Educational Records** – Student records are confidential and will not be shared with anyone, even your parents, without express permission from you. If you wish to release your confidential records to anyone, you will have to provide the Department of History and Philosophy with a signed, written release granting permission. “The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (also called FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) affords students certain privacy rights regarding their education records. ... FERPA protects the privacy of all education records, in any medium, maintained by Montana State University. Although the law was written in 1974, its coverage is not limited to paper copies. All student education records, including records about students contained in computer databases, are protected. Additionally, Montana law protects students’ right to privacy and is considered more restrictive in its approach to the release of dependent student information to parents.” See <https://www.montana.edu/registrar/ferpa/> for more information.

Assignment Overview

- **Prompt Responses** – Two Prompt Responses will be assigned in the course of the semester. The first will be a one-page (or less) written response to a question posed in class and the second will be a three-page written response to a question posed in class. If asked to cite course materials, you should use ordinary inline citation patterns in doing so. However, these are not research assignments, so you are welcome to approach them in an informal style. For instance, you should not waste space with a formal introduction and outline of your argument. Just jump in and respond to the prompt as presented in class. If you miss the course meeting in which the prompt is presented, contact me via the D2L messaging system as soon as possible.
- **Reading Reflections** – Four Reading Reflections will be assigned in the course of the semester: one at the end of the first, second, third, and fourth Divisions as represented on the Course Roadmap. These reflections will be four- to five-page semi-formal written assignments in which you reconstruct important ideas and arguments from the materials assigned during the corresponding Division. You will draw upon one or two of the readings assigned during that Division, choose a major thesis defended in one of those works, and reconstruct the arguments for that thesis. If you have space, you are also welcome to devote a page or two to

your own evaluation of that argument. These exercises will test your understanding of the assigned materials and provide you with opportunities to explore ideas that may be of use to you in the Final Paper. I will distribute a handout on D2L – “Guidelines for Reading Reflections” – with more detailed instructions on how to approach the exercise.

- **Final Paper** – There will be a single, long, formal philosophical research paper due at the end of the semester. It will be 10 to 12 pages long, and should engage with the ideas of one or more of the figures discussed in class. I will provide optional topic prompts for the papers. If you prefer to choose your own topic, you should contact me no later than Monday, April 24th (the beginning of 14th week, two weeks before the Final Paper is due) to have your topic approved. In the paper, you should introduce a thesis, and present reasons and evidence in favor of that thesis, drawing on assigned materials to do so. You are welcome to approach the paper from a more *historical* angle or from a more *systematic* angle. We will discuss the difference between these approaches in class. I will also distribute a handout on D2L – “Final Paper Prompts” – with more detailed instructions on how to approach the Final Paper.
- **Attendance & Participation & Possible Extra Assignments** – Your Attendance & Participation grade will depend on your regularly attending course meetings, completing assigned readings, contributing to in-class discussions, and demonstrating responsiveness to feedback on your written assignments by adjusting your approach in future assignments. If I sense that students are not completing the readings (e.g. if in-class discussion slows considerably), I will introduce extra assignments designed to encourage reading. For instance, I may administer short, in-class Reading Quizzes or require each student to send me a Discussion Question via D2L prior to each meeting. These are not punishments, but devices for improving the quality of in-class discussions. For the devices to work, however, they have to carry some weight for your grade, so if this becomes necessary, your Attendance & Participation grade will be modified by your performance on these Extra Assignments. If it becomes necessary to add Extra Assignments to the course, I will announce the fact ahead of time in class—although, in the case of Reading Quizzes, I will not announce when each Quiz will be administered. The best way to avoid this outcome is to come to each meeting prepared!

Recommended Readings

In undergraduate courses, I discourage students from paying too much attention to secondary works, which often introduce as many confusions as they resolve. If you find yourself struggling with a figure on whom you intend to write your Final Paper, however, I can recommend the following works:

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| Rousseau | ... | Nicholas Dent, <i>Rousseau</i> (Routledge, 2005). |
| Burke | ... | Ian Harris, “Edmund Burke,” 2020 Article in the <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/burke/) |
| Wollstonecraft | ... | (eds.) Sandrine Bergès & Alan Coffee, <i>The Social and Political Philosophy of Mary Wollstonecraft</i> (Oxford, 2016). |
| Kant | ... | Holly Wilson, <i>Kant’s Pragmatic Anthropology</i> (SUNY, 2006). |
| Hegel | ... | Peter Singer, <i>Hegel</i> , 2 nd edition (Oxford, 2001). |
| Marx | ... | Allen Wood, <i>Karl Marx</i> , 2 nd edition (Routledge, 2004). |
| Nietzsche | ... | Brian Leiter, <i>Nietzsche on Morality</i> , 2 nd edition (Routledge, 2015). |

I also recommend the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (plato.stanford.edu) as a general resource for philosophy—one always to be preferred (say) to Wikipedia. Though some philosophers cite the SEP in published papers, I would still discourage you from doing so in college-level writing.

Course Roadmap

Week 1	Introduction to the Topic: Reason and Revolution	
W 1/18	<i>First meeting.</i>	---
W 1/18	Prompt Response on “Revolution” Due after Class.	
F 1/20	- Koselleck, “Excerpt from Historical Criteria of the Modern Concept of Revolution” (D2L) [9 pgs.] - Turgot, “Excerpt from A Philosophical Review of the Successive Advances of the Human Mind” (D2L) [1 pg.]	10 pgs.
Division I – Discovering Revolution		
Week 2	The French Revolution	
M 1/23	- Rousseau, “Excerpts from On the Social Contract” (D2L) [19 pgs.]	19 pgs.
W 1/25	- Robespierre, “Draft Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” (D2L) [6 pgs.] - Robespierre, “On the Principles of Revolutionary Government” (D2L) [9 pgs.]	15 pgs.
F 1/27	- Robespierre, “On the Principles of Political Morality” (D2L) [17 pgs.] - Condorcet, “On Revolution” (D2L) [6 pgs.]	23 pgs.
Week 3	The Birth of Conservatism	
M 1/30	- Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> , 3-8, 12-23, 26-30 [20 pgs.]	20 pgs.
W 2/1	- Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> , 31-38, 41-43, 45-46, 50-56, 67-70 [22 pgs.]	22 pgs.
F 2/3	- Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> , 76-85, 95-99, 108-110, 139-140, 144-146, 148-149 [20 pgs.]	20 pgs.
Week 4	Revolutionism and Progress	
M 2/6	- Wollstonecraft, “An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution,” 287-289, 317-319, 329-340, 354-357, 367-371 [24 pgs.]	24 pgs.
W 2/8	- Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,” 71-104 [33 pgs.]	33 pgs.
F 2/10	- Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,” 191-197, 221-231 [16 pgs.] - Condorcet, “Excerpt from The Sketch” (D2L) [8 pgs.]	24 pgs.

Sa 2/11

Division I Reading Reflection Due by 11:59PM

Division II - Revolution in Theory

Week 5 The Human Vocation

M 2/13	- Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" (D2L) [7 pgs.] - Kant, "Excerpt from the Anthropology Friedländer" (D2L) [2 pgs.]	9 pgs.
W 2/15	- Kant, "Excerpts from the Lectures on Pedagogy" (D2L) [8 pgs.] - Kant, "Excerpt from Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View" (D2L) [11 pgs.] - Kant, "Excerpt from the Anthropology Pillau" (D2L) [1 pg.]	20 pgs.
F 2/17	- Turgot, "Excerpt from On Universal History" (D2L) [1 pg.] - Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim" (D2L) [13 pgs.]	14 pgs.

Week 6 Reason in History

M 2/20	<i>President's Day. No meeting.</i>	---
W 2/22	- Hegel, <i>Introduction to The Philosophy of History</i> , 3-18 [15 pgs.] - Hegel, "Who Thinks Abstractly?" (D2L) [5 pgs.]	20 pgs.
F 2/24	- Hegel, <i>Introduction to The Philosophy of History</i> , 19-40 [20 pgs.]	20 pgs.

Week 7 The Necessity of Revolution

M 2/27	- Hegel, <i>Introduction to The Philosophy of History</i> , 40-56 [15 pgs.] - Hegel, "Excerpts from the Lectures on Logic" (D2L) [5 pgs.]	20 pgs.
W 3/1	- Hegel, <i>Introduction to The Philosophy of History</i> , 57-75 [18 pgs.]	18 pgs.
F 3/3	- Hegel, <i>Introduction to The Philosophy of History</i> , 75-82 [7 pgs.] - Hegel, "Excerpts from Outlines of the Philosophy of Right" (D2L) [11 pgs.]	18 pgs.

Su 3/5

Division II Reading Reflection Due by 11:59PM

Division III - Revolution in Practice

Week 8 Alienation and Flourishing

M 3/6	- Marx, "Estranged Labour," 70-81 [11 pgs.] - Aristotle, "Excerpt from the Nicomachean Ethics" (D2L) [3 pgs.]	14 pgs.
W 3/8	- Marx, "Private Property and Communism," 81-92 [11 pgs.]	11 pgs.
F 3/10	- Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," 683-686 [4 pgs.]	4 pgs.

3/13 – 3/17	<i>Spring Break. No meetings.</i>	---
Week 9	The Economics of History	
M 3/20	- Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” 143-145 [3 pgs.] - Marx & Engels, “The German Ideology, Part I,” 147-163 [16 pgs.] - Marx & Engels, “Excerpt from The German Ideology, Part III” (D2L) [1 pg.]	20 pgs.
W 3/22	- Marx & Engels, “The German Ideology, Part I,” 163-193 [29 pgs.]	29 pgs.
F 3/24	- Marx & Engels, “The German Ideology, Part I,” 193-200 [7 pgs.] - Marx, “Society and Economy in History,” 136-142 [7 pgs.] - Marx, “Marx on the History of His Opinions,” 3-6 [4 pgs.]	18 pgs.
Week 10	Revolution and Reform	
M 3/27	- Marx, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” 473-500 [27 pgs.]	27 pgs.
W 3/29	- Bernstein, “Excerpt from Evolutionary Socialism” (D2L) [29 pgs.]	29 pgs.
F 3/31	- Lenin, “Excerpt from What is to Be Done?” (D2L) [3 pgs.] - Luxemburg, “Excerpts from Reform or Revolution” (D2L) [15 pgs.] - Bordiga, “On Elections” (D2L) [10 pgs.]	28 pgs.
Su 4/2	Division III Reading Reflection Due by 11:59PM	
Division IV – Counterrevolution in Theory		
Week 11	The Slave Revolt in Morality	
M 4/3	- Rée, “The Origin of the Concepts ‘Good’ and ‘Evil’” (D2L) [11 pgs.] - Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> , 1-7 [7 pgs.] - Nietzsche, “Selections on Genealogical Method” (D2L) [7 pgs.]	25 pgs.
W 4/5	- Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> , 9-19 [10 pgs.] - Nietzsche, “Selections on Rank and Nobility” (D2L) [9 pgs.] - Aristotle, “Excerpt from the Politics” (D2L) [5 pgs.]	24 pgs.
F 4/7	<i>University Day. No meeting.</i>	---
Week 12	Revolution and Counterrevolution	
M 4/10	- Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> , 19-33 [15 pgs.]	15 pgs.
W 4/12	- Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> , 67-87 [19 pgs.]	19 pgs.
F 4/14	- Nietzsche, <i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i> , 87-106 [20 pgs.]	20 pgs.
Week 13	The Revolt of the Masses	

M 4/17	- Nietzsche, "Selections on Revolution and Slavery" (D2L) [26 pgs.]	26 pgs.
W 4/19	- Ortega y Gasset, "Excerpts from 'The Revolt of the Masses'" (D2L) [29 pgs.]	29 pgs.
F 4/21	- Mosca, "Excerpts from 'The Ruling Class'" (D2L) [25 pgs.]	25 pgs.
Su 4/23	Division IV Reading Reflection Due by 11:59PM	
Division V- Counterrevolution in Practice		
Week 14	A Confusion of Revolutions	
M 4/24	- Burnham, "First Excerpts from 'The Managerial Revolution'" (D2L) [24 pgs.]	24 pgs.
W 4/26	- Burnham, "Second Excerpts from 'The Managerial Revolution'" (D2L) [28 pgs.]	28 pgs.
F 4/28	- Burnham, "Third Excerpts from 'The Managerial Revolution'" (D2L) [19 pgs.] - Sohn-Rethel, "Excerpt from 'The Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism'" (D2L) [11 pgs.] - Sohn-Rethel, "Excerpts from 'The Seven Chapters'" (D2L) [4 pgs.]	34 pgs.
Week 15	The Revolt of the Elites	
M 5/1	- Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class" (D2L), 5-30 [24 pgs.]	24 pgs.
W 5/3	- Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class" (D2L), 30-45 [14 pgs.] - Ehrenreich, "An Ancient Antagonism" (D2L) [12 pgs.]	26 pgs.
F 5/5	- Lasch, "Excerpt from 'The Revolt of the Elites'" (D2L) [24 pgs.]	24 pgs.
F 5/5	Prompt Response on "Managerial Class" Due by 11:59PM	
Finals Week		
M 5/8	Final Paper Due by 11:59PM	