

Modern Political Thought

Professor Nicholas Tampio

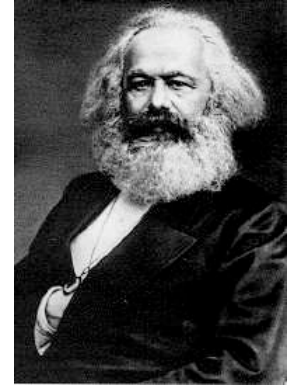
Fordham University, POGA 5301

Fall 2013

Class: Faber Hall 668, M 5:30-7:20 pm

Office hours: Faber 665, M 4-5:30 pm

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Course Overview

During the Thirty Years War (1618-48), a conflict largely between Catholics and Protestants, approximately one-fifth of the population of the Holy Roman Empire died. One of the great questions of modern political thought is how to transmute militant religiosity into pacific pursuits—how to make captains of war, in one formulation, into captains of industry. In this course, we consider how modern political philosophers justified and criticized capitalism. A goal is to gain insight on contemporary debates about religion, capitalism, and politics.

The course sets up a dialogue between profound defenders and critics of capitalism, using a historical framework presented by Albert Hirschman in *The Passions and the Interests*. We begin by examining how one of the leading thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, Adam Smith, draws a connection between moral philosophy and economics in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*. Next, we consider how the eighteenth-century Swiss philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, condemns the moral corruption of modern civilization in the *Discourses* and promotes radical democracy in *The Social Contract*. Then, we show how Karl Marx radicalizes Rousseau's vision in his philosophical, political, and economic writings and Max Weber argues that Protestantism gave birth to capitalism. Milton Friedman, in *Capitalism and Freedom*, defends capitalism's role in a free society, and William E. Connolly considers the possibility of eco-capitalism in *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*.

Texts

Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, 1997), ISBN-10: 0691015988

Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Liberty Fund, 1985), ISBN-10: 0865970068

Smith, *Wealth of Nations, Vol. 1* (Liberty Fund, 1981), ISBN-10: 0865970076

Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Yale, 2002), ISBN-10: 0300091419

Marx, *Selected Writings* (Oxford, 2000), ISBN-10: 0198782659

Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Norton), ISBN-10: 0393930688

Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (University of Chicago, 2002), ISBN-10: 0226264211

Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Duke, 2008), ISBN-10: 0822342723

Course Requirements

1. Class participation. Students are expected to come to class on time and prepared to discuss the readings.
- 2, 3, 4. Class presentation, paper, and handout. Early in the semester, students will volunteer to lead two classes. For each class that you lead, write a 4-5-page paper describing the context of the book (especially if you are the first one presenting on an author) and the argument of the assigned readings. Highlight key passages of the argument and describe recent controversies over the work. For the class, distribute a one-page handout (with key dates, quotes, diagrams, arguments, and critiques), speak for about 20 minutes, and lead class discussion. This seminar gives you the chance to hone the art of teaching.
5. First paper: Write a 8-10 page essay comparing and contrasting Smith and Rousseau on modern civilization. How does Smith defend capitalism and how does Rousseau criticize it? Where do you stand in this dispute and why? Due October 21.
6. Second paper: Write a 8-10 page essay either (1) comparing and contrasting Marx and Weber on the relationship between religion and capitalism or (2) comparing and contrasting Friedman and Connolly on freedom, or democracy, and capitalism. Due December 16.

Grade Distribution

Class participation	10
Class presentations	10 (2 x 5)
Class presentation papers	20 (2 x 10)
Handouts	10 (2 x 5)
First paper	20
Second paper	30

1. September 4 – The Basis of Modern Political Philosophy

Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (entire)

2. September 9 – The Moral Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment

Adam Smith, *The Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, Parts 1 and 2

3. September 16 – The Economics of the Scottish Enlightenment

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, Book I

4. September 23 – The Economics of the Scottish Enlightenment

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, Book III

5. September 30 – An Enlightenment Critique of Capitalism

Rousseau, First and Second Discourses (entire)

6. October 7 – Democracy versus Capitalism

Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (entire)

7. October 21 – Marx on Religion (*First paper due.)

Marx, Selected Writings, Part One

8. October 28 – Marx on History

Marx, Selected Writings, Part Two

9. November 4 – Marx on Economics

Marx, Selected Writings, Part Three

10. November 11 – Weber on Protestantism and Capitalism

Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (entire)

12. November 18 – Capitalism and Freedom

Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Introduction-Chapter II

13. November 25 – Capitalism and Government

Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chapters III-XIII

14. December 2 – Connolly on the Spirit of Capitalism

Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, Preface-Chapter 2

15. December 9 – Connolly on Eco-Politics

Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, Chapter 4

16. December 16 – Final papers due. Let's meet at my office at 5:30 and walk to Little Italy for dinner.