

PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

PHI-5000-001

FALL 2014

PROFESSOR GABRIEL ROCKHILL

Time: MW, 3-4:15 p.m.

Location: Tolentine 310B

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OVERVIEW

“La révolution est à réinventer et d’abord à reconnaître! Aujourd’hui, l’esprit prométhéen, c’est celui qui prononce: ‘La Révolution, comme l’amour, est à réinventer.’”

- Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction à la modernité*

This seminar explores the modern and contemporary transformations in our *political culture*, understood as the practical mode of intelligibility that structures the very nature of politics by determining who qualifies as a political subject, what is visible as a political action, and how the spatio-temporal framework of politics is organized. After a brief methodological and historiographical introduction, we will study the historical emergence of the modern concept of revolution and the transformations in the temporal horizons of the political due to the opening up of the future as an unknown field of utopian possibility. We will examine, in this light, historical writings on various revolutions as well as theoretical attempts to conceptualize the specificity of revolutionary movements. Against this historical backdrop, we will then explore what it means for a revolution to change social structure by discussing the reconfiguration of class relations as well as the role of gender and race in modern revolutions. This will allow us, more specifically, to examine the various accounts of agency used to explain revolutionary change, and we will be particularly interested in developing a non-reductive, multi-agential theory of social transformation. This methodological orientation will go hand in hand with a re-conceptualization of social norms as immanent, multi-tiered, dynamic, and therefore malleable. Finally, after developing tools for a radically historicist and multi-agential approach to revolutions, we will conclude by examining the claim that there has been a shift in political culture from the grand era of revolutionary politics (roughly 1789 to 1968) to a purportedly post-revolutionary epoch (approximately 1968-present). More specifically, we will investigate the contemporary historical imaginary by asking whether or not the belief in an unprecedented future is a thing of the past. Is such a future, in fact, a *future past* or a *future afar* (in the sense that revolutions, if they happen, occur far from the hegemonic centers of the Euro-American world)? If so, what are we to make of the recent revolutionary activity around the world, from Latin America to the entire Mediterranean region, the Occupy movement and beyond? What is the status of revolutionary activity in the present, and does it require a reworking of the very category of revolution?

REQUIRED MATERIAL

You are free to use other copies of the books listed below or scan/photocopy the relevant sections (depending on the length). However, these are the editions that will be referenced in class.

1. Arendt, Hannah. *On Revolution*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

2. Condorcet, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat. *Condorcet: Political Writings*. Edited by Steven Lukes and Nadia Urbinati. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
3. Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Men ; with A Vindication of the Rights of Woman ; and Hints*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
4. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Edited by Alan D. Schrift and Duncan Large. Vol. 8: *Beyond Good and Evil / On the Genealogy of Morality*. Translated by Adrian Del Caro. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014.
 - a. *Alternate version*: Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson. Translated by Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
5. Badiou, Alain. *The Rebirth of History: Themes of Riots and Uprisings*. London: Verso, 2012.
6. Essays and articles will be made available to you electronically. It is required that you bring hard or electronic copies of them to every class.

OPTIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIAL

1. DeFronzo, James. *Revolutionary Movements in World History: From 1750 to the Present*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
2. DeFronzo, James. *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011.
3. Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
4. Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
5. Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
6. Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and participation – 15%
2. Response paper to one of the sessions – 25%
3. Exposé based on one optional reading or film – 25%
4. Final paper and participation in research symposium – 35%

PROGRAM (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

HISTORY

§1. Introduction

8/25 and 8/27

Required

Hannah Arendt, Hannah, *On Revolution* (Introduction and Chapter 1).

Optional

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*

Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*

Raymond Williams, "Revolution" in *Keywords*

9/1 Labor Day, No Class and 9/3 Class Cancelled

§2. Words and Things

9/8 and 9/10

Required

Arendt, Hannah, *On Revolution* (Chapters 2-3)

Condorcet, "On Revolution: On the Meaning of the Word 'Revolutionary'" in *Political Writings*

Optional

Film: Andrzej Wajda, *Danton*, 1983

Krishan Kumar, "Revolution" in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*

Félix Gilbert, "Revolution" in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*

Karl Griewank, "Emergence of the Concept of Revolution" in *Revolution*

Keith Michael Baker, "Revolution" in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, Vol. 2, *The Political Culture of the French Revolution*

Reinhardt Koselleck, "Historical Criteria of the Modern Concept of Revolution" in *Futures Past*

Alain Rey, "Révolution", *histoire d'un mot*

Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848*

§3. Toward a Radical History of Revolution

9/15 and 9/17

Required

Arendt, Hannah, *On Revolution* (Chapters 4-6)

Optional

Film: Robert Enrico and Richard Heffron, *La révolution française*, 2011 (no English subtitles)

Eric Hobsbawm, "Hannah Arendt on Revolution" in *Revolutionaries*

Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution*

Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*

David Armitage, "Every Great Revolution Is a Civil War"

Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*

David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840*

Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*

Robert Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*

SOCIETY

§4. What Is a Social Revolution?

9/22 and 9/24

Required

François Furet, "Commentary"

Declaration of Independence

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

Haitian Declaration of Independence

Optional

François Furet, "L'idée française de la révolution"

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

George Comninel, "The French Revolution as Bourgeois Revolution: Orthodoxy and Challenge" in *Rethinking the French Revolution*

Neil Davidson, "Revisionism: The Bourgeois Revolutions Did Not Take Place" in *How*

Revolutionary Were the Bourgeois Revolutions?
Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le tiers-état?*
Stathis Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Kant to Marx*
Gary Kates, Ed., *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*
Nikki R. Keddie, Ed., *Debating Revolutions*
John Foran, David Lane, and Andreja Zivkovic, Eds., *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World: Social Identities, Globalization, and Modernity*

§5. Political Subjectivities: Class, Gender, Race

9/29 and 10/1

Required

Condorcet, "On Slavery" and "On the Emancipation of Women" in *Political Writings*
Mary Wohlstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (prefatory letter and chapters 1-4, or p. 67-155)

Optional

Valentine Moghadam, "Modernizing Women: Reforms, Revolutions, and the Woman Question" in *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*
Joan Landes, "The History of Feminism: Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
Olympe de Gouges, "Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne" in *Oeuvres*
David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*
Joan Scott, "The Uses of Imagination: Olympe de Gouges in the French Revolution" in *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*
Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class*
Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution*

§6. Revolutionary Propositions and Their Consequences

10/6 and 10/8

Etienne Balibar, "Citizen Subject"

Optional

Jacques Derrida, "Declarations of Independence"
Etienne Balibar, "The Proposition of Equaliberty" and "New Reflections on Equaliberty: Two Lessons"
Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders, *Socialist Thought: A Documentary History*
Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*
Karl Marx, *Capital*
Rosa Luxemburg, *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*
V.I. Lenin, *Essential Works of Lenin*
Clara Zetkin, "Lenin on the Women's Question"
Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*

Semester Recess (10/13-10/17)

AGENCY

§7. Revolutions Made and Unmade

10/20 and 10/22

Required

Jack A. Goldstone, "Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation"
Karl Marx, "After the Revolution: Marx Debates Bakunin" and "The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850" in *The Marx-Engels Reader*
Patrick's Presentation

Optional

Mikhail Bakunin, "Revolutionary Catechism"

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*

Saba Mahmood, "Agency, Gender, and Embodiment" in *Politics of Piety*

James DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions" in *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*

John Foran, Ed., *Theorizing Revolution*

Jack Martin, Jeff Sugarman, Janice Thompson, *Psychology and the Question of Agency*

Jack Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*

§8. Toward a Multi-Agential Theory of Revolution

10/27 and 10/29

Required

Murray Bookchin, "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought"

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (selection)

Optional

Cornelius Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings*, Vol. 1-3

Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*

Margaret S. Archer, *Culture and Agency*

E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*

Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*

Films: Peter Watkins, *La commune*, 2000; Sergei Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925 and *October*, 1928

§9. Political Efficacy

11/3 and 11/5

Required

Thomas Frank, "To the Precinct Station: How Theory Met Practice... and Drove It Absolutely Crazy" in *The Baffler* no. 21

David Graeber, "Revolutions in Reverse" in *Revolutions in Reverse*

Optional

Cornelius Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings*, Vol. 1-3

Paul Cardan, a.k.a. Cornelius Castoriadis, "Redefining Revolution"

David Graeber, "A Practical Utopian's Guide to the Coming Collapse"

David Graeber, *Direct Action*

Johann Hari, "Protest Works: Just Look at the Proof," *The Independent*, October 29, 2010.

INTERMEZZO

§10. Writing Revolution

11/10 and 11/12

Required

Victor Hugo, "Reply to a Bill of Indictment"

Colin's Presentation

Optional

Victor Hugo, *Ninety-Three*

Victor Hugo, *Bug-Jargal*

Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

Leo Tolstoy, "Epilogue: Part Two" in *War and Peace*
Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

NORMATIVITY

§11. Toward an Immanent Theory of Normativity

11/17 and 11/19

Required

Pierre Macherey, *In a Materialist Way* (selection)

Franz Kafka, "Before the Law"

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Immanence and Desire" in *Kafka*
Abigail's Presentation

Optional

Michel Foucault, "Preface to Transgression"

Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*

Jacques Bouveresse, *La force de la règle*

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*

Jacques Derrida, "Before the Law" in *Acts of Literature*

§12. Metanormativity, Historical Emergence and Agency without Agents

11/24 (11/26 Thanksgiving Recess, No Class)

Required

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (selection)

Paola's Presentation

Optional

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

THE CONTEMPORARY CONJUNCTURE

§13. Topological Capture: Thinking the Present

12/1 and 12/3

Required

Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History* (first half of the book)

Film: *Bahrain: Shouting in the Dark*

< <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/2011/08/201184144547798162.html>>

Optional

Andrew Whitehead, "Eric Hobsbawm on 2011"

Perry Anderson, "On the Concatenation in the Arab World"

Jürgen Habermas, "The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies"

Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*

Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Declaration*

Slavoj Žižek, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*

§14. Mapping the Contemporary Revolutionary Conjuncture

12/8 and 12/10

12/8: Submit outline of final paper

Required

Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History* (second half of the book)

Optional

Alain Badiou, *Philosophy for Militants*

Noam Chomsky, *Occupy*

Tavis Smiley and Cornel West, *The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto*

Paul Mason, *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions*

Slavoj Žižek, *Demanding the Impossible*

12/12

Post rough draft of final paper and share with all members of the class

12/15

Comment on at least one rough draft

12/17

Final paper deadline (please submit electronically)