

“The American Revolution was not a common event. Its effects and consequences have already been awful over a great part of the globe. And when and where are they to cease? But what do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American War? The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the People. A change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations....”

—John Adams, Letter to Hezekiah Niles, February 13, 1818

Political Science 7991 Seminar: Revolution Spring 2021

When is political change so extensive or so dramatic that it ought to be called a “revolution”? When is revolution justified, and when not? What makes a revolution successful, and why do some attempts at revolution fail? What is the difference between revolution and reform? Is political change sufficient to define a revolution, or must there be social change as well? Can a change in customs or ways of thinking constitute a revolution even if it is accompanied by little or no violence and if it is achieved through established institutions? Can revolutions proceed continuously over a long period of time, or must there be a moment of revolutionary choice? Is revolutionary change always in one direction—for example, towards greater liberty or greater equality—or is revolution simply “regime change,” perhaps cyclical? Is revolution to be hoped for, worked for, or guarded against?

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Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00-11:30 am;
Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 pm; and by appointment

Books available for purchase:

- Plato, *Republic*, tr. Bloom (Basic) [ISBN 9780465094080] [*recommended*]
- Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. Lord, 2d ed. (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226921846]
- Sallust, *Cataline's War*, tr. Woodman (Penguin) [ISBN 9780140449488]
- Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford) [ISBN 9780192803207]
- Augustine, *City of God*, tr. Bettenson (Penguin) [ISBN 9780140448948]
- Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, tr. Mansfield & Tarcov (Chicago) [ISBN 9780226500362]
- “Junius Brutus,” *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, or A Defense of Liberty against Tyrants* (Canon Press) [ISBN 9781952410529]
- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford) [ISBN 9780199539024]
- Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (Dover) [ISBN 9780486408934] [*recommended*]
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Oxford) [ISBN 9780199555468] [*recommended*]
- Tocqueville, *The Ancien Regime and the Revolution*, tr. Bevan (Penguin) [ISBN 9780141441641]

- Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (International) [ISBN 9780717800568]
- Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Penguin) [ISBN 9780143039907]
- Albert Camus, *Caligula and 3 Other Plays* (Vintage) [ISBN 9780394702070]
- Tom Stoppard, *The Coast of Utopia: Voyage, Shipwreck, Salvage* (Grove Press) [ISBN 9780802143402]

Course requirements:

- Attendance at all class sessions and participation in discussions [unexcused absences will be penalized; those required to quarantine should attend via Zoom with cameras on, unless too ill to participate]
- Five 500-word papers on the assigned reading, due before class (& read aloud), as follows: 1/20, 2/3, 2/17, 3/3, and 3/17 *or* 1/27, 2/10, 2/24, 3/10, and 3/24 [40%]
- Presentation of research (4/7, 14, or 21) [10%]
- Research paper, 15-18 pages, on an approved topic (topic due 4/2; paper due 4/29) [50%]

Grading scale: A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%), etc.

SYLLABUS:

I. The Classical Political Science of Revolution

- Wed., 1/13 Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, III.70-85; IV.46-48
David Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas*, ch. 1, 4
- Wed., 1/20 Plato, *Republic*, books VIII and IX (through 580c)
Aristotle, *Politics*, book V

II. The Politics of Rome

- Wed., 1/27 Sallust, *Cataline's War*
Plutarch, *Lives* (Caesar, Cato the Younger, Cicero)
- Wed., 2/3 Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (excerpts)
- Wed., 2/10 Augustine, *The City of God* (excerpts)
- Wed., 2/17 Machiavelli, *Discourses* (excerpts)

III. Modern Revolutions

- Wed., 2/24 "Junius Brutus," *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*
John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, II.19
Charles S. Hyneman & Donald S. Lutz, *American Political Writing* (excerpts)

Wed., 3/3 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (excerpts)
 Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (excerpts)
 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpts)

Wed., 3/10 Tocqueville, *The Ancien Regime and the Revolution*

Wed., 3/17 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

IV. Revolution After the End of History

Wed., 3/24 Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*

Wed., 3/31 Albert Camus, *The Just Assassins (Les Justes)*
 Tom Stoppard, *The Coast of Utopia Trilogy: Voyage, Shipwreck, Salvage*

V. Workshop: Presentation of Research

Wed., 4/7 Presenting:

Wed., 4/14 Presenting:

Wed., 4/21 Presenting:

Thurs., 4/29 **PAPERS DUE**