

Tufts University
Fall 2018
Wed., 1:30-4:00
Bromfield-Pearson 006

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Office hours: Wed., 10:00-12:00
Packard Hall 109

**PS 157 – Seminar: Markets, Morals, and Religion:
The Political Theory of David Hume and Adam Smith**

This course will examine the writings of two major thinkers who happened to be best friends for most of their adult lives: David Hume and Adam Smith. Hume is widely considered to be the greatest philosopher ever to write in the English language, and Smith is almost certainly history's most famous theorist of commercial society. As leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, they did much to inspire our way of life in the modern West – for instance, our liberal democratic politics, our market capitalist economies, our embrace of technological progress and scientific inquiry, and our toleration of religious pluralism. Thus, a study of their writings allows us to examine some of the original arguments for our way of life, as well as the limitations that these thinkers themselves placed on their arguments. Through an examination of some of their major works, we will analyze, compare, and assess their views of reason, morality, politics, commerce, religion, and the good life.

Course Format and Requirements:

By far the most important requirement of the course is that you complete all assigned readings *carefully* and *before class*. My recommendation is to go over the readings relatively quickly once, to see what topics are covered and to pick out the main ideas, and then do them again, slowly and carefully, taking notes about what seems important or intriguing and about what you don't fully understand. These notes will also help immensely in generating useful class discussion. To facilitate reading, I will hand out a list of study questions on each text; these questions can be used to guide your reading but are not exhaustive.

Attendance is required; more than one absence without a proper excuse will affect your participation grade, and absence from four or more classes will automatically result in a failing grade. Students arriving late will generally be counted as absent.

The class will be conducted in seminar format, and you should plan on participating every day. High-level participation requires that you grapple with the central ideas and arguments of the readings ahead of time, and bring to class any questions or confusions you might have. Note that class participation is not simply a "fudge factor" in determining your grade; a key component of the course is learning to articulate your thoughts/questions and to engage in our conversation about the issues at hand. You can expect to be called on if you do not volunteer. For those who feel nervous about talking in class, please come see me early in the semester so that we can develop strategies for effective participation. You should always bring the relevant text to class.

The use of laptops/tablets in class is permitted but discouraged. If you do use one, you may not use it for any purpose other than to look at the readings (when they are on Canvas) and to take notes: absolutely no email, Facebook, ESPN, etc. These non-class-related activities are

disrespectful to me and your classmates and distracting for those sitting near you. I recommend disconnecting your computer from the internet during class to help avoid the temptation. You may not use your phone for any purpose during class time; if an emergency arises and you need to do so, please step out of the room first. If I see you using your computer for a non-class-related activity or your phone for any reason, I will lower your participation grade by 10 percentage points (each time).

In addition to careful reading, regular attendance, and thoughtful class participation, the requirements of the course include one response paper (5-7 pages), weekly posts on Canvas, and a final paper (15-20 pages).

Beginning the third week of the semester (September 19), one student will write a 5-7 page response paper on each week's readings. You are required to write one such paper during the course of the semester; I will hand out a sign-up sheet in class on September 12. The paper will be due the Monday before class (by midnight), and it should be posted on Canvas (under "Discussions") in order to make it available to the other members of the seminar. Papers posted after midnight will be penalized by 10 percentage points; those posted after 6 am on Tuesday will be penalized by 20 points; and those posted after noon on Tuesday will receive a zero. I will hand out a set of guidelines for writing these papers.

Every week, the other students are required to post a response to the paper on Canvas. (You are allowed to miss one of these posts without a penalty; more than one will count against your participation grade.) These posts don't need to be extensive – a paragraph or two will suffice – but they should offer a clear, concise, and thoughtful response to the argument presented in the paper. Is the argument well supported? Is it convincing? Does the paper consider the most serious potential counter-arguments? These responses must be posted by midnight the night before our class meeting (i.e. Tuesday night) in order to receive credit. Obviously, in order to formulate a thoughtful response you will have to have read both the student paper and that week's readings. Your posts should generally cite specific passages in the readings. While these are online posts, you should write them with the same care and in the same style as you would a normal paper – in other words, include citations, no writing in "text speak," and so on.

The final paper (15-20 pages) will be analytical in nature and won't require any research beyond the course readings. The guidelines for the response papers also apply here, except that in the final paper you can focus on any of the semester's readings. The paper should tackle a genuinely provocative question – i.e., it should center on an important issue, and there should be no "easy" answer to it, or at least thoughtful arguments on both sides. You must begin by writing a proposal in which you clearly lay out the question/problem that your paper will explore and present some preliminary suggestions as to how your argument will proceed. These proposals should be around 1-2 pages and are due in class on November 28. You will then meet with me to discuss your proposal on or around Friday, November 30. A hard copy of the final draft of the paper is due in my box in Packard Hall by noon on Monday, December 17. Late papers will be penalized by 5 percentage points for each day they are late.

Papers will be given a numerical grade on the following scale:

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59 and below

Grades will be determined as follows:

Class participation (including weekly Canvas posts)	25 %
Response paper	25 %
Final paper	50 %

The university's policy on academic honesty will be strictly adhered to. For more information on plagiarism and the proper citing of sources, see:

<http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center/what-we-offer/writing-support/avoiding>

Required Texts:

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg, second edition (Hackett, 1993). ISBN: 9780872202290.

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. J. B. Schneewind (Hackett, 1983). ISBN: 9780915145454.

David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Liberty Fund, 1987). ISBN: 9780865970564.

David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Richard H. Popkin, second edition (Hackett, 1998). ISBN: 9780872204027.

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. A. L. Macfie and D. D. Raphael (Liberty Fund, 1982). ISBN: 9780865970120.

Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (Liberty Fund, 1981). Two volumes. ISBN: 9780865970083.

These books are available at the bookstore; please buy the editions listed here. All other required readings will be made available on Canvas.

Recommended reading:

Dennis C. Rasmussen, *The Infidel and the Professor: David Hume, Adam Smith, and the Friendship That Shaped Modern Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2017). ISBN: 9780691177014.

Course Schedule and Readings:

9/5 Introduction

9/12 Some Relevant Background

René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, part 4 (pp. 126-31)

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chapters 2, 5, 8 (§95-101, 113-22),
19 (§221-31)(pp. 8-14, 18-30, 52-54, 61-65, 111-16)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *First Discourse*, prefatory material and part 2 (pp. 4-10, 23-36)

Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (pp. 242-54)

(All of these readings can be found on Canvas.)

9/19 Hume's Skepticism

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, sections 2, 4, 5 (part 1), 10-11, second
half of 12 (pp. 9-13, 15-31, 72-102, 109-14)

A Treatise of Human Nature, conclusion of Book 1 (Canvas, pp. 171-78)

9/26 Hume's Moral Theory

An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, sections 1-3, 5, 7, 9, appendices 1-3,
and "A Dialogue" (pp. 13-34, 38-51, 61-68, 72-98, 107-19)

10/3 Smith's Moral Theory

The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 9-26, 67-91, 109-19, 134-38, 156-61, 187-93, 200-
211

(Make sure you're reading the text and not the editors' introduction.)

10/10 Hume on Commerce and the Arts and Sciences

"Of the Standard of Taste," "Of Refinement in the Arts," "Of the Jealousy of Trade," "Of
Civil Liberty" (*Essays*, pp. 226-49, 268-80, 327-31, 87-96), and *History of
England*, selection from volume 2 (Canvas, pp. 518-25)

10/17 Smith on Commerce, Morality, and Happiness

The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 50-66, 149-56, 179-87, 212-16, 227-34

10/24 Smith on Commerce and the State

The Wealth of Nations, pp. 10-30, 82-101, 330-49, 452-56, 687-88, 723-31, 781-88, 814-
16

(Again, make sure you're reading the text and not the editors' introduction.)

10/31 Hume on Politics

“Of Parties in General,” “Of the Original Contract,” “Of Passive Obedience,” “Of the Origin of Government,” “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth” (*Essays*, pp. 54-63, 465-92, 37-41, 512-29)

11/7 Smith on Politics and Progress

The Wealth of Nations, pp. 689-723, 376-427

11/14 Hume on Religion

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, introduction, parts 1-3, 5, 9-12 (pp. 1-27, 34-38, 54-89)

11/21 No class – Thanksgiving

11/28 Hume vs. Smith on the Separation of Church and State

Frederick Whelan, selection from “Church Establishments, Liberty & Competition in Religion” (Canvas, pp. 157-60)

Hume, “Of Superstition and Enthusiasm” (*Essays*, pp. 73-79) and *The History of England*, selection from volume 3 (Canvas, pp. 134-37)

Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, pp. 788-99

Proposal for final paper due in class

11/30 **Individual meetings with me about papers**
(Friday)

12/5 Hume on the Good Life

“The Epicurean,” “The Stoic,” “The Platonist,” “The Sceptic,” “Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion,” “My Own Life,” Smith’s letter to Strahan (*Essays*, pp. 138-80, 3-8, xxxi-xlix)

12/17 **Final paper due by noon (in my box in Packard Hall)**
(Monday)