

**PHL 522: SOCIAL/POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
HISTORY OF SOVEREIGNTY**

Kevin Thompson

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This seminar is an examination of one of the central concepts in modern political philosophy: sovereignty. Its approach is both historical and systematic. It studies the modern origin and the central problems in the development of this concept and, in doing so, it explores the questions of the justification and nature of the sovereign authority of the state.

Sovereignty, at its core, is the supreme authority of the state to rule over its citizenry within a set of declared territorial boundaries. The concept initially took shape in sixteenth century European thought, principally in the work of Jean Bodin. Over the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, two issues propelled its development: the question of its justification, whether it required appeal to some transcendent foundation or merely to society itself, and the question of its structure, that is, is it necessarily one or is it divisible.

The seminar is divided into four parts, the first three serving to set up the more focused study of the final section. Part I examines the historical roots of the concept of sovereignty in the work of Jean Bodin. Part II briefly reviews the absolutist tradition as it is embodied in the thought of Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf and the mixed constitutionalist tradition as it was articulated by John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, and James Madison. Part III notes the decisive role that Jean-Jacques Rousseau played in this history. And Part IV concludes the seminar with an exploration of an important case study where both the justification and nature of sovereignty are at stake: the political theories of German Idealism as developed in the work of Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and the early (unpublished) political commentary of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

TEXTS

Jean Bodin, *On Sovereignty* (Cambridge, 1992, 0521349923)

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge, 0521567971)

Samuel Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law* (Cambridge, 0521359805)

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge, 0521357306)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *'The Social Contract' and Other Later Political Writings* (Cambridge, 0521424461)

Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge, 0521654084)

J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right* (Cambridge, 0521575915)

REQUIREMENTS

One thematic paper (10-15pp., 3000-4500 words), due at Noon, Friday, 28 November 2014

READING SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER

I. THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE MODERN CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY

11: Introduction: Method and Concept

Jean Bodin, *The Six Books of the Commonwealth* [1576], Book I, Chaps. 8 (On Sovereignty) & 10 (On the True Marks of Sovereignty) & Book II, Chaps. 1 (On the Kinds of States in General) & 5 (Whether it is Lawful to Make an Attempt Upon the Tyrant's Life)
[*On Sovereignty*, 1-126, esp. 1-8, 46-88, & 89-126]

II. ABSOLUTISM & MIXED CONSTITUTIONALISM

18: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* [1651], Letter of Dedication, Introduction, Part I [Of Man], Chaps. XIII-XV & Part II [Of Commonwealth], Chaps. XVII-XXI, XXVI, XXX, & A Review, and Conclusion [3-4, 9-11, 86-111, 117-154, 183-200, 231-244, & 483-491]

Samuel Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law* [1672], Book II, chaps. 1, 5-11, 13, & 15-18 [115-119, 132-154, 158-162, & 166-177]

25: John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* [1689], Book II, Chapters I-V, VII-XIV, XVIII, & XIX [267-302, 318-380, & 398-428]

Charles-Louis Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* [1748], Book XI [on reserve]

Publius (James Madison), *The Federalist* [1787-1788], Papers 47-51 [on reserve]

OCTOBER

III. THE ROUSSEAUN MOMENT

2: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* [1762], Book I-Book II, Chapter 6, & Book III [39-//??//]

IV. IDEALISM AND REPUBLICANISM: KANT, FICHTE, & HEGEL

9: Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but It is of No Use in Practice" [1793] *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project* [1795]
[*Practical Philosophy*, 273-309 (esp. 279-281 & 290-304), & 316-351 (esp. 317-331)]

J. G. Fichte, "Review of Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*" [1796] [on reserve]

16: J. G. Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right* [1796], Introduction & First Main Division (Deduction of the Concept of Right) [3-52]

23: *Foundations of Natural Right*, Second Main Division (Deduction of the Applicability of the Concept of Right) & Third Main Division (Systematic Application of the Concept of Right) [53-164, esp. 79-84 & 133-164]

30: Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Moral: Part I: Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right* [1797], Preface, Introduction to the Metaphysics of Morals, Introduction to the Doctrine of Right, & Part I: Private Right [*Practical Philosophy*, 363-452, esp. 365-397, 401-434, & 443-452]

NOVEMBER

6: *The Doctrine of Right*, Part II: Public Right & Appendix [*Practical Philosophy*, 453-506, esp. 455-492 & 504-506 (Note: Read Section I [The Right of a State] in the following order: §§ 44, 43, 45, 48, 46, 49, 47, 51, 52, & General Remark)]

13: Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, Part II or Applied Natural Right [1797], Third Section of the Doctrine of Political Right: On the Constitution [249-263]

G. W. F. Hegel, "The German Constitution" [composed, 1799-1802] [excerpts, on reserve]