

PHL 657, Spring Quarter 2015
The Subject of Politics II: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3:00-4:00 and by appointment

This course is the second part of a two quarter seminar on the subject of politics in the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This quarter we will finish our reading of *Emile*, continuing to focus on the issues of nature, history, desire, subjectivity, citizenship, rights, equality, and freedom. Of particular concern will be Rousseau's understanding of the move from the *amour de soi* to the *amour propre* wherein the complex relations between nature and culture, the individual and the political, reason and desire, and morality and freedom come into play. Supplementing our reading of *Emile* will be excursions into *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* as well as his respective letters to Beaumont and Franquières wherein Rousseau offers further reflections on many of the issues he is grappling with in *Emile*, most notably on lying, the sense of one's own existence, materialism, and the status of religion.

Finishing *Emile*, we will then turn to *The Social Contract*. Our reading of *The Social Contract* will continue to focus on the issues outlined above, but now in relation to Rousseau's understanding of the law, the general will, the role of the legislator, and nature of the political subjectivity that informs Rousseau's understanding of the sovereign citizen. Indeed, a central focus of our reading is to see how Rousseau's analysis of the *amour de soi* and the *amour propre* in his early writings develops into a notion of political subjectivity as sovereign citizen in *The Social Contract*. Alongside *The Social Contract*, we will read Rousseau's *The Geneva Manuscript*, *Discourse on Political Economy*, and *Considerations of the Government of Poland*.

We will also read essays by contemporary political theorists—Althusser, Balibar, Kaufman—which address Rousseau and the issues of our seminar.

Required Texts

Rousseau, *Emile*, translated by Allen Bloom, Basic Books, 1979

_____ *The Social Contract* in *Rousseau: The Social Contract and other later political writings*, edited by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge UP.

_____ *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Penguin, 1979

_____ *The Geneva Manuscript* in *Rousseau: The Social Contract and other later political writings*.

_____ *Discourse on Political Economy* in *Rousseau: The Social Contract and other later political writings*

_____ *Letter to Beaumont*, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Letter to Beaumont, Letters from the Mountain, and Related Writings*, translated by Christopher Kelly and Judith R. Bush, Dartmouth College Press, 2001

Althusser, Louis, *Politics and History, Part II: Rousseau, The Social Contract*, translated by Ben Brewster, New York: Verso, Radical Thinkers, 2007.

Balibar, Etienne, "What is a Politics of the Rights of Man?" in *Masses, Classes, Ideas*, translated by James Swenson, New York: Routledge, 1994.

Kaufman, Sarah "Rousseau's Phallogocratic Ends" *Hypatia*, vol. 3, no. 3 (fall, 1988)

Recommended: De Man, Paul, "Allegory of Reading (*Profession de foi*)" and "Promises (*Social Contract*)" in *Allegories of Reading*, New Haven: Yale U, 1979.

Recommended: Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Spivak, Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1974, (pages 165-194)

Recommended: Ranciere, "Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?" *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103:2/3, Spring/Summer 2004.

REQUIREMENTS OF COURSE: Students are required to attend and participate in the seminar. Also required of each student is a protocol and a seminar presentation. In addition, students enrolled only in the spring quarter of the Rousseau seminar have the option of taking a final examination or turning in an 8-9 page essay, typed, double spaced; this paper should be a polished version of the class presentation; students who enrolled in the first quarter of the Rousseau seminar (winter 2015) are required to turn in their 15-18 page essay, which will fulfill the requirements for both quarters of the seminar.

Protocols should be no more than 2 pages, typed single-spaced; the protocol should offer a brief organized summary of the topics and issues discussed in the previous seminar, concluding with questions that remain unaddressed or topics that need further consideration. Copies of the protocol should be brought for all seminar participants.

Presentations should offer a discussion of the assigned reading, connecting the reading to the arguments and topics found in the other texts assigned for that meeting. For example, the presentation on *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Walk Four, should connect Rousseau's reflections on truth and lying to the issue of deception in *Emile*, especially Book Three. The presentation may also examine other topics and arguments that appear relevant to the seminar. **Presentations should be 3-5 pages, typed double-spaced.** Presentations must be circulated to all participants a day prior to the seminar **(Wednesday by 5:00)** in order that participants have an opportunity to read and think about the presentation in advance of the seminar discussion.

OUTLINE OF COURSE AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

April 2: *Emile*, Books One and Two
Reveries of the Solitary Walker, Walks Three and Five, (on education [III], and on the sense of existence [V])

- April 9:** *Emile*, Books Three and Four
Presentation: *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Walk Four, (On Truth and Lying)
- April 16** *Emile*, Book Four
Presentation: *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Walks Three, Six, and Eight (On Self-Love)
Recommended: Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 165-194 (On pity and the imagination in the *Essay on the Origins of Language* and in *Emile*)
- April 23** *Emile*, Book Four
“Pastoral Letter of his Grace the Archbishop of Paris” and “Letter to Beaumont” in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Letter to Beaumont, Letters Written from the Mountain, and Related Writings*
Presentation: “Letter to Franquières” (in Gourevitch, *Rousseau: The Social Contract and other later political writings*, (pp. 272-285)
Recommended: Paul de Man, “Allegory of Reading (Profession de foi) in *Allegories of Reading*
- April 30** *Emile*, Book Five
Presentation: Kaufman, *Rousseau’s Phallogocratic Ends*
- May 7** *Discourse on Political Economy*
Guest Lecture: Anna Yeatman, University of Western Sydney, Whitlam Institute, “On Political Sovereignty”
- May 14** *The Social Contract*, Part 1
Presentation: *The Geneva Manuscript*
- May 21** *The Social Contract*, Parts II and III
Presentation: Althusser, *Politics and History, Part II: Rousseau*, **Justin Boyd/Bradley Ramos**
Recommended: De Man, “Promises (*The Social Contract*) in *Allegories of Reading*
- May 28** **No Class—Professor at SWIP Conference (Make-up class on June 11)**
- June 4** *The Social Contract*, Parts III and IV
Presentation: “Considerations on the Government of Poland and Its Projected Reformation,” in Gourevitch, *Rousseau: The Social Contract and Later Political Writings*
- June 11** *The Social Contract*, Part IV
Presentation: Balibar, “What is a Politics of the Rights of Man?” in *Masses, Classes, Ideas*

Recommended: Ranciere, "Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?"
The South Atlantic Quarterly, 103:2/3, Spring/Summer 2004.

June 19

FINAL EXAMINATION OR PAPER DUE