

# ENGLISH / MAFL 741

## Approaching the Modern II: Modernity and Sovereignty

Spring Semester  
M 5:30-8:10  
Curtin 284  
3 Credits  
Class Website: [d2l.uwm.edu](http://d2l.uwm.edu)

Professor Peter Y. Paik  
Office: 786 Curtin Hall  
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3 PM  
E-mail: [pypaik@uwm.edu](mailto:pypaik@uwm.edu)  
phone: 229-6299

### Description

The concept of sovereignty refers to the supreme law-making power of a people, a government, a nation, or even an individual. In recent years, with the advent of a seemingly open-ended war on religious extremism and the practice of indefinite detention of enemy combatants, the idea of sovereignty has received renewed and vigorous attention from political theorists. This course will examine the key ideas of the thinkers whose works have been formative in the emergence of modern states and in developing the modern idea of sovereignty, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Bodin, and Baruch Spinoza. We will explore such topics as the idea of the social contract, the powers of the popular will, the defense of the authoritarian state, the division between private and public spheres, the persistence of theological concepts in modern accounts of sovereignty, the problem of the decision, and states of emergency in which the laws are suspended or dissolved.

### Requirements

There will be one short paper (4-6 pages) and a final paper (12-15 pages), in addition to occasional responses to the readings and discussion.

We will begin each class with a brief overview of the reading given by one or more members of the class. This introduction should be no longer than 5-7 minutes, and its aim should be to develop questions for the class to discuss. In addition to formulating questions, you may also select passages from the readings to examine more closely.

### D2L

I will e-mail you any changes to the syllabus and schedule of screenings over d2l. Assignments and other relevant materials will also be posted on the site, which you may print out at home or at the library.

**Required Texts** (available at Woodland Pattern Book Center, 720 East Locust, b/w Fratney and Pierce streets, tel. 263-5001):

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and The Discourses*. Trans. G. D. H. Cole. New York: Knopf, 1993
- Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*. Trans. Michael Silverthorne and Jonathan Israel. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Trans. Douglas Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*. Trans. Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Other readings will be available on d2l and/or e-reserve.

Schedule:

- Jan. 26 Introduction, plus readings on d21:  
Judith Shklar, "Putting Cruelty First"  
Michael Gillespie, "Death and Desire: War and Bourgeoisification in the Thought of Hegel"  
Peter Thiel, "The Straussian Moment"
- Feb. 2 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (selections), d21
- Feb. 9 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*  
Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (selections), d21
- Feb. 16 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
- Feb. 23 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*: Revolution on Corcyra, The Melian Dialogue, d21  
Reinhart Koselleck, from *Critique and Crisis*, d21  
Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (selections), d21
- Mar. 2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*
- Mar. 9 Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, Preface and Chapters 1-8
- Mar. 16 Spring Break
- Mar. 23 Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, Chapters 9-20
- Mar. 30 Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitude* (selections), d21  
Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (selections), d21  
Etienne Balibar, "Jus-Pactum-Lex: On the Constitution of the Subject in the Theologico-Political Treatise," d21  
Optional: Alexandre Matheron, "The Theoretical Foundation of Democracy in Spinoza and Hobbes," d21
- Apr. 6 Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," d21  
Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" d21  
Judith Butler, "Critique, Coercion, and Sacred Life," d21
- Apr. 13 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*  
Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, d21
- Apr. 20 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 1-158
- Apr. 27 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, pp. 158-end
- May 4 Georges Bataille, from *The Accursed Share*, d21  
Alberto Moreiras, "A God Without Sovereignty," d21  
Slavoj Zizek, from *The Parallax View*, d21