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PHL 469.01: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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Philosophy 469

Jean-Jacques Rousseau¹

Fall 2021 – Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:20p LA 304

Prof. Bridget Clarke
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OH tba

Required Texts

The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, tr. and ed. by John Scott (University of Chicago, 2012)

No e-books allowed. Please use the Scott edition.

Other Texts We'll Be Reading. (I'll Supply Them.)

Sheryll Cashin, *Loving: Interracial Intimacy in America* (Beacon Press, 2017)

Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Houghton-Mifflin, 2005)

Heather McGhee, *The Sum of Us* (Random House, 2021)

Jonathan Metzler, *Dying of Whiteness* (Basic Books, 2019)

Toni Morrison, "Sarah Lawrence Commencement Address" in *The Source of Self-Regard* (Knopf, 2019 [1988]).

Kahlil Muhammad, "The Barbaric History of Sugar in America," *NYT Magazine* (2019)

Rousseau, "Observations by Jean-Jacques Rousseau of Geneva" [to Stanislas, King of Poland] (1751) in *Rousseau The Discourses and other Early Political Writings*, tr. and ed. by Victor Gourevitch, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2019)

Rousseau, "Preface to *Narcissus*" (1752) in Gourevitch (2019)

Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food* (Penguin, 2008)

Frederick Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Critique of Inequality* (Cambridge, 2015)

Requirements and Evaluation

[Grad students, please see me]

Attendance/ Participation: 20% (includes posts, quizzes, presentations, and other activities)

Journal: 25%

2 Short Papers: 35% (10%, 25%)

Take-home Final: 20%

This is a collaborative seminar. Your presence and preparation are essential. Everyone gets two absences (no excuse needed). After that your final grade goes down by one interval with each additional absence. I'll naturally make allowances for Covid as appropriate.

¹ Columbus: 1451-1506; Montaigne: 1533-1592; Shakespeare: 1564-1616; Galileo: 1564-1662; Hobbes: 1588-1679; Descartes: 1596-1650; Locke: 1632-1704; Hume: 1711-1776; **Rousseau 1712-1778**; Adam Smith: 1723-1790; Kant: 1724-1804; William Blake: 1757-1827; Mary Wollstonecraft: 1759-1797; Industrial Revolution 1760-1840; American Revolution: 1776-1783; French Revolution: 1789-1799

I don't like to accept late work. Please note in particular that you must bring a draft of your first and second papers to the workshops *in class* on 9/28 and 11/16 to receive credit for those papers.

Please see me *as soon as possible* if something comes up that threatens to interfere with your work for the course.

Academic Misconduct

Please don't try to take credit for work you didn't do, hand in work that you already submitted for another course, or otherwise attempt to game the system. The [Student Conduct Code](#) identifies the main forms of misconduct. For starters, I'll give an "F" to any work that violates the code. Let me know if you ever have questions about whether something is allowable.

Disability Modifications

Please let me know at the beginning of the term if you'll need accommodations from the Office for Disability Equity (ODE, formerly DSS). If you need to take your exams through ODE, you must arrange this in advance, and you must provide verification of your disability from ODE. You can find more information on the [Office for Disability Equality website](#).

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1

Aug. 31 Kick-Off

Sept. 2 Damrosch. **Quiz on reading.**

Week 2*

Begin Journal Entries this week. No need to do an entry on Comte-Sponville.

Sept. 7 First Discourse², Part I in Scott, including the title page, "Notice" and "Preface."

Sept. 9 First Discourse, Part II in Scott; Comte-Sponville, "Simplicity." **Post** one of your responses to the Rousseau reading for today on [Moodle](#). Please post *before* we meet.

Week 3

Remember to do your Journal Entries

Sept. 14 "Observations by Jean-Jacques Rousseau"

Sept. 16 "Preface to *Narcissus*"

Week 4

Sept. 21 Pollan, *In Defense of Food* (excerpt)

Sept. 23 Muhammad, "The Brutal history of Sugar in America"

Week 5

Sept. 28 **Paper #1 draft due. Workshop**

Sept. 30 **Presentations**

Journals and Paper #1 final version due Friday October 1 by 5

Week 6*

No need to do Journal Entries this week.

Oct. 5 **Presentations continued**

² The nickname for Rousseau's *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* (1750)

Oct. 7 Neuhouser, "Introduction" *Rousseau's Critique of Inequality*; Second Discourse³,
"Preface" in Scott, 51-56; Morrison, "Commencement Address"

Week 7*

Resume Journal Entries this week

Oct. 12 Second Disc., First Part, 57-81 "...for him to live in society"; Notes IX, XI, and XIV

Oct. 14 Second Discourse, finish First Part; Note XV

Week 8

Oct. 19 Neuhouser, Ch. 1, 16-60. *Heads-up: This is more reading than usual. Quiz.*

Oct. 21 No Class

Week 9

Oct. 26 Second Discourse, Second Part, 91-104 "Let us return ... institution." **Quiz**

Oct. 28 Cashin, *Loving*, 27-50. **Post** one of your responses to this reading on Moodle before class.

Week 10

Nov. 2 Second Discourse, finish Second Part

Nov. 4 Neuhouser, Ch. 2, 61-78 "...that I am proposing here"

Week 11

Nov. 9 Finish Neuhouser Ch. 2, 78-108

Nov. 11 No Class. Veteran's Day

Week 12

Nov. 16 **Paper #2 draft due. Workshop**

Nov. 18 TBA

Paper #2 final version due Friday, November 19 by 5p

Week 13

Nov. 23 McGhee, pp. 3-39. **Post** one of your responses before our scheduled meeting time.

Nov. 25 **Thanksgiving**

Week 14

Nov. 30 Neuhouser, Ch. 4, 164-189 "...that Rousseau worries about)."

Dec. 2 Finish Neuhouser Ch. 4, 189-197

Week 15

Dec. 7 Tentatively: Metzl, pp. 285-286 and 1-20. **Post** one of your responses before we meet.

Dec. 9 TBA

Take-Home Essay and Journals due Friday December 17 by 4p. (Earlier if you can.)

³ The nickname for Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* (1754)

Journal Instructions

Preliminary

1. Get a notebook that you like.
2. Write your name on the notebook so I know it's yours.
3. Journal entries are required for every reading except the readings in week one and six i.e., you'll be doing them all the time.
4. Do your entry for each reading before we meet to discuss it, and while the reading is fresh in your mind.

Header

For each entry, please indicate the following at the top:

1. The number of the week
2. The date
3. The *specific* reading assignment

For example: Week 9, Oct. 26, Second Discourse, 91-104

Content

1. Report/Summary

Give your best (clearest, most accurate) summary of what took place in the assigned reading. What was discussed or defended? What conclusions, if any, were drawn? What examples or considerations figured prominently and to what end (what were they supposed to do)?

Write the summary so that if you needed to remember what happened in this stretch of text twenty years from now, it'd supply you with a pretty good snapshot. Be specific. Give page numbers.

Most summaries will need to be a substantial paragraph.

2. Questions

Note the outstanding questions you have about this specific reading, things you'd like to better understand, uncertainties. Take time to formulate these things clearly and to elaborate them if that seems called for. Be specific. Give page numbers.

The length of this section is going to vary. State the questions as precisely as you can. Some days you'll have more than others.

3. Responses

Note the things in this particular reading that elicited a strong response. Be specific. Give page numbers.

The length of this section will also vary. I'll normally expect to find two to three response-eliciting things (a., b., c.). Write a few sentences for each one, describing the response and making clear what you're responding to.

4. Other

This section is the catch-all for anything else you have to say. Use it as needed.

Sample Journal Page
Please be sure to follow this format

Week 9, Oct. 26, Second Discourse, 91-104

Report

In this section Rousseau discusses the evolution of language. He distinguishes three stages and claims that human beings did not fully come into being until they reached the second stage. He uses this idea to explain how...

Questions

I don't understand why he thinks written language is so important...(p. 94)

I wonder if he is serious or sarcastic when he says, on p. 98 that [] because it seems to go against his idea that....

I don't get the purpose of his discussion of Sparta on pages 101-103.

Responses

a. I was moved by his image of the boat on p. 92. It reminded me of

b. I get really frustrated when claims that “ ” (93). It seems like....

c. I like/dislike/find very strange the way he talks about children in this section. His description on pp. 102-103 captures how... and I'm not used to philosophers even thinking about children.

Other