

## PT 298 Hobbes' *Leviathan*

Tue/Thu 14-15:30

Seminar Leader: Ewa Atanassow

Guests: Aaron Tugendhaft (BCB); Richard Boyd (Georgetown); Yannis Evrigenis (Tufts); David Kretz (Chicago)

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 15-16:00, or by appointment

Hobbes' *Leviathan* – a foundational work of modern political science and masterpiece of early modern English prose-writing – is rarely read in its entirety. This is likely because a good half of the book is an extended exercise in Biblical exegesis that poses great challenges to the modern reader. In this book Hobbes endeavored to reform political thought and practice by grounding it in modern science. He also perceived the demand for, and set out to supply, a theological justification for the modern project. And so, whereas some consider Hobbes as a pioneer of the scientific study of politics, others (notably Carl Schmitt) celebrate him as the principal political theologian of modernity.

Our purpose in this course will be to read Hobbes' entire text and seek to understand it on its own terms, while also taking note of its most influential interpretations. The questions we shall ask include: What is Hobbes' view of human nature, and what is it based on? How does Hobbes understand the ends of society and of political life, and the best means for achieving those ends? What is the place of religion in this understanding? In what ways does Hobbes propose to resolve the tensions between religion and politics, and religion and science? How did he strive to make his proposed solution acceptable to his readers? Who is the *Leviathan* addressed to? Is Hobbes a philosopher or a theologian, and what difference does this make?

### Required Texts

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, E. Curley ed. (Hackett, 1994), ISBN 9780872201774

The King James Bible

*Leviathan's* 1651 edition: [https://archive.org/details/leviathanormatte00hobb\\_3/page/n7/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/leviathanormatte00hobb_3/page/n7/mode/2up)

### Additional Readings

Ioannis Evrigenis, *Images of Anarchy: The Rhetoric and Science in Hobbes's State of Nature*

Martinich et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes*

Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*

Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*

Devin Stauffer, *Hobbes' Kingdom of Light*

Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes and Hobbes' Critique of Religion*

### Library and Book Purchase Policies

Students are expected to have at their disposal a hard copy of all required texts. Copies of the *Leviathan* and the Bible are available on loan from the library. Additional readings can be found on the library reserve shelf.

## Requirements

### Attendance and Participation

Careful preparation, regular attendance and active participation are essential to the success of this course. Absences beyond two will affect the seminar grade.

Please note: arriving late or leaving in the middle of a session will count as half-absence. Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, whether excused or unexcused. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL SPRING '21 ARRANGEMENTS: If conditions allow, the seminar will take place in person. Students, who for health or visa reasons are unable to attend in person, will be able to participate in the seminar proceedings via zoom.

### Writing

Protocol writing and presentation: over the course of the semester, students will take turns to prepare protocols of the proceedings for each week, and present these at the beginning of the Tuesday session. A 'protocol' is a concise (up to 1000 words) account that recapitulates the main themes discussed during the week, analyses a key issue, and articulates 1-3 questions for further discussion. The protocols should be circulated online by midnight on Monday.

Project Proposal and Final Essay: at the end of the semester students will write a substantial final essay of up to 3500 words on one aspect of the course material. To identify the final essay topic students are expected to conduct individual research throughout the term and submit (by Sunday, May 9) a 500-word proposal for the final essay topic, including bibliography, to be discussed with the instructor. The deadline for the final essay is May 21.

### Assessment

Assessment will be based on seminar participation (30%); protocol writing and presentation (25%); a project proposal (15%) and final essay (30%).

### Late Submission and Academic Integrity

Late papers will be downgraded in light of the policy outlined in the Student Handbook. Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### Deadlines at a glance

The schedule for protocols will be set up by Friday, February 4, 2021

Proposal for final essay due Sunday, May 9, 2021

Final Essay deadline: Friday, May 21, 2021

## Schedule

Week	Date	Tue, 14-15:30	Thu, 14-15:30
1	Feb 1-5	Frontispiece, Letter Dedicatory	<u>Part I: Of Man</u> Introduction, Chs 1-3
2	Feb 8-12	Chs 4-5	Chs 6-9
3	Feb 15-19	Chs 10-12	Chs 13-15. Seminar with Richard Boyd
4	Feb 22-26	<u>Part II: Of Commonwealth</u> Chs 16-18	Chs 19-20
5	Mar 1-5	Chs 21-22	Ch 23-24
6	Mar 8-12	Ch 25-26	Chs 27-28
7	Mar 15-19	Chs 29-30	Ch 31
8	Mar 22-26	<u>Part III: Of a Christian Commonwealth</u> Chs 32-33	Ch 34. Seminar with Aaron Tugendhaft
	<b>Mar 29 -Apr 2</b>		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
9	<b>Apr 5 – Apr 9</b>	Chs 35-36	Ch 37
10	Apr 12 – 16	Chs 38-39	Chs 40-41
11	Apr 19 – 23	Ch 42	Ch 42
12	Apr 26 – 30	Ch 43	<u>Part IV: Of the Kingdom of Darkness</u> Ch 44
13	May 3 – 7	Ch 45	Ch 46
14	May 10 – 14	Ch 47, R&C	<b>Federal Holiday</b>
15	May 17 – 21	Completion week: Final essays due Friday, May 21	