

**Religion 508 S2017: Studies in Religion and Morality:
Virtue, Values, and Conflict**

Note: Books are available for purchase at Labyrinth Books. Please read the Bowlin assignment before the first session.

Instructors

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Description

This seminar will examine modern accounts of value, with special attention to the topics of religion, virtue, power, freedom, equality, and democracy. Writers include Machiavelli, Milton, Hume, Emerson, Heyrick, Nietzsche, Dewey, Addams, Berlin, and Wolin.

Requirements

Responsible preparation for, and participation in, the seminar discussions. A term paper (15-20 pages, double-spaced), due on Dean's Date. At least one turn as co-leader of the seminar. A co-leader initiates discussion of selected passages in the required reading, helps guide the discussion, and stands ready to raise questions about additional passages.

Readings

Items marked with an asterisk will be made available on Blackboard.

1. February 6: Virtues and Their Semblances

John R. Bowlin, *Tolerance among the Virtues*.

Professor Bowlin will join us for a discussion of his book, which takes a Thomistic approach to tolerance. Our main purpose in discussing it will be to get the gist of classical and medieval thinking about virtue and vice. Machiavelli, Hume, and Emerson depart from Thomas in various ways, but still employ the traditional vocabulary, not least when discussing religion.

2. February 13: Machiavelli: Emancipatory Leadership

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Isaiah Berlin, "The Question of Machiavelli," in *The Proper Study of Mankind*.

Kenneth Burke and Isaiah Berlin, "An Exchange on Machiavelli"* (letters), *New York Review of Books*, (6 April 1972):

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1972/04/06/an-exchange-on-machiavelli/>

Erica Benner, *The Prince: A New Reading*, esp. xix-lii, 22, 69-73, 111-122, 149-154, 161-162, 173-246, 279-282, 288-290, 292-293, 305-328. This book, like Benner's earlier volume *Machiavelli's Ethics*, argues that Machiavelli was closer to Aristotelian and Christian ethics than he has often been taken to be. Regardless whether one agrees with her about that, there is much to be learned from her about Machiavelli's use of rhetoric.

Recommended secondary sources:

- Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Vol. II, chapter on Machiavelli.*
- Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, chapters 1 and 2.
- Michael Walzer, "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 2 (Winter 1973), 160–80.
- Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Part IV.
- C.A.J. Coady, "The Problem of Dirty Hands," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online). Includes many other relevant references by Walzer and others.
- Bonnie Honig, *Emergency Politics*. Chapters 3 and 4 use Louis Post and Franz Rosenzweig, respectively, to counter Schmitt and Agamben on the exception.
- Mikael Hornqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*. Early modern republicanism favored liberty (for some) at home, imperial domination abroad.
- James Hankins, "Exclusivist Republicanism and the Non-Monarchical Republic," *Political Theory* 38 (2010): 452-482. Hankins explains how the term *republic* came to designate a non-monarchical regime, and points out that many early-modern "republicans" saw princely rule as legitimate in some cases.
- Miguel Vatter, "Machiavelli and the Republican Conception of Providence," *Review of Politics* 75 (2013): 605–623. Vatter argues that in chapter 26 of *The Prince* Machiavelli might have been drawing on Jewish and Islamic sources when devising his conception of providence.
- John P. McCormick, "Machiavelli and the Gracchi: Prudence, Violence, and Redistribution," *Global Crime*, 10.4 (November 2009): 298–305.

3. February 20: Machiavelli: Republics

Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy's History of Rome*, esp. Greeting, Preface; Book I, discourses 1-21, 37, 40-45; Book II, discourses 1-5; Book III, discourses 1-3, 7-9, 30, 33, 41, 49.

Recommended secondary sources:

Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, chapters 1 and 2.

- Skinner, "A Third Concept of Liberty."*
- Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, chapters 3 and 4.
- Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics*.
- John McCormick, "Machiavelli against Republicanism."*
- Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli's God*.
- Harvey Mansfield, *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy*, esp. 69-79, on the uses of religion.
- Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue*.
- Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, 2 vols. Everything in Vol. 1, *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, is relevant to our course, but especially the first part, which concerns the rejection of monarchy. Vol. 2, *The Values of Republicanism in Early-Modern Europe*, includes relevant chapters by Skinner on the English Civil War, David Armitage on empire, Vittorio Conti on republican rituals, and three chapters on women and republicanism, including one by Judith A. Vega.
- Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Pettit and Skinner taught a seminar together at the Australian National University in 1994. In *Republicanism*, Pettit reconstructs the main ideas that Skinner attributes to neo-Roman republicans. Pettit develops the theory further in subsequent works (listed on Pettit's homepage). Skinner's later work is influenced by Pettit's reconstruction.
- Paul A. Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern*, 3 vols. This is a conservative alternative to Skinner's interpretation of republicanism, classical and modern.
- Rahe, "Quentin Skinner's 'Third Way,'" *The Review of Politics*, 62.2 (Spring, 2000): 395-398. Rahe's review of *Liberty before Liberalism*.
- Frank Lovett, *Domination and Justice*. The precise analysis of domination offered in this book differs in a number of details from Pettit's.
- Lovett, "Domination and Distributive Justice," *The Journal of Politics*, 71.3 (July 2009): 817-830.
- Patchen Markell, "The Insufficiency of Non-domination," *Political Theory* 36.1 (2008): 9-36.
- Ian Shapiro, "On Non-Domination," *University of Toronto Law Journal* 62 (2012): 293-335. The article offers a critical discussion of Habermas, Foucault, Walzer, Skinner, and Pettit.
- Nicholas Vrousalis, "Exploitation, Vulnerability, and Social Domination," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 41.2 (2013): 131-157.
- Melvin Rogers, "Republican Confusion and Liberal Clarification," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 34.7 (2008): 799-824. Rogers argues that Skinner and others mischaracterize the differences between republicanism and liberalism—first, by overemphasizing

the link between Hobbes and latter-day liberalism and, second, by abstracting the liberal notion of freedom from a broader liberal framework that includes commitments to consent, publicity, and the rule of law.

Note:

Machiavelli assumed freedom to be the condition of persons living in a community that provides them with security from domination. The opposite of freedom in this sense is being at someone's mercy, as a slave is when subject to a master's arbitrary power. In *Leviathan*, chapter 21,* Hobbes redefined freedom. For interpretations of this move, see Philip Pettit, "Liberty and Leviathan"* and Skinner's book, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*.

4. February 27: Hume: Religion, Race, and Liberty

Hume, *Natural History of Religion*.

Hume, "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm,"* "Of National Characters,"* "Of Passive Obedience,"* "Whether the British Government Inclines More to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic."*

James Beattie, "On Slavery."*

Recommended primary sources:

Hume, "The Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth"* and "Of the Origin of Government."

Recommended secondary sources:

Gordon Graham, "Hume and Smith on Natural Religion."*

Cornel West, "A Genealogy of Modern Racism," in *Prophesy Deliverance!**
Annette C. Baier, "Civilizing Practices," in *Postures of the Mind*, chapter 13.

Baier, *The Pursuits of Philosophy: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of David Hume*.

Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*, chapters 7-12.

Baier, *Moral Prejudices*, esp. chapter 4: "Hume, the Women's Moral Theorist?"

Christopher J. Finlay, *Hume's Social Philosophy*, chapters 7-8. Finlay is helpful on Hume's trade-offs between liberty and other values, a bit less so on Hume's relation to republicanism.

Jennifer A. Herdt, *Religion and Faction in Hume's Moral Philosophy*. This book includes an excellent account of Hume's ethics of sympathy.

Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress*.

5. March 6: Hume: Reason, Faith, and Skepticism

Hume, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*.

Hume, "Of Miracles"* and "The Sceptic."*

Recommended secondary sources:

Andre C. Willis, *Toward a Humean True Religion*, esp. 18-43.

Robert J. Fogelin, *A Defense of Hume on Miracles*.

Robert J. Fogelin, "The Tendency of Hume's Skepticism," in *Philosophical Interpretations*, chapter 8.

Julia Annas, "Hume and Ancient Skepticism," *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 66 (2000): 271-285.

Willem Lemmens, "The 'True Religion' of the Sceptic."*

Renato Lessa, "The Ways of Scepticism (Then and Now)."*

Jeffrey R. Tiel, "A Pyrrhonist Interpretation of Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*."*

Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Skepticism from Savonarola to Bayle*.

6. March 13: Emerson et al.: Be Ye Not Conformed to the World

Note: We will focus mainly on Milton's "Ready and Easy Way," Emerson's "Divinity School Address," and "Self-Reliance," simply because they are harder than the other required readings.

Gerrard Winstanley et al., "The True Levellers Standard Advanced."* This egalitarian manifesto was written in 1649 in resistance to the enclosure of formerly common lands (thus depriving the poor of squatting opportunities) and in support of the "Diggers" gathered on [St.] George's Hill to scratch out a living for themselves. See especially the highlighted passages on pp. 10-12, which anticipate Hegel, Marx, Thoreau, Beauvoir, and Fanon on reversal of relations of domination.

John Milton, "The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth."* This rejection of kingship as essentially a form of bondage was written in 1660, when the monarchy was about to be restored. The most important passages, for our purposes, are about what makes a relationship qualify as an instance of domination and how being at someone else's mercy gives rise to temptations of slavishness, servility, or conformity.

William Hazlitt, "On the Clerical Character."* This essay on the dangers of clerical dress and the servility of established clergy was originally published in a journal in 1818 and then collected in Hazlitt's *Political Essays* a year later. Notice the quotations from Romans 12:2, Milton, and Marvell. Hazlitt's father was one of the dissenting ministers praised in the essay.

Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*. * A British Quaker who opposed the gradualist approach to abolition advocated by Wilberforce and Burke, Heyrick here addresses the pivotal issue of

complicity, and recommends a boycott on grounds similar to those later advanced by Thoreau, Gandhi, King, and Chavez.

Henry Highland Garnet, "An Address to the Slaves of the United States."*

A call for resistance, rooted in the early modern covenant theology from which Milton was also drawing. Garnet was a Presbyterian.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address", "Man the Reformer," "Self-Reliance," and "New England Reformers" in *Essays and Lectures*.

Recommended primary sources:

Emerson, "The American Scholar," "Lecture on the Times," "The Conservative," "Heroism," "The Over-Soul," "Circles," "History," "Compensation," and "Spiritual Laws."

Ralph Sandiford, *A Brief Examination of the Practice of the Times* (1729).*

The first Quaker to criticize scriptural arguments for taking Africans to be living under the "curse of Cain." Notice his use of the categories of "arbitrary" power and "oppressive tyranny."

David L. Crosby (ed.), *The Complete Antislavery Writings of Anthony Benezet*. Benezet, who was born in France, was the most effective organizer among the early Quaker abolitionists.

Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*.* Clarkson was an Anglican recruited to the abolitionist cause by the Quakers who started the movement. He was a great organizer. Emerson credits him with being the Luther of abolitionism. Emerson read Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade** when preparing to write the Address on Emancipation of 1 August 1844.

William Wilberforce, *Speech on Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1789).* An evangelical Anglican and a Member of Parliament, recruited to the movement in part by Clarkson.

David Walker, "Our Wretchedness in Consequence of the Preachers of the Religion of Jesus Christ," Article III in *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829).*

Abraham Lincoln, *Address at the Lyceum in Springfield*.* This is the first of Lincoln's speeches to be published. He recommends a "political religion" as a remedy for lynching, mobocracy, and idolatry of strongmen.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, Vol. I, "Politics" and "Economy," Vol. II, "Rural Labour" and "Morals of Slavery," and Vol. III, "The Spirit of Religion." A British abolitionist protected from mob violence by the Emerson and his brother when she spoke in Boston.

<http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/DSS/Martineau/siatoc.html>

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman** (1792), 47-56.

Recommended secondary sources:

Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Vol. II, chapter on Milton.*

Myles Lavan, "Slavishness in Britain and Rome in Tacitus' *Agricola*."*

Nigel Smith, *Is Milton Better Than Shakespeare?* The best popular introduction to Milton; has additional bibliographical suggestions.

Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660*.

The Milton Reading Room, [link](#).

David Armitage et al. (eds.), *Milton and Republicanism*.

Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*.

Frank Lovett, "Milton's Case for a Free Commonwealth," *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 (2005): 466–478.*

Jeffrey Stout, "Lincoln's Religion,"* "Callings,"* and "Emerson's Spiritual Hermaphrodite."*

Len Gougeon, "Emerson and Abolition: The Silent Years."**

Maurice Gonnaud, *An Uneasy Solitude: Individual and Society in the Work of Ralph Waldo Emerson*.

George Kateb, *Emerson and Self-Reliance*, second edition.

Stanley Cavell, *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes*.

Patrick Keane, *Emerson, Romanticism, and Intuitive Reason*.

March 20: Spring Break

7. March 27: Emerson: The Transformation of Ideals into Practical Power

Emerson, "Experience," "Politics," "Uses of Great Men," and two pieces entitled "Worship" (one from *English Traits*, the other from *The Conduct of Life*) in *Essays and Lectures*.

Emerson, "Address on the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies"* and "Fortune of the Republic."*

Recommended primary sources:

Emerson, "Fate" and "Power" in *Essays and Lectures*.

Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. *Representative Men* is Emerson's democratic response to this.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, chapters 9, 10, Appendix.* Douglass followed Emerson to the stage in Concord on 1 August 1844. In *Narrative* and many speeches, Douglass vehemently criticizes slaveholding Christianity but explicitly refrains from criticizing Christianity itself. See especially the following report of a speech he delivered in Concord, N.H., on 11 February 1844—which probably led Emerson in Douglass's direction not long before the event of August 1st:

<http://frederickdouglass.info/et/io/islandora/object/islandora%3A112#page/1/mode/1up>

Henry Highland Garland, "Let the Monster Perish."

<http://www.blackpast.org/1865-henry-highland-garnet-let-monster-perish>

Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address.*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Worship of God in Man"* and "The Degradation of Disfranchisement."* These essays apply a conception of ethical religion to the matter of patriarchy.

Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*.

Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas*.

William Mackintire Salter, *Ethical Religion* (1889).* This book is the most important link between Emerson and Gandhi, apart from Emerson's essays. Gandhi had an abridged version of Salter translated and published in India.

Recommended secondary sources:

Jeffrey Stout, "The Transformation of Genius into Practical Power: A Reading of Emerson's 'Experience.'"*

Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, chapter 1.

Len Gougeon, "Emerson and the Woman Question,"* "Militant Abolitionism,"* and *Virtue's Hero*.

Albert J. Von Frank, *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston*.

Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People*, chapters 10-12.

David M. Robinson, *Emerson and the Conduct of Life*. This book is an excellent overview of the increasingly social and pragmatic orientation of Emerson's later writings, following the lead of West's *American Evasion*.

Daniel Koch, *Ralph Waldo Emerson in Europe: Class, Race, and Revolution in the Making of an American Thinker*. This important recent study focuses on Emerson's trip to Europe in 1847-48 and his evolving attitudes about race, the English, Americans as a people indebted to the English (for good and for ill), Chartism, and the revolutionary moment he witnessed in Paris in March 1848.

Stanley Cavell, *Senses of Walden, expanded edition*.

Elise Lemire, *Black Walden: Slavery and Its Aftermath in Concord, Massachusetts*.

Alda Balthrop-Lewis, *Thoreau's Political Asceticism: From Abolitionism to Environmental Justice*, doctoral dissertation, Princeton University.

Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century*. This book includes valuable discussions of: Lincoln's speech to Wisconsin farmers in 1859, ancient republicanism's "paradox of slavery," labor republicanism's transformation of virtue ethics, and the strengths

and weaknesses of the recent revival of republicanism in political theory. Unfortunately, it includes no discussion of Emerson's connection to labor republicanism, and mentions religion only in passing.

8. April 3: Nietzsche: Variations on Emersonian Themes

Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, second and third pieces.
Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Recommended primary source:

Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*.

Recommended secondary sources:

Hugo Drochon, *Nietzsche's Great Politics*.

Tamsin Shaw, *Nietzsche's Political Skepticism*.

Irena S. Makarushka, *Religious Imagination and Language in Emerson and Nietzsche*.

Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, expanded edition, chapter 13.*

9. April 10: Nietzsche: Slave Morality and Genealogy

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*.

Recommended secondary sources:

Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche and Genealogy."*

Robert Brandom, "Reason, Genealogy, and the Hermeneutics of Magnanimity."*

Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, chapters 5-8.

Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, esp. chapters 2 and 9.

10. April 17: Dewey and Addams: The Ethics and Religion of Democracy

John Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy,"*# "Emerson: The Philosopher of Democracy,"* and *A Common Faith*.

Jane Addams, "A Modern Lear,"* "The Thirst for Righteousness,"*# and "Religious Education and Contemporary Social Conditions."*#

Note: Professor Beth Eddy will be leading our discussion of Addams.

Recommended primary sources:

Dewey, *Ethics*.

Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*.

Recommended secondary sources:

West, *American Evasion*, chapters 2-3.

- Elizabeth Anderson, "John Dewey's Moral Philosophy," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online).
- Beth Eddy, "The Cathedral of Humanity on Halsted Street: Jane Addams, Auguste Comte, and Edward Caird"* and "Struggle for Mutual Aid."*
See also Eddy, *Evolutionary Pragmatism and Ethics*.
- Charlene Haddock Seigfried, "Socializing Democracy: Jane Addams and John Dewey."*
- Melvin L. Rogers, *The Undiscovered Dewey*.
- Rogers, "The Fact of Sacrifice and the Necessity of Faith: Dewey and the Ethics of Democracy."*
- Rogers, "Democracy, Elites, and Power: John Dewey Reconsidered."*
- Rogers, "Dewey and His Vision of Democracy."*
- Hilary Putnam, "A Reconsideration of Deweyan Democracy."*
- Richard Rorty, "Feminism and Pragmatism."*
- Axel Honneth, "Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation."*
- Eddie Glaude Jr., *In a Shade of Blue*.

11. April 24: Berlin: Liberty, Realism, and the Plurality of Values

Note: We are still deciding on which readings to require for this week. The following list is tentative:

- Isaiah Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind*: "The Pursuit of the Ideal," "Two Concepts of Liberty," "Herder and the Enlightenment," "Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power."
- Berlin, "The Incompatibility of Values," in Melvin Kranzberg (ed.), *Ethics in an Age of Pervasive Technology*.*#
- Berlin, "Jewish Slavery and Emancipation," *Jewish Chronicle* (1951).*#
- Berlin, "Disraeli, Marx, and the Search for Identity."*#

Recommended primary sources by Berlin or influenced by him:

- Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind*: "The Counter-Enlightenment" and "The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will." These pieces are related to Herder chapter.
- Berlin, "Realism in Politics," *Spectator* 193 (1954), 774–6.
- Michael Walzer, "Liberalism, Nationalism, Reform" in *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Mark Lilla, Ronald Dworkin, Robert Silvers (New York, NY: New York Review Books, 2001), 169-177.
- Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*.
- Avishai Margalit, "The Crooked Timber of Nationalism," in *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin*, 147-161.
- Margalit, *The Decent Society*.
- Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

Recommended secondary sources:

Skinner, "A Third Concept of Liberty."*

Chang, Ruth (ed.), *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1997: Harvard University Press): chapters by James Griffin, Charles Taylor, Elizabeth Anderson, Steven Lukes,* Michael Stocker, and John Finnis.

Robert Merrihew Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods*, chapter 4.

Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed Are the Organized*, chapter 17.

Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin*.

John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin: An Interpretation of His Thought*.

Joshua Cherniss, *A Mind and Its Time: The Development of Isaiah Berlin's Political Thought*.

12. May 1: Wolin: Democracy and Vocation

Sheldon S. Wolin, *Fugitive Democracy and Other Essays*, chapters 1, 2, 5, 14-25.

Note: Professor West will be leading this session. Professor Stout will be in Edinburgh.

Recommended primary sources:

Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, chapters 7 and 17.

Recommended secondary source:

David Marcus, "Into the Cave: Sheldon Wolin's Search for Democracy," *Dissent* (November 2, 2015):

https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/into-the-cave-sheldon-wolin-obituary-1922-2015