

HONOR 2103 – Intellectual Traditions
The State of Nature / Nature of the State
Policy Statement and Syllabus
Summer Semester, 2021 (Asynchronous Online)

Instructor: Dr. Paul Ketzle

Course Website: <http://utah.instructure.com>

TEXTS (PHYSICAL COPIES—ON ORDER AT CAMPUS BOOKSTORE)

Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe (Penguin Classics) ISBN: 978-0141439822

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley (Broadview, 3rd Edition) ISBN: 978-1554811038

Plus Other Materials Posted On Canvas

FOCUS

The European Renaissance opened a new era of scientific and philosophical inquiry, pursued by the increasingly prosperous populations and budding nations of the West—with consequences over the next 400 years for the entire world. The Protestant Reformation, the availability for cheap mass printing and books, the expansion of trade with the Middle and Far East and the rise of a mercantile class, the exploration of the New World, combined with the world-changing discoveries of Galileo and Newton fostered this new Age of Enlightenment. For intellectuals of the Renaissance and beyond, Reason replaced religious dogma as the pathway to truth. But this road was hardly a smooth one. If Truth was not simply to be accepted, it became necessary to ask what is human knowledge and what are its limitations? What is the basis of the Social contract, as well as the communities and governments that binds us together? Who might humans be outside of society, in a state of nature? Can we even actually **know** anything at all? Is human reason sufficient to lead us to moral and empirical truth about the world? And what, in the end, is the purpose of the state that governs us? What should that state look like and who should make those decisions? What are the fundamental rights and responsibilities that need to be protected?

BASIC COURSE POLICIES

- 1) Be respectful and courteous to others.
- 2) Be charitable in your readings of each others' ideas and work
- 3) Follow all assignment and course directions. Failure to do so can result in a loss of credit and lowering of your grade.
- 4) Complete all online discussions, papers, votes and other assignments. Non-submission of assignments can reduce your assignment grades. Non-completion of a significant number of assignments is grounds for course failure.
- 5) Late work will be marked down two full letter grades for *each day* it is late. (If you have file issues other personal problems, email your work to me by the due date, no matter how “finished” it is. This gives me the greatest flexibility to be lenient. Turning in your best work on time is *always* a better option than turning in something more “finished” but late.)

ONLINE BEHAVIOR AND MUTUAL RESPECT

What's expected of you is to participate in the debates, discussions, and votes that we are conducting in class this semester. But it is also critical that you are respectful toward each other. Being respectful means being polite, professional and engaged. Online discourse can be problematic because people don't always accurately communicate their intended tone—and it's easy to both give and take offense. We should assume that people do not intend to give offense and if someone takes offense, we should quickly work to ensure that the offended party is assured of our true intent. Apologies for misunderstandings are, therefore, appropriate and should be both quickly offered and accepted.

But we should not be offended because our ideas are challenged. I **expect** you to challenge each other—and so you should expect to be challenged. I expect you to challenge me, as well, and you should never take the simple fact that I try to explain why I think you are wrong as any kind of insult or lack of respect. (I'll also try to make a point of explaining why I think you are right, too.) Rather than feeling disrespected when people disagree with you, recognize that we seriously argue with those we respect, otherwise we wouldn't waste our time. There's nothing wrong with disagreement, but simple disagreement will not be sufficient in this class and shouldn't be sufficient really anywhere else. Having an opinion is fine, but sharing and arguing one necessitates that you support it with reasons that can persuade a critical audience. And I'd suggest that you should never be merely satisfied yourself with conclusions that you cannot defend to others.

This is what I mean by respect. Respect each other enough to apologize if you've mistakenly offended them. Respect people enough to accept their apologies. And respect people enough to challenge them—and to seriously consider challenges to your own ideas. How you conduct yourself in your online interactions with your peers (and me) will all factor into this portion of your grade. Your mere completion of assignments does not automatically equate to participation. Writing words does not equate to "engagement." Unruly or unprofessional behavior may result in your being asked to leave and marked absent.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS

- Discussion Responses 50%
- Peer Responses 20%
- Final Essay (Federalist Paper) 30%

GRADING SCALE

93-100 A	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	00-59 E
90-92 A-	83-86 B	73-76 C	63-66 D	
	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-	

SMALL GROUP WRITTEN DISCUSSIONS

We will be conducting most of our written discussion in small groups of 6 to 7 at a time. These groups will rotate over the course of the semester, so you will have the chance to directly interact with the work and ideas of most, if not all, of your classmates at some point in the semester.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS AND PURPOSE

DISCUSSION RESPONSES: Because of the abbreviated time-frame of the summer session, writing multiple quality papers is not realistic. However, putting your ideas in writing is one of the best ways to not only demonstrate your knowledge, but to help you become clear about what you yourself think. What I want to see in this assignment, then, is careful consideration of the text (or some aspect of the text) that clearly demonstrates a familiarity and understanding of the reading, but also either challenges or builds upon the text.

PEER RESPONSES: For this assignment, I am looking for you to “seriously engage” your peers’ posts. “Engagement” is a difficult idea to explain simply, but what it means essentially is that it should be clear that you are thinking about what your peers have written and that you are either building upon their ideas or challenging them. The point isn’t just to “say something” or say something related to what someone else has written. Think about it. Build on it. And you should feel free to respond to peer comments, on your own work or on others’. As much as possible, we want to maximize a meeting of minds and replicate debate. This won’t be (and can’t be) the same as an in-person discussion. But it has the potential to be, at least in some ways, even more productive because people are more invested in what they write. The words don’t just disappear in the wind. They are sustained and endure—and we want to hold each other to account for the claims we make.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: We will be holding a scaled-back version of a Constitutional Convention at the end of the semester, after we have read and discussed some of the philosophical foundations that helped shape the attitudes of this nation’s framers, and even some critiques of and alternatives to those perspectives. The premise of this assignment is both timely and fantastical—but it’s designed to put us in conversation and negotiation with each others’ ideas and principles (which requires that understand what those are, relative to not only each other, but the philosophers we are reading). All of the aspects of this assignment, from the proposed amendments, to the arguments we make, to the voting, are meant to help us establish what we ourselves understand as essential. Philosophy isn’t meaningless abstraction, but rather the basis we use to decide what is critical to our lives and society. We will be trying to identify rights and principles that need to be preserved, and then end by defending those ideas by discussing them in relation to the intellectual traditions that have come before.

FINAL ESSAY: “YOUR FEDERALIST PAPER”: After we’ve argued and negotiated these principles, our final assignment will ask you to make a case to “the people” to ratify the document. This argument will be based to an extent upon the document itself, but largely grounded upon and building up from the Enlightenment authors we’ve been reading. Much like Madison, Hamilton, and Jay, we are demonstrating to “the people” that these ideas are well-founded and that we who have built this document understand its philosophical foundations.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Punishment for plagiarism is an automatic *E* in the course. See sections II and V of the Student Code for details and consult your instructor and your textbook for explanations and examples so that you don’t run into trouble.

OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Inquiry and Analysis: Students will learn to critically analyze primary and secondary texts. They will read about ideas from the Renaissance to the 20th Century to explore the continuum of ideas that have shaped human thought and experience across eras and cultures and the relationship of those ideas to present understanding and perspectives. They will discover how ideas build-upon and react to each other as they learn to ask questions that challenge those ideas.

Written Communication: Students will learn how to construct persuasive arguments with supportive evidence from primary and secondary texts to construct arguments based upon this inquiry.

Creative Thinking: To engage all aspects of students' intellectual intelligence, students will also be asked to consider conventional questions, topics and events in unconventional ways, using creative approaches to imagine and reimagine these questions and the answers they might give.

ADDRESSING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

ADA

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY

No content accommodations will be made for this course. It is the student's obligation to determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, if the requirements of this course conflict with the student's sincerely-held core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. Please visit the Administration Policy and Procedures Website (<http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/index.html>) for complete details.

HONOR 2103 Schedule (Summer 2021—Asynchronous Online)

WEEK 1

before **Monday (5/17)**, 10pm:

READING: Hobbes, Galileo, First Lecture

WRITING: [Response to Enlightenment Lecture](#)

by **Tuesday (5/18)**, 10pm:

WRITING: [Share Something About Yourself](#)

before **Thursday (5/20)**, 10pm:

READING: *Robinson Crusoe*, (Up to p.122 or halfway, whichever is greater)

WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)

by **Friday (5/21)**, 10pm:

WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

WEEK 2

before **Monday (5/24)**, 10pm:

READING: *Robinson Crusoe*, (p.122 to end of book)

WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)

by **Tuesday (5/25)**, 10pm:

WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

before **Thursday (5/27)**, 10pm:

READING: *Frankenstein* (through Book II, Ch. 2, p.120)

WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)

by **Friday (5/28)**, 10pm:

WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

WEEK 3

before **Monday (5/31)**, 10pm: (*Memorial Day Holiday, grace period until **Tuesday**, 10pm.*)

READING: *Frankenstein* (through p, 221 or end of novel)

WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)

by **Tuesday (6/1)**, 10pm:

WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

before **Thursday (6/3)**, 10pm:

READING: *Leviathan*, Hobbes

WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)

by **Friday (6/4)**, 10pm:

WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

WEEK 4

before **Monday (6/7)**, 10pm:
READING: Locke
WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)
by **Tuesday (6/8)**, 10pm:
WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

before **Thursday (6/10)**, 10pm:
READING: Rousseau & Federalist Papers
WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)
by **Friday (6/11)**, 10pm:
WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

WEEK 5

before **Monday (6/14)**, 10pm:
READING: The Global Enlightenment
WRITING: [Discussion Response](#) (500-700 words)
by **Tuesday (6/15)**, 10pm:
WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

before **Thursday (6/17)**, 10pm:
READING: Proposed Constitutions
WRITING: [Proposed Amendments Due](#)
by **Friday (6/18)**, 10pm:
WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

WEEK 6

before **Monday (6/21)**, 10pm:
READING: [Proposed Constitution & Amendments](#)
WRITING: Argument in Support of Amendment (500-700 words)
by **Tuesday (6/22)**, 10pm:
WRITING: [2 Peer Responses](#)

before **Thursday (6/24)**, 10pm:
VOTE: On Amendments and Constitution
by **Friday, (6/25) 10pm: [Final Essay: "Your Federalist Paper" due](#)**
(grace period through [Monday, June 28, 10pm](#))