

# THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

HIEU 391  
Spring 2000  
TU TH 11:00-12:15  
CAB B026

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### POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL THOUGHT IN EUROPE II: 1300-1700

#### READING GUIDE

This guide is a brief supplement to the much more extensive guide written for the first part of this course. It is meant to do nothing more than to inform you about a few basic tools of reference and a few classic studies that are particularly relevant for the period 1300-1700. They will allow you to start your own reading on most of the topics and individuals that will be covered in this part of the course. I also recommend that you pay attention to the bibliographical notes and the introductions that accompany the selections of primary readings. For more information, please refer to the guide written for the first part of this course (HIEU 390).

#### A. Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

The following will furnish initial guidance to the most basic questions that can be asked about the subject matter of this course. Note that the articles in the Dictionary of the History of Ideas and those in the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe are often important pieces of scholarly research and synthesis in their own right. The three encyclopedias (on the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment) complement each other relatively nicely to cover the whole of the early modern period. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences is listed here because it deals with many of the same subjects of this course, but from a social-scientific, rather than an historical, perspective.

Brunner, Otto, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, eds. Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. 7 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972-1992).

Grendler, Paul F., ed. Encyclopedia of the Renaissance. 6 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1999).

Hillerbrand, Hans J., ed. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation. 4 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Sills, David L., ed. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. 18 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1968-1979).

Wiener, Philip P., ed. Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas. 5 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1973-1974).

Wilson, Ellen Judy and Peter Hanns Reill. Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment. (New York: Facts On File, 1996).

### B. Surveys and Handbooks

Allen, John William. A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century. (London: Methuen, 1928). This is now quite old. But even though it has been surpassed in many particulars, it remains a sound introduction to the most important characters in, and the general development of, early modern European political thought overall. Its organization is straightforward (nations, individuals) and its style readable. Above all else, it is distinguished by the author's independent judgment, and his willingness to make his judgment quite clear.

Brady, Thomas A., Jr., Heiko A. Oberman and James D. Tracy, eds. Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation. 2 vols. (Leiden - New York - Köln: E. J. Brill, 1994-95). A recent collection of short essays by authorities in their respective fields that aims to cover the history of the period comprehensively. It is finely subdivided according to subject matter, time, and geography. As always, there are some omissions. But the high quality of some essays and the bibliographies more than make up for the deficiencies. This is the best available summary of current scholarship on early modern Europe in general.

Burns, J. H. and Mark Goldie, eds. Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). This is a collection of essays by distinguished historians writing about the areas of early modern political thought with which they are especially familiar. It is very strong on some subjects, weak on others, and uneven on the whole. But the bibliographies are comprehensive and up-to-date. At the end of the volume you will find very useful "biographies" with summary information about the lives of individual authors, their works, and the literature about them. If read in conjunction with Allen, Figgis, and Skinner, this will give you a thorough sense of the issues in the history of political thought as they are currently perceived by mostly Anglophone scholars.

Mesnard, Pierre. L'Essor de la philosophie politique au XVIe siècle. (Paris: Boivin & Cie., 1936). In spite of its age still the most thorough survey of political thought in the sixteenth century. But unfortunately written in French and therefore condemned to be mostly ignored.

Rabil, Albert A. Jr., ed. Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy. 3 vols. (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1988). A substantial collection of short essays on virtually all aspects of humanism, its diffusion through Europe, and its effects on European thought and society. The essays are readable and well annotated. An excellent place to begin any special investigation of any subject related to humanism.

### C. Classic Studies

Baron, Hans. The Crisis of the Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny. 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). Famous for the thesis that humanism and republicanism are substantially related to each other, and that Florence was the Republic that made the connection when it was fighting for its liberty against Milan in about 1400. The main alternative view of humanism is that of Kristeller.

Barracough, Geoffrey. Papal Provisions: Aspects of Church History, Constitutional, Legal, and Administrative in the Later Middle Ages. (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1935). An old book that does a better job than any other I know of dismantling the myths still circulating about the

abuses supposedly perpetrated by the late medieval church. It consists of a close investigation of one particularly famous and important "abuse" (the papal practice of provisions), and shows clearly precisely what the problem was: not any moral failure by the church, but rather the huge legal, moral, and institutional problems created in a world that, in the absence of a generalized system of taxation, could not but rely on "benefices" in order to finance the performance of "offices" in a responsible manner.

Elias, Norbert. The Civilizing Process. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). One of the most interesting interpretations of European history written in this century. This book was first written in German in the 1930s and virtually ignored in Germany, because the author had to emigrate, and in England and the United States, because it was idiosyncratic and written in German. When it was first translated in 1968, it attracted a great deal of attention. That has now waned, but its basic ideas have not by any means been integrated into the history of Europe as they deserve. This is largely because Elias adopts a position that questions the very distinction between "individuals" and "society" and thus places him right in the methodological abyss between history and sociology. His deepest insight was that historical changes on the level of state development are deeply related to historical changes on the level of individual psychology. He documented his insight by focusing on the "history of manners" in early modern Europe, extended it to an interpretive history of Europe, and then used that as the foundation for a general theory of "civilization" as a process transcending and transforming both individuals and societies.

Figgis, John Neville. Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916). In spite of its age this remains one of the most important works in the field. It is one of very few works that deal with the period as a whole, beginning with the late medieval movements of conciliar reform and ending at the point where modern conceptions of individual freedom and state sovereignty are already clearly established. It is very stimulating reading and probably the best place to begin for anyone who would like to get a quick grasp of the fundamental issues that have governed the scholarship during the last century.

Franklin, Julian H. Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963). A short book, and still one of the best introductions to the thought of Jean Bodin and his pivotal role in early modern historical and political thought. Especially important for the clarity with which it focuses on the profound relationship between thinking about time (history) and thinking about law, politics, and the state.

Gierke, Otto Friedrich v. Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500 to 1800: With a Lecture on the Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity by Ernst Troeltsch. 2 vols. Trans. Ernest Barker. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934). A classic work on the subjects described in the title: the new theories of natural law and sovereignty. Especially important because of the attention it pays to developments in the Germanies, such as Althusius and Pufendorf. An important corrective to the bias with which most historians writing in English deal with Italy and England, sometimes also France, but very rarely Germany.

Gilmore, M. P. Argument from Roman Law in Political Thought, 1200-1600. Harvard historical monographs, 15. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941). The single best study (virtually the only one) on the place occupied by Roman law in the shaping of modern political thought. Dated in many ways, but clear and to the point.

Habermas, Jürgen. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. Trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. Studies in contemporary German social thought. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). A

- book that created quite a stir because of its impassioned defense of the kind of rational discourse that Habermas identified with the Enlightenment and the emergence of a public sphere, as a genuine alternative to the private interests motivating capitalist exchange society.
- Hinsley, Francis Harry. Sovereignty. 2nd ed. (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986). The best general treatment of the concept of sovereignty. This book is not so much distinguished by its detailed grasp of early modern political thought, as by the broad perspective from which it views the emergence of sovereignty as placed between primitive societies without state organization properly speaking and the contemporary world.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society. Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. Ed. Thomas McCarthy. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988). This brilliant book, written as his dissertation, made Koselleck famous for straddling the boundary between political philosophy and history more imaginatively than anyone in Germany other than his rival Jürgen Habermas. Where Habermas views Enlightenment rationality as a reliable constraint on the irrationalities of capitalism and totalitarianism, Koselleck believes the Enlightenment to be related to its opposite by a fundamental dialectic that is already evident in Hobbes' Leviathan and leads, if not inexorably, at least predictably to the forms of dictatorship and totalitarianism that flourished in the twentieth century.
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar. Renaissance Thought and Its Sources. Ed. Michael Mooney. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). An excellent collection of Kristeller's most important writings on the Renaissance and Humanism, and the main alternative to Hans Baron's interpretation of the Renaissance. Kristeller's view is that humanism was a cultural movement that cannot be linked to any definite political purpose or any specific doctrine about the nature of human beings. His view is perhaps less exciting than Hans Baron's, but it has stood the test of time with more success.
- MacFarlane, Alan. The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, and Social Transition. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978). A provocative and stimulating bit of interpretive history looking at the social setting in which modern individualism became possible.
- Meinecke, Friedrich. Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and its Place in Modern History. Trans. Douglas Scott. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957). Now dated, but still worth reading for the depth of its understanding and the path breaking importance of this work for putting intellectual history on the map early in this century, between political history on the one hand and social or economic history on the other. This is not only still a good study of Machiavelli, but also a work that explicitly seeks to show how the study of ideas ought to differ from mere "intellectual history" by helping to illuminate general history. By the standards of today it looks like a disappointingly old-fashioned history of ideas—but only because it helped to raise the standards of intellectual history to the point at which they are today.
- Oakley, Francis. Omnipotence, Covenant and Order: An Excursion in the History of Ideas from Abelard to Leibniz. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984). A short but extremely enlightening piece of intellectual history on a fundamental problem in the history of political thought from high medieval to early modern times. The problem, most basically, turns on the question whether God is subject to his own reason or not. This may seem to be mere theology, but in fact has profound implications for modern theories of law, for example, the question whether the sovereign legislator is subject to any law or not.
- Oakley, Francis. Natural Law, Conciliarism, and Consent in the Late Middle Ages: Studies in Ecclesiastical and Intellectual History. Variorum reprints, CS189. (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984). Oakley has never written a synthetic history of conciliarism and

- constitutionalism in the late middle ages and early modern Europe. Yet there is no historian alive who knows this history better or has done more to illuminate some of its aspects, especially those having to do with the contribution made by the church to the development of secular constitutional government, than Oakley. In the absence of a general history, this collection of essays will have to do. It may be taken as an extension of the work of Figgis.
- Pagden, Anthony. Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c. 1800. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995). One of the few overarching books on the question of empire in early modern Europe. It does not pay enough attention to German thought on Empire, and it is neither as deep nor as thorough as one would like. But it is a stimulating and readable work on a subject otherwise mostly ignored.
- Pantin, William Abel. The English Church in the Fourteenth Century. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955). This book accomplishes pretty much the same results as Barraclough's Papal Provisions (on which see above), but by focusing on all aspects of ecclesiastical life in a limited region (England) as opposed to focusing on a limited practice (provisions) in the entire late medieval church.
- Pocock, J. G. A. The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). A sprawling book, hugely ambitious and brilliant in execution, though not always lucid. This work put "republicanism" on the map of early modern political thought. In so doing it created a genuine alternative to the emergence of "liberalism" as the main theme of early modern political thought.
- Tierney, Brian. Religion, Law, and the Growth of Constitutional Thought, 1150-1650. The Wiles Lectures given at the Queen's University of Belfast. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). A relatively short book in which Tierney summed up what he believed could be said about the role that the canonists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have played in the shaping of modern constitutional government. Not as incisive or well-documented as his Foundations of the Conciliar Theory of 1955, but grander in design and more assertive.
- Tierney, Brian. The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law, 1150-1625. Emory University Studies in Law and Religion, 5. Ed. John Witte, Jr. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1997). A recent collection of a systematic series of studies into the origin of natural rights by one of the masters in the field. Serious scholarship, and heavy going, but very rewarding if you have the patience.
- Tuck, Richard. Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development. (Cambridge - New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). A short and schematic, but also instructive work on the emergence of natural rights theories in the seventeenth century. As Tuck himself now recognizes, the differences between medieval and modern theories of natural law have still not been properly understood. But his book is a good place to start looking into the question.
- Tuck, Richard. Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651. Ideas in Context, 26. (New York - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). A survey of political thought well into the seventeenth century that has as many virtues as it has vices. Its main virtues are, first, that it offers a recent summary of what we now believe about the relationship between the Renaissance, Humanism, Stoicism, and Scepticism in Italy and England and, second, that it contains a detailed account of the political thought of Grotius, the English Revolution, and Hobbes. In addition it deals in considerable detail with a whole cast of lesser known characters. Its main vice is that it pays virtually no attention to the Reformation or to France.