This course presents some of the greatest social thinkers of the last three centuries. Our modern period since 1780 has been marked by accelerated economic growth, an increasingly secular society, and predominance of the nation-state. Yet along with increased life expectancy and wealth, as well as enhanced individual freedoms in many places, the modern period has been accompanied by unprecedented violence, sharp inequalities, cultural dislocation, and human unhappiness. Why? The readings give us some answers. Our format will be lecture (with questions) on Monday and oral presentations on Wednesday, guided by questions distributed in advance. Very little mathematics or technical economic theory will be required.

The course satisfies the S&H distribution and COAS Intensive Writing requirements. Grading will be based on oral participation, a midterm exam on the readings, three short papers, and a final examination on the second half of the readings. Accommodations for students with disabilities, language difficulty, or religious obligations will be made upon reasonable prior notice to the instructor.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1. What is meant by “modern society??

Section I. How does individual freedom work for and against human beings in modern times?

Week 2. Adam Smith: natural liberty and its limitations. Selections to be announced.

3. Alexis de Tocqueville: the community in a democracy. Selections to be announced.


5. Karl Marx: class as a determining factor in the state. Selections to be announced.

6. Karl Polanyi: social protection as restraint on the self-regulating market. Selections TBA.

Midterm exam—Thursday, about the seventh week

**First short essay 6-7 pp.: compare and contrast Smith, Marx, and Polanyi on the threats to human freedom in a market economy** (due about the tenth week) This paper will be returned for revisions.

II. Problems of modern society

7. Friedrich Nietzsche: the loss of moral certainty. Selections to be announced.

8. Friedrich Hayek: the over-powerful state. Selections to be announced.

10. Emile Durkheim: anomie, loss of social connectedness. Selections to be announced.


12. Sigmund Freud: unconscious resistance to social demands. Selections to be announced.

**Second essay (6-7 pp.):** What evil is most connected to modern society and human nature and therefore hardest to overcome? (due about the thirteenth week)

13. Simone de Beauvoir and Orlando Patterson: demands for equality and inclusion.

III. Some solutions to modern problems


**Last paper (6-7 pp.):** What do you think about Friedman’s defense of property rights? (due at the final exam)

15. Economic policy as a response to unemployment: J.M. Keynes’ macroeconomics (selection to be distributed from Spechler, *Perspectives in Economic Thought*, pp. 203-33)

**Final exam:** first week of May, time and place to be announced.

**Warning!** Plagiarism will not be tolerated; when detected, it will result in an “F” for the assignment without appeal. **Take care not to copy materials from the Internet.** Plagiarism is “presenting someone else’s work, including the work of other students, as one’s own.” Students must fully acknowledge any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use. Credit must be given if directly quoting another person’s actual words or ideas. Paraphrasing the words or ideas of others, whether oral or written, or borrowing facts or materials collected by others must be acknowledged, unless that information is common knowledge. Students’ rights in this matter and concerning cheating or fabrication are outlined at [www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.st](http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.st). You will be held responsible for knowing these definitions and for acting honestly and truthfully.

**Books recommended for purchase:**


(supplementary only)


Mill, J.S. *On Liberty and Other Essays*. Cambridge pb* ISBN 0521379172*


Polanyi, K. *The Great Transformation*. Beacon pb* ISBN 080705643X*

Hayek, F. The Road to Serfdom. Chicago pb* ISBN 0226320618


deBeauvoir, S. The Second Sex. Vintage pb* ISBN 0679724516

Schumpeter, J. Imperialism and Social Classes Meridian Books pb* [also available on Kindle]

Suggested:

Kuttner, R. Everything for Sale.

*available used on Amazon