

TOPICS IN EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY **Between Self-Preservation and War**

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Course Description

This seminar examines philosophical responses to war. How did philosophers reconcile the violence of warfare with concepts of justice and the rational pursuit of ethics? Are violence and reason compatible? Is morality consistent with, or do some moralities reflect, a military virtue? The canonical figures treated in this course transformed traditional ideas of authority and institutional organization, but they never questioned the role of war within the economic and social fabric of society. Cicero, Justus Lipsius, Grotius, Hobbes, and Spinoza conceptualized war as an inevitable consequence of human relations. Grotius, for instance, reconciled war with ethics against the backdrop of imperialism, colonial expansion, and wars based on economic interest. Other philosophers, however, challenged the necessity of war. We will attend to the ways philosophers either embraced or rejected the worldview brought forth by the realities of war, through debates about the relation between mind and body, visions of the ideal society, and in conversations about personal versus political peace. The course brings to light contrasting philosophies of war in Marie de Gournay (1565–1645) and Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673) and Thomas Hobbes, and Baruch Spinoza and Anne Conway (1631–1679). However, this course will situate the impact of war on these women thinkers' philosophical thought (which has previously been excluded from the traditional philosophical canon) and their attention to larger questions on the nature of violence and authority: namely, whether war is inevitable and whether there are ontological conditions for lasting peace. We will also discuss how the philosophies of the women who challenged the inevitability of war represent affinities with, critiques of, or distinctive breaks with other thinkers of the time.

Assignment Requirements and Descriptions

Weekly Reading Analysis/Exegesis | A paper consisting of 500 to 800 words will be due every Thursday at the start of class. There will be approximately five weekly analyses due this semester. The purpose of the weekly analysis or exegesis is to serve as an avenue to maintaining a regular writing schedule, to engage with the text on a deeper level, and to provide analysis for your final paper. Each paper will be worth roughly 5% of your final grade. The analysis must be a direct engagement with the text. It should take the form of a standard paper but can be a traditional exegesis, a passage interpretation, a critical interpretation, or a comparative analysis. All papers must have a thesis and be formatted according to the Chicago Style. Each summary must be written on at least one of the readings assigned from any reading from the week (note: you can always supplement the readings by incorporating those from previous weeks). No late submissions will be accepted. All of your analyses total will equal 25% of your final grade.

Reading Discussions | Each student will be required to lead two class discussions, which will be assigned at the beginning of the semester. No more than two students can present on the same day. The purpose or objective of student presentations is to demonstrate knowledge of the text but NOT to give an overview of the main ideas and arguments in the text. Rather, the role of the presentations is to facilitate discussion amongst your classmates. A successful presentation should highlight at least one idea, problem, argument, or interpretation of the text. Each presentation should be 5–10 minutes and include questions for discussion immediately following the presentation. There is no rubric for the assignment, which is graded on a pass/fail basis. Both presentations together are worth 20% of your final grade.

Seminar Paper | The final paper is the capstone of the course work for this class. The paper itself is worth 35% of your

final grade and reflects the accumulation of your labor from other written assignments from the course. Typically, paper topics should be chosen by students by mid-semester. The length of the paper should be 15–25 pages. The paper must include at least 3–9 secondary materials and 1–3 primary texts.

Annotated Bibliography | Students are required to write three article reviews of secondary sources during the course of the semester, creating an annotated bibliography that will be worth 20% of your grade.

Course Reading Schedule

[Subject to Change]

Day	Date	Assigned Topic	Reading & Assignments Due
	(WEEKS 1–4)	LAWS OF NATURE, MORALITY, AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-PRESERVATION	Cicero, <i>Orations on War</i> (selections) Cicero, <i>On Laws</i> (selections) Cicero, <i>De Finibus</i> (selections) Erasmus, <i>The Complaint of Peace</i> Erasmus, <i>Bellum: Essay on War</i> Justus Lipsius, <i>On Constancy</i> Justus Lipsius, <i>Politica</i> (selections) Justus Lipsius, <i>Political Admonitions and Examples</i> (selections) Marie de Gournay, “Institution du Prince” and “Adieu du l’ame du Roy.”

	(WEEKS 5–9)	HUGO GROTIUS: A NEW CONCEPT OF WAR	<p>Geoffrey Symcox, <i>War, Diplomacy, and Imperialism, 1618–1763</i>, pp. 1–62</p> <p>Richard Tuck, <i>Philosophy and Government</i>, pp. 31–64</p> <p>Richard Tuck, <i>The Rights of War and Peace</i>, pp. 78–126</p> <p>Hugo Grotius, <i>On Prize and Booty</i></p> <p>Hugo Grotius, <i>The Rights (Law) of War and Peace</i>, selections from Book I and Book II</p>
		GROTIUS CONTINUED [...]	(ONLINE) Hugo Grotius, <i>The Rights (Law) of War and Peace</i> , selections from Book III
	(WEEKS 10–13)	THOMAS HOBBS AND MARGARET CAVENDISH: ON HUMAN NATURE, WAR, AND SOVEREIGNTY	<p>(ONLINE) Hobbes, <i>On the Citizen</i>, selections</p> <p>(ONLINE) Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>, part I, selections</p> <p>(ONLINE) Hobbes, <i>The Elements of Law</i>, selections</p> <p>(ONLINE) Cavendish, <i>Philosophical Letters</i>, Sections 1.4–1.14</p>

		ON WAR AND UTOPIAS OF PEACE IN MARGARET CAVENDISH	<p>Cavendish, <i>The Blazing World</i>, 5–20 (Political Writings, Cambridge Edition)</p> <p>Cavendish, <i>Orations</i> (Political Writings, Cambridge Edition), Part I, Orat. 1–11; Part II, Orat. 12–27; Part III, Orat. 28–44; Part VI, Orat 65–73; Part XIV, Orat. 149–169</p>
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		CAVENDISH'S <i>THE BLAZING WORLD</i>	(REQUIRED) Cavendish, <i>The Blazing World</i> , (entire text)
	(WEEKS 14–16)	CONWAY & SPINOZA: PERFECTION AND CORRECTION	<p>(REQUIRED) Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i>, Part I + Appendix of Part I; and Part IV, including Preface</p> <p>(REQUIRED) (ONLINE) Spinoza's correspondence with Blijenbergh in 1664–1665</p>

		CONWAY & SPINOZA: PERFECTION AND CORRECTION	<u>Continued reading from 12.3...</u> (REQUIRED) Anne Conway, <i>Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy</i> , chapters 1–4
		CONWAY & SPINOZA: PERFECTION AND CORRECTION	(REQUIRED) Anne Conway, <i>Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy</i> , chapters 5–9
		UTOPIA(S) AND ESCHATOLOGIES OF PEACE: RETHINKING EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY (CONCLUSION)	