STAR-CROSSED LOVERS: 
THE POLITICS & PHILOSOPHY OF MODERN FREEDOM

First, this course is aimed at providing a historical grounding for engaging in current debates on the meaning and practice of freedom.

Second, in focussing on the philosophical activity between the two French revolutions, it hopes to provide us with a way of talking about the relation between thought and action, theory and practice.

Third, while it focuses on a particular period in western history with its concomitant history of political thought (conventionally understood), the course is not invested in telling a neat story. Rather, it is an attempt at studying the evolution of political thought that leaves the storytelling to us, and is attentive to continuities and disjunctures, to products and remainders (and to waste as well!)
Fourth, it seeks to critically engage and assess the title’s claim that the story of modern freedom and subjectivity involves star-crossings.... Who are the characters? Is another genre more appropriate? Is there even an identifiable plot?

In all this, the course assumes, on the part of its designer, that something in the chosen period is rather crucial as a bridge between different eras in world history, wherein many formative stories get told, which are worth investigating, if only to earn the privilege to subvert them, or to transcend them, or to challenge the said assumption—and to understand subversions and transcendences that have happened over the past century and a half, in and outside western philosophy.

TEXTS

Required
Stepelevich. *The Young Hegelians: An Anthology*
Marx, Karl. *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*
Kant, Immanuel. *The Basic Writings of Kant*
Findlay, J.N. *Hegel: The Essential Writings*
Bretall, Robert. *The Kierkegaard Anthology*
Bowie, Andrew. *Introduction to German Philosophy*

Required and suggested readings beyond the above-mentioned books have been placed on electronic reserve, and are detailed in the reading schedule that follows.

EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Preparation

• You are required to attend class having done the assigned reading for the day. Please bring the text to class. I realise, however, that some form of guidelines will be helpful, and I will post them on the course website a day in advance of the scheduled reading.

• Active class participation is not only required, it is expected. The point is not to have understood everything before coming to class—your treasure is the questions, difficulties and issues that arise from what is read, because they eventually determine what course the class will take—and, more importantly, the story about freedom we will collectively tell. So, try to have as many of those as possible when you come to class.

• I will follow the college attendance policy, very strictly. Two unexcused absences will earn you an official warning. Three unexcused absences shall result in suspension. You must not be absent on the days you are the scribe, for that will automatically get you an F on that part of the course requirements.

• Tardiness is disrespectful, really, and counts against you.
Written Work

There are two broad components of your written assignments for this course, roughly described as (mainly) creative, and (mainly) exegetical. (I know these categories are simplistic, but please work with me here!)

First, you will keep a journal throughout the semester to be handed in to me at the beginning of every week. The journal will contain your responses to, and reflections on the readings. But there is something you must keep in mind here. Imagine the journal as your notes for a play on freedom—you will be keeping a record of what kind of play you could be writing, as our work in class unfolds. You can do pretty much whatever you want here (work with other literary forms, perhaps.) The point is to explore possibilities of forms of interpretation. (Let the course goals guide you here, in the form of questions to be addressed.)

Second, there will be short exegetical papers (3-4 pages in length) on (1) Kant (2) Hegel (3) Young Hegelians (4) Marx (5) Kierkegaard (on topics suggested by me), followed by a final paper (12-15 pages long) which will combine your work in earlier papers and your journal. You and I will work together to design the final paper. You will present this paper at the conference organised by the class (see below).

Presentations

Each student will prepare a presentation that consists of two parts. The first part will involve being a scribe for one week of class. You will produce a “transcript” or “minutes” of two class periods. This transcript (for lack of a better word) is a carefully edited summary/notes of the previous class session, but written in complete sentences. Transcripts will be no more than 2 single-spaced pages and will be photocopied by the student who wrote it and handed out to all students at the beginning of each class to be read aloud, and will serve as a cumulative record of the course. In addition to reviewing the material covered over the previous week, the transcripts should include announcements made in class, questions not addressed in class. A transcript is not supposed to merely reproduce what was said in class, but should organise the material thematically, making choices about importance and relevance and important connections. When presented to the class, we can make amendments to these minutes as required.

The second part of your presentation will introduce us to the new reading for the day, raising questions, making connections to previous material, and present something relevant about the intellectual genealogy of the thinker.

Conference

The class will put together a mini-conference on freedom. We will discuss this in detail. Participation in organising this is mandatory.

For course policies on Academic Honesty and Religious Holidays, please refer to the SRC Catalogue, pp. 31-33. For issues of learning skills, and subsequent accommodations, please get in touch with me, and also contact Rebecca Fiske (rebecca@simons-rock.edu).
A sketch of your grade composition

Participation, Presentations, Conference 25%
Written work 75%
   Journal 15%
   Papers 60%

CLASS SCHEDULE
* All readings marked with an asterisk are on electronic reserve. The rest are available at the Hart Bookstore. The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus—you will be consulted for, and informed of, changes made.

Tuesday, 17 January  Introductions
The French, the Germans and the Enlightenment

Thursday, 19 January  The Question of the Moral and the Political
*Schneewind, J.B. “Themes in the History of Moral Philosophy”
Bowie, Andrew. Introduction to German Philosophy (IGP), pp. 1-12

KANT
Tuesday, 24 January  Wood, Allen. “Introduction,” in Basic Writings of Kant (BWK), pp. viii-xxv
Kant, Immanuel. “What is Enlightenment?” in BWK, pp. 133-142

Thursday, 26 January  Kant. Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, in BWK, pp. 145-163

Tuesday, 31 January  Kant. Groundwork, pp. 164-202

Thursday, 2 February  Kant. Groundwork, pp. 203-221

Tuesday, 7 February  Kant. “[...]Theory [...] Practice,” in BWK, pp. 417-432

Thursday, 9 February  Bowie. IGP, pp. 13-40

First paper due by noon on Monday, 13 February

FICHTE & SCHELLING
Thursday, 14 February  *Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. Vocation of Man

Tuesday, 21 February  NO CLASS—Winter Break

Thursday, 23 February  NO CLASS—Winter Break

HEGEL
Tuesday, 28 February  Hegel, Georg W. F. The Essential Writings (TEW). pp. 1-36
Bowie. “Hegel,” in IGP, pp. 79-92

Thursday, 2 March  Hegel. TEW, pp. 37-85
Tuesday, 7 March  Hegel. *TEW*, pp. 37-85 (contd.)
Thursday, 9 March  Hegel. *TEW*, pp. 253-313
Tuesday, 14 March  Hegel. *TEW*, pp. 253-313 (contd.)

Second paper due by noon on Friday, 17 March

**THE YOUNG HEGELIANS**

Thursday, 16 March  Stepelevich, Lawrence. “Introduction,” in *The Young Hegelians (TYH)*, pp. 1-16
Bowie. “From the Early Romantics to Feuerbach,” in *IGP*, pp. 94-117
Tuesday, 21 March  Feuerbach, Ludwig. *TYH*, TBA.
Thursday, 23 March  Feuerbach. TBA
Tuesday, 28 March  NO CLASS—Spring Break
Thursday, 30 March  NO CLASS—Spring Break
Tuesday, 4 April  Ruge, Arnold. *TYH*, TBA
Thursday, 6 April  Stirner, Max. *TYH*, TBA

Third paper due by noon on Monday, 10 April

**KARL MARX**

Tuesday, 11 April  Marx, Karl. *Writings of the Young Marx… (WYM)*, pp. 35-66
Thursday, 13 April  Marx. *WYM*, pp. 216-248
Tuesday, 18 April  Marx. *WYM*, pp. 249-264
Thursday, 20 April  Marx. *WYM*, pp. 265-282
Tuesday, 25 April  Marx. *WYM*, pp. 283-300, 314-337

Fourth paper due by noon on Friday, 28 April

**KIERKEGAARD & CONCLUSION**

Thursday, 27 April  *Kierkegaard. Soren. “Fear and Trembling”*
Tuesday, 2 May  *Kierkegaard (contd.)*
Thursday, 4 May  Readings TBA (Berlin, Christman, spectral nationality etc.)

Fifth Paper due by Thursday, 4 May

Wednesday, 10 May  FINAL PAPER DUE