

UCSD DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
ADAM SMITH: MORALS AND MARKETS
POLITICAL SCIENCE 119A
Winter 2012

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Adam Smith lived and wrote during a period of intellectual flourishing in 18th century Scotland, known as the Scottish Enlightenment. Best known in succeeding centuries for his treatise *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) and its defense of free markets, and its caustic assault on the mercantile system, he was also author of a treatise on morals that was highly influential in eighteenth-century intellectual circles, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). Some have argued that Smith's emphasis on human sympathy in the 1759 *Moral Sentiments* was incompatible with, and was ultimately succeeded by, his emphasis on self-interested economic behavior in the 1776 *Wealth of Nations*. In this course we will pursue this so-called "Adam Smith Problem" by carefully examining Smith's two seminal treatises, with an eye to addressing the proper relation between morals and markets in Smith's mind, and in our own world.

A seminar can thrive only with full, committed participation of its members. Your main tasks in this seminar are to come prepared to engage in active discussion of the text, and a take-home final essay, based on questions distributed during week 4. Your participation grade is 20% and your final essay will count for 80%.

Our discussions will be oriented around questions that can be found under the "Adam Smith" tab at: weber.ucsd.edu/~fformanb/page1/page1.html Please print and bring with you to each session.

Required texts. Please use the editions assigned here:

*Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. Raphael and Macfie (Liberty Fund)

*Adam Smith, *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Dickey (Hackett)

* All other readings are in a Course Reader, available at University Readers. 858-552-1120. Or <http://www.universityreaders.com/students/instructions> Once you pay for your reader online, you will get a link to a PDF containing 20% of the course readings, to get you started until your reader arrives.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Adam Smith as a "problem"

Week 2: 18th century debates on nature and civilization: Hobbes, Mandeville, Rousseau and Smith

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 13

Bernard Mandeville, *The Grumbling Hive*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Second Discourse*

Adam Smith, "Letter to the Edinburgh Review"

Smith, *Lecture on Jurisprudence* A.i.27-35 (14-16); B 339-358 (545-554)

Week 3: Adam Smith: Sympathy or Self-Interest?

Fonna Forman-Barzilai, selection from *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy: Cosmopolitanism and Moral Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 29-5.

Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I

Week 4: Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Parts II-III

Week 5: Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Parts IV-V (special Monday night session)

Week 6: Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Parts VI-VII

Week 7: Wealth of Nations, Books I-II FILM: *Adam Smith and the Wealth of Nations*

Week 8: Wealth of Nations, Books III-IV

Week 9: Wealth of Nations, Book V

Week 10: FILM: *Modern Times*