

PSC 282
MWF 11.00-11.50, Hawkins 209
Office: Hawkins 149G (inside Political Science suite)
Office Hours: Mon. 2-3pm / Wed. 4.50-5.30pm / Thur. 2-3.30pm / other times, email me

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POLITICAL IDEALS AND IDEOLOGIES

Spring 2019

About the Course

Should we be more concerned with freedom, equality, or order in politics? What should the relationship be between people and their government? Is the individual or the group more politically meaningful? What are major systems of political beliefs, and what are the conflicts within and between them? To explore these and other important questions, this course studies major political ideologies. By reading classical and contemporary primary sources from a variety of ideological traditions, this class provides a critical analysis of politics, political ideas, and political life. It also examines the concept of 'ideology' itself, asking what an ideology is and why they are important to study. Finally, the course examines how political ideologies and beliefs impact our understanding of contemporary political phenomena and the ways we justify and understand our own political choices.

In these ways, this course also functions as an introduction into the historical tradition of political thought. It emphasizes close readings, critical analysis, and class discussion of theoretical texts. In this class you will develop your own capacity for articulating and analyzing political ideologies in this class and beyond, as a crucial element in your own political life. This means that your active citizenship in the course is essential, and that you should be open to reflecting on and re-evaluating your own political ideas (as I will do myself). Our course discussions, writing assignment, and final podcast assignment provide opportunities for practicing your own political thinking and developing your own political ideals.

While large, this is still a discussion-centered class, and all students are expected to actively participate in class. You must prepare for every class by doing the reading, reflecting upon the course texts, and bringing to class issues, questions, important passages, and critiques for discussion. *Bring the relevant text to class, always!*

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end the semester, students should be able to successfully:

- Analyze political ideologies and their component ideals
- Demonstrate knowledge of central questions, arguments, themes, concepts, and thinkers in Western political theory
- Explain the study of political ideas as an ongoing, connected conversation debating enduring questions related to freedom, power, and order
- Assess questions about political theory in written and oral form
- Apply abstract ideas in order to evaluate contemporary political events and their own political beliefs

General Education Learning Outcomes

This class fulfills the Humanities 5HUM General Education requirement. Following a course in this category, students will:

- Understand the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities
- Demonstrate understanding the complexity of our world,
- Demonstrate understanding of aesthetics,
- Identify the great ideas and cultures of the world,
- Explain the moral responsibility of the individual,
- Communicate effectively in written and oral expression, and
- Filter, analyze, and critique information and experiences.

Evaluation

- Class citizenship, including attendance: 20%
- Class blog: 25%
- Take-home essays: 30% (2 highest essay grades out of 3 essays, 15% each)
- Final assignment: 25%

Grading: Grades will be assigned in accordance with the SUNY Plattsburgh College Catalog: *Superior:* A (92.5-100), A- (90-92.4); *Above Average:* B + (87.5-89.9), B (82.5-87.4), B- (80-82.4); *Average:* C+ (77.5-79.9), C (72.5-77.4), C- (70-72.4); *Passing but unsatisfactory:* D+ (67.5-69.9), D (60-67.4); *Failing:* E (0-59.9)

I reserve the right to incorporate pop quizzes on the reading, which would become part of your class citizenship grade.

Assignments

- Class citizenship (20% of overall grade): I care about whether you come to class and the role you play in it; our class will be most rewarding if you attend regularly, and if you are an active citizen. I expect you to come on time, to listen, and to participate. I also realize that being sick, taking mental health days, and other things are a part of life. After four absences, the class citizenship part of your grade will decrease for each additional absence; if have a long-term health issue or any kind of emergency that is going to keep you out for two class sessions or more in a row, be in touch so we can work out alternate arrangements. When you miss class, contact a classmate, and then come to me with questions about the reading, things you'd like to discuss, needed clarifications.

Class citizenship, however, entails more than just showing up, it also means participating in class.

- Doing the reading is part of your classroom citizenship.
- Participation can take many different forms: asking questions about unclear concepts or materials, raising ideas we as a class or the author may have overlooked, respectfully sharing opinions, volunteering to read passages aloud, visiting office hours, contributing to class discussions in large and small groups without monopolizing conversations, paying attention to me and to your classmates, and taking risks when there are questions asked that have no clear answers. Participation does not only mean talking—it also means working to be aware of the space you inhabit and how you can best contribute to an atmosphere of supportive learning.

- I understand that speaking in class can be challenging. We will have a number of different kinds of discussions to encourage participation, and you should use the blog as a way of preparing ideas to bring to our class sessions. Regularly coming to office hours and discussing the readings can contribute to your class citizenship grade as well, as does asking questions in class.
 - Last but not least, class citizenship means being receptive of and interested in others' political and philosophical perspectives, respectful of experiences different than your own, and open to having others disagree with you.
- Class blog (25% of overall grade): Throughout the semester, we will make a class blog, using WordPress. During the first week of class, I will lead a brief WordPress tutorial and distribute instructions on joining WordPress and becoming a member of the blog. You are required to write one post of at least 175 words + 1-3 discussion questions once per week; in addition, you must make 2 comments (at least 50 words each) per week on others' posts. Posts are due by midnight the night before class, on the readings to be discussed the next day; comments can be made at any time during the week. The class will be split into groups during the first week of class, and the group you are in will determine what days you are required to write a post. The posting schedule will be passed out and uploaded to Moodle.

The blog is *not* intended to be a place for you to summarize the readings, but rather to interpret and analyze them. Your blog posts can take many forms: offer a critique of the reading, connect it to contemporary or historical events, relate it to earlier readings in the course, offer a close reading of an especially important or interesting passage, and much more. We will use responses and discussion questions in each class session. *A secondary goal of the blog is to familiarize you with the WordPress platform, gaining a skill set relevant for work in the many advocacy groups, media companies, organizations, and businesses that use WordPress or similar content management systems/web platforms.* In order to encourage you to grapple with difficult ideas and challenge your own views, this will be a private blog visible only to our class.
 - Take-Home Essays (30% of overall grade): There are three take-home essay assignments throughout the semester; I will count your highest two grades 15% each toward your final grade. This means you can write all three essays and I will drop the lowest score, or you can write two essays that will both count. The three essay due dates are 2/15, 3/11, and 4/10. They will require you to write approximately 1000-1200 words, and you will have the assignment at least one week before the due date.
 - Final Assignment (25% of overall grade): The main form of the final assignment will be creating a podcast connecting ideas, ideals, ideologies, and readings from the class to a contemporary political phenomenon and/or piece(s) of popular culture with major political themes.
 - There will be a specific set of guidelines as to what will be included in your podcast.
 - You will have the option to work individually, or in a group of 2 or 3 people (but the podcasts from a group will be required to be longer than those of individuals).
 - We will build up to this assignment throughout the semester, including a tutorial on audio recording + editing and feedback as you develop topics

- I am familiar with making podcasts and with audio recording and editing, and will be a resource for any technical difficulties you run in to.
- My goal with this assignment is to offer everyone an of-the-moment (and dare I say fun?) way to demonstrate critical thinking and analysis different from a traditional research paper.
- This assignment will also build technological skills relevant beyond the classroom. If they wish, students can opt out of the podcast assignment, instead writing a research paper. I will provide guidelines for this alternate assignment when the podcast assignment is distributed.

Texts

All material for this course will be provided in PDF/electronic form through Moodle. I would suggest printing out readings (still cheaper than the major textbooks for a course like this!); you are required to have the reading(s) with you in paper or electronic (see below) form for every class session. Regularly not having the readings with you will lower your class citizenship grade.

Inclusivity and Classroom Environment

The diversity of this classroom and campus is a strength. I intend to cultivate a classroom environment that is attentive to and respectful of diversity in its many forms, including but not limited to the intersections of race, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class/socioeconomic background, ability, age, culture, national origin, religion, and political and philosophical opinion. I strive for inclusivity in education, understood as a demonstration of equity through awareness, understanding, and respect for the ways that the differences, identity, culture, background, and experience, and socialization impact how we live and learn. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or a fellow student, is particularly troubling.

I believe that the best way to learn and engage with the course material is adopting a critical perspective. I expect us to challenge all taken for granted assumptions, including our own. To this end, we have to first give all arguments the benefit of doubt, learn how these ideas are constructed, and how they operate in our political world. This class is an open floor for all types of ideas as long as we acknowledge that there might be fundamental differences in our opinions and political positions, cultivate respect for each other, and avoid discriminatory language.

Further, disagreement (including with me!) is inevitable in a political science class, and can be generative for everyone in the room, so long as it proceeds equitably. A diversity of opinions and experiences can be a source of learning for us all. It is also likely that readings in this class will contradict your beliefs. My conviction is that, as the [American Association of University Professors writes](#), this kind of challenge “is inevitable in classrooms if the goal is to expose students to new ideas, have them question beliefs they have taken for granted, grapple with ethical problems they have never considered, and, more generally, expand their horizons so as to become informed and responsible democratic citizens.”

Gender Pronouns

All people deserve to be addressed in accordance with their identity, ranging from preferring a nickname to your gender pronouns. Students are encouraged to notify me of their gender

pronouns so I can address you correctly (she, he, they, ze, etc.), especially if they have reason to believe I may refer to you by the incorrect pronoun. I use he/him/his pronouns.

Accessibility and Student Support Services

It is the policy of the College that any student requiring accommodations of any kind to fully access this course must be registered for accommodations with the Student Support Services office located in the Angell College Center. If you need any accommodations for this course, please contact Student Support Services at 518-564-2810.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If there are ways I can assist you in reaching your full potential in class, please talk to me or email me. Please feel free to bring and use (quiet) fidget/stim toys in the classroom.

Learning Center

The Learning Center (101-103 Feinberg) offers many resources that may be useful for this course, including free appointment and walk-in tutoring, academic peer mentoring, “academic personal trainers,” and more. Visit the [Learning center website](#), contact them, or ask me for a referral. I am also available to answer any questions, to help with readings, to brainstorm, to assist on assignments, to offer advice, and more – email me or drop-in during office hours.

Technology

Numerous studies (for example [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#); for an overview see [here](#)) demonstrate that, on aggregate, students taking notes by hand learn information more effectively and receive higher grades than those taking notes electronically, even when those on devices are exclusively focused on class tasks (which is hard to do!). Moreover, many of us (myself certainly included) find it difficult to pull ourselves away from social media, news, etc. when we have screens in front of us. Finally, in a class that will involve lots of discussion with one another, screens, alerts, and notifications can distract you and your classmates, and can impede the conversations that will be essential to our experience in the course this semester.

Nevertheless, many of our readings for the course are in PDF/electronic form, and I recognize that laptops/tablets are essential to the learning of many students. So, while I encourage you to print out course materials and take written notes, you may use laptops and tablets for referencing readings and taking notes in class; you may NOT use your phones. Any in-class use of technology (e.g., laptop, tablet, etc.) or other activity that is disruptive to your fellow students or to me will result, without warning, in your citizenship grade going down. If you have concerns or want to talk to me for advice on technology use, please come talk to me.

Academic Honesty

It is expected that all students enrolled in this class support the letter and the spirit of the Academic Honesty Policy as stated in the College Catalog.

Academic misconduct and dishonesty—such as cheating, plagiarism, submitting someone else’s work as your own, submitting work from other classes without permission, etc.—are serious offenses. Such acts violate the trust that forms the foundation of the student-teacher relationship, they take away opportunities to learn, and they discount the work of others, including peers,

faculty, and scholars. In particular, plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and is unacceptable. Any acts of suspected academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be addressed through the [Suspected Academic Dishonesty Procedure](#).

Other course policies and notes

- Check your email regularly – I will do the same for you.
 - If a student has a desired name that is not listed on my course roster, please let me know.
 - I strongly encourage you to come visit my office hours, even if only to chat; if the times listed don't work, email me so we can figure out another time to meet.
 - If you are struggling with any aspect of the course, talk to me sooner rather than later so we can work on the ways to best help you. Please also consider visiting the Learning Center.
 - If you would like a little bit of extra credit, email me a cute animal picture by 10:30am on January 30 to demonstrate that you have read all way through the fine print of the syllabus
 - If a religious holiday that you observe conflicts with an assignment, please let me know in advance so that we may discuss alternate options.
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READING SCHEDULE

Read the listed text(s) before coming to class for that day (earlier, if you are writing a blog post for that day). The schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion; any changes will be announced in class and/or over email. When there are multiple readings, please read them in the order listed.

I. What is Ideology, and why study it anyway?

1/28: Welcome

- Read the syllabus, start to finish

1/30: What is ideology?

- Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (2003), pp. 1-4, 31-39

2/1: What is ideology?, continued

- Raymond Williams, "Ideology," *Keywords: A Vocabulary for Culture and Society* (1976), all
- Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (2012), pp. 17-20
- Dino Franco Felluga, *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory* (2011), "Althusser on Ideological State Apparatuses," all

2/4: Why study ideology?

- Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (2003), pp. 122-128
- Tommie Shelby, "Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory" (2003), *The Philosophical Forum* Vol. 34: pp. 187-8
- Take the Political Compass test before coming to class, and think about the test and your results in relation to the reading so far: <https://www.politicalcompass.org/test>

II. Liberalism

2/6: John Locke, the state of nature, and civil society

- Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (c. 1689), chap. 2 all, chap. 7 sect. 87-94

2/8: Locke and property

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, chap. 5 ("Of Property"), all

2/11: Locke and liberal government

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, chap. 8, sect. 95-99; chap. 9, all; chap. 19, sect. 221-230

2/13: John Stuart Mill and liberal individuality

- Mill, *On Liberty* (1859), chap. 1 all

2/15: Mill, continued

- Mill, *On Liberty*, chap. 4, excerpt

2/18: T.H. Green and positive liberty

- Green, “Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract” (1881), excerpt

2/20: John Rawls and philosophical political liberalism

- John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political, not Metaphysical,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol. 14 (1985), read sections II, IV, VI (pp. 226-231, 234-239, 245-251)

2/22: Feminist liberalism

- Martha Nussbaum, “The Future of Feminist Liberalism,” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 74 (2000), read sections I, III, IV (pp. 47-48 and 59-68)

2/25: Black liberalism

- Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*, excerpt from chap. 6

2/27: ESSAY I DUE

- *During class time, you are required to attend a session (your choice) of the “Many Faces of Social Justice” Teach-In*

III. Conservatism

3/1: Edmund Burke and the conservative inheritance

- Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), “Our liberties as inheritance”; “The importance of property”; “The rights of men,” in online *Early Modern Texts* version

3/4: Burke, continued

- Burke, *Reflections*, “The loss of our compass”; “In defense of prejudices”; “Caution in Amending the State”; “Society as a contract”; “What is wrong with absolute democracy,” in online *Early Modern Texts* version

3/6: Michael Oakeshott on conservatism as a disposition

- Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative” (1956), in *Rationalism and Politics and Other Essays*, read pp. 168-182

3/8: Oakeshott, continued

- Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative,” read pp. 182-196

3/11: Phyllis Schlafly and grassroots American conservatism

- Phyllis Schlafly, *A Choice not an Echo*, “The Obvious Choice” and “Why this Book was Written”
- Elizabeth Kolbert, “Firebrand: Phyllis Schlafly and the conservative revolution” (2005), *The New Yorker*, all

3/13: Donald Trump and conservatism

- Gladden Pappin, “The Anxieties of Conservatism” (2017), *American Affairs Journal*, excerpts
- Corey Robin, “Donald Trump’s Reactionary Mind” (2017), *Jacobin*, excerpts

IV. Capitalism, Libertarianism

3/15: Joseph Schumpeter

- Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1942), “The Process of Creative Destruction” and “The Civilization of Capitalism”

Spring Break!

3/25: Friedrich Hayek

- Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom (Condensed Edition)* (1945), excerpts

3/27: Milton Friedman

- Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), chap. 1 (“The Relation between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom”)

3/29: Robert Nozick

- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), excerpts from chap. 7, “Distributive Justice”

4/1: **ESSAY II DUE**

V. Marxism

4/3: An introduction to Marx

- Friedrich Engels, “Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx” (1883)
- Marx, “Letter to Arnold Ruge (For A Ruthless Criticism...)” (1843)
- Marx, Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (“Marx on the History of His Opinions”) (1859), excerpt

4/5: Ideology

- Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (1845-6), excerpts

4/8: Alienation

- Reading: Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1844), “Estranged Labour”

4/10: Labor and exploitation

- Marx, *Capital, Vol. I* (1867), excerpts on labor and the workday

4/12: Revolution

- Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Community Party (1847-8), Prologue and Part I

4/15: Revolution

- Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Community Party (1847-8), Part II

4/17: Critique of Liberalism

- Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, excerpts

4/19: Freedom

- Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Program” (1875), excerpts
- Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (1845-6), excerpt on communism
- Marx, *Capital Vol. III* (1894), excerpt on freedom and necessity

4/22: Marxism and Race in the US

- W.E.B. Du Bois, “Marxism and the Negro Problem” (1933) excerpts. In *African American Political Thought* (1996), ed. Wintz

4/24: Marxism and Feminism: Wages for Housework

- Nicole Cox and Silvia Federici, “Counter-planning from the Kitchen” (1974)

4/26: **ESSAY III DUE**

- In-class: podcast tutorial

VI. Political ideologies and us

4/29: Film and Political Ideology: *Sorry to Bother You* (2018, dir. Boots Riley)

- Greg Smith, *What Media Classes Really Want to Discuss* (2011), read chap. 1
- San Diego Film Festival, “How to Analyze a Movie” (2015), all

5/1: *Sorry to Bother You*, continued

- Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience*, excerpts from chap. 1
- Stephen Mulhall, *On Film*, 2nd ed., pp. 7-10

5/3: *Sorry to Bother You*, continued

- John S. Nelson, *Popular Cinema as Political Theory*, pp. 2-4, 7
- Erenest Giglio, *Here's Looking at You: Hollywood, Film & Politics*, 3rd ed., excerpts from chap. 1
- OPTIONAL: read the rest of Nelson, for more about how to synthesize film analysis and political theory

5/6: Topic TBD by class

5/8: Why study ideologies, encore

- Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (2003), pp. 122-128
- Take the Political Compass test before coming to class, and think about the test and your results in relation to the whole semester: <https://www.politicalcompass.org/test>

5/10: Final project in-class work day

Finals week begins