

**Political Science 200**  
**Interpreting Politics: An Introduction to Political Ideas**  
Hunter College  
Fall 2016

Professor Leonard Feldman

Lecture: M, TH: 3:10-4 pm in Hunter West 714  
and

Discussion: M 4:10-5 pm (North C108) *or* W 4:10-5 pm (West W208) *or* TH 4:10-5 pm  
(North C108)

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This course is designed to introduce students to the interpretive practice of political theory by examining some central arguments over the meaning and application of core political ideas. This course will introduce students to some of the core concepts and texts of major traditions of political thought. The course is especially concerned to cover those traditions of political thought that have had significant impact in the practical life of constitutional democracies. It does so by examining rival interpretations of political ideas such as freedom, democracy, equality, human nature and legitimacy. We will focus on competing understandings of these ideas as they are developed in the liberal, conservative and socialist traditions. We will critically examine how theorists within each of these traditions conceptualize the relationship between the individual and the political order and we will examine ethical debates within and between these traditions concerning the nature of freedom and its relation to political life, the question of immigration and borders, and the degree of equality required for democracy.

**Learning Outcomes**

After taking this class, students will be able to analyze and interpret political arguments from several central political-ideological traditions (liberalism, socialism and conservatism), gaining an understanding of how each of these traditions conceptualizes the relationship between the individual and the political order, and the how their ethical and policy commitments are shaped by underlying premises concerning human nature and the nature of community. Students will learn how freedom, human nature, equality and

the state are conceptualized and linked together in each of these traditions. Writing assignments will teach students the process of constructing logical arguments in political theory, with a focus on employing textual evidence to defend the arguments. Assignments will also develop students' skills in applying theoretical and conceptual materials to specific policy controversies and empirical cases.

### **Office of Accessibility**

Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of Accessibility located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call 212-772-4857, TTY 212-650-3230.

### **Academic Integrity**

Any deliberate borrowing of the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others without clear and specific acknowledgment of the source is intellectual theft and is called plagiarism. It is not plagiarism to borrow the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others if the source is clearly and specifically acknowledged. Students who consult such critical material and wish to include some of the insights, ideas, or statements encountered must provide full citations in an appropriate form. Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

### **Online Elements of the Class**

There are three online components of the class that are required: Blackboard, Top Hat, and Turnitin.

1. We will use **Blackboard** regularly to communicate information, post assignments and study questions, and post grades. In addition, some readings (marked with an asterisk on the class schedule below) will be made available as PDF documents on the Blackboard site for our class. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard regularly. You also need to make sure that Blackboard has an email address for you and that it's an email address you check regularly. If it's not, change your email address on Blackboard by clicking "Update Email" on the tools menu.
2. We will be using the **Top Hat** ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat->

[Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide](#)) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website:

<https://app.tophat.com/e/581514> Note: our Course Join Code is 581514. Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: [www.tophat.com/pricing](http://www.tophat.com/pricing).

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

3. You are required to submit the three essays to **turnitin.com**. *Your paper will not be graded until it is uploaded there.* We will provide you with the Course ID and password for our class, as well as complete instructions, when we distribute the first essay assignment.

## Requirements

- Class participation (20%). Class participation involves consistent, regular attendance at lecture **and** at your assigned discussion section. For lecture, this means checking in via Top Hat at the beginning of each lecture and responding to any survey questions or quizzes via Top Hat during lecture. For discussion section, it includes coming to section having done the assigned reading, participating in class discussion, and completing any in-class writing, small-group assignments and/or quizzes therein. Attendance and question response in Top Hat will be worth 10 percent of your final grade. Attendance and participation in your discussion section will also be worth 10 percent of your final grade.
- A three page essay due September 26th (5%) This essay will ask you to apply what you've learned about one of the three political ideologies we will study to an analysis of an aspect of the Presidential election campaign.
- An in-class midterm test (one essay and short answer questions) on October 24th (20%). The midterm will examine (1) your ability to correctly identify and explain key concepts, positions, and arguments within the liberal and conservative traditions and (2) develop comparative evaluations (i.e. critically assess liberal positions from a conservative viewpoint, critically assess conservative viewpoints from a liberal viewpoint).
- A six page paper due November 17th (25%) This paper will further develop your skills comparing, contrasting and evaluating rival political traditions by asking you to (a) apply two political thinkers from different traditions to a contemporary policy controversy and develop an original argument explaining which thinker/tradition does a better job of interpretation and evaluation, and why.

- An 8-10 page take-home exam due December 19<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm (30%) The take-home final will further examine your skills in applying normative theoretical texts and arguments to specific controversies by using the topic of criminal punishment in U.S. society as a lens through which to apply, compare and evaluate liberal, conservative, and socialist political theories.

Late paper policy: Unless you have a documented medical emergency, late papers will be deducted one-half of one grade for every day they are late.

### **Additional Expectations**

- You are expected to show up for lecture **on time**. Coming in late is disruptive to other students.
- You are expected to do the assigned reading before class and to bring the particular text or texts to lecture.
- You may use your phone to check-in with top hat and respond to questions, but no extracurricular cellphone use is permitted. Similarly, laptops may be used in class but only for note-taking, top hat, and accessing electronic copies of the readings.

### **Books to Buy at Shakespeare & Co (Lexington Ave between 68<sup>th</sup> and 69<sup>th</sup>):**

1. Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (Fifth Edition... but Fourth Edition is fine too)

All other readings, marked with an asterisk (\*), are available on blackboard under “course materials.”

### **Schedule of Classes and Reading Assignments:**

#### **I. Mapping Political Arguments**

TH 8/25 Introduction to contested political ideas

M 8/29 Preliminary Concepts and Definitions. How do people adopt their political ideologies? Three ways of “mapping” ideologies: the linear spectrum, the horseshoe, and the double axis

Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, Introduction, pp. 1-23

Take the Online Political Ideologies Quiz at [www.politicalcompass.org](http://www.politicalcompass.org)

## II. Three Political Ideologies: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Socialism

TH 9/1 Core themes of Liberalism: Liberty  
Heywood, chapter two, pp. 24-53

TH 9/8 Liberalism Classical and Modern; Paper Writing Tutorial  
Heywood, chapter two, pp. 53-64  
Hillary Clinton's Acceptance speech, 2016 DNC:  
<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/full-text-hillary-clintons-dnc-speech-226410>

M 9/12 Core Themes of Conservatism  
Heywood, chapter three, pp. 65-85

TH 9/15 Conservatism and the New Right  
Heywood, chapter three, pp. 86-97  
Donald Trump's Acceptance speech, 2016 RNC:  
<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/full-transcript-donald-trump-nomination-acceptance-speech-at-rnc-225974>

M 9/19 Core Themes of Socialism  
Heywood, chapter four, pp. 99-118

TH 9/22 From Marx to Social Democracy  
Heywood, chapter four, pp. 118-142  
Jill Stein's Acceptance speech, 2016 Green Party Convention  
[http://www.jill2016.com/transcript\\_jill\\_stein\\_accepts\\_the\\_green\\_party\\_nomination](http://www.jill2016.com/transcript_jill_stein_accepts_the_green_party_nomination)

## III. Freedom as an “Essentially Contested” Concept

M 9/26 Liberal Freedom as Individual Choice  
**First Paper due**  
J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* chapter one

TH 9/29: “Freedom From” versus “Freedom To”  
J.S. Mill,\* *On Liberty*, chapter three

TH 10/6: “Freedom To”: Freedom and the Welfare State  
TH Green,\* “Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract”

TH 10/13 Neoliberalism and “Freedom From”: Capitalism, and the Minimal State  
Milton Friedman,\* *Capitalism and Freedom*, chpt 1

M 10/17: Capitalism as False Freedom  
Marx and Engels,\* *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

Marx,\* *Critique of the Gotha Program*

TH 10/20: Freedom as Collective Self-Governance

Rousseau,\* *Social Contract* Book One

Olivia Goldhill,\* “Brexiters who argued they’d be more ‘free’ didn’t really understand the philosophy of freedom”

M 10/24 **In-class Midterm**

#### **IV Borders, Migration and Justice**

TH 10/27 Immigration as a Question of Justice

Heywood, chapter 5 “Nationalism” and chapter 11, “Multiculturalism”

M 10/31 Conservatism and Immigration

Francis Fukuyama,\* “Immigrants and Family Values”

TH 11/3 Social Democracy and Immigration

Michael Walzer,\* “Membership”

M 11/7 Liberalism and Immigration

Joseph Carens,\* “Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders”

TH 11/10 Radical Democracy and Immigration

Bonnie Honig\*, “Immigrant America? How Foreignness ‘Solves’ Democracy’s Problems”

M 11/14 The Left Critique of Borders

Wendy Brown,\* “Waning Sovereignty, Walled Democracy”

#### **V. Democratic Equality**

TH 11/17 What Kind of Inequalities Exist in the Contemporary World?

**Second Paper Due**

Branko Milanovic, *The Haves and the Have-Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Global Inequality* excerpt\*

M 11/21 What does political equality require?

TH Marshall,\* “Citizenship and Social Class”

M 11/28 Welfare Liberalism and (Justified) Inequality

John Rawls\*, “A Well-Ordered Society,” and “The Veil of Ignorance”

TH 12/1 From Welfare Liberalism to Property-Owning Democracy

Rawls,\* “Institutions of a Just Basic Structure”

M 12/5 The Libertarian Critique of Economic Egalitarianism  
Robert Nozick,\* *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, excerpt

TH 12/8 Reparations for Slavery  
Ta-Nehisi Coates,\* “The Case for Reparations”

M 12/12: Review

Take-Home Final due to Turnitin: MONDAY DECEMBER 19th