

Political Science 200
Interpreting Politics: An Introduction to Political Ideas
Hunter College
Fall 2017

Professor Leonard Feldman

Lecture: MON, THU: 3:10-4 pm in W 714
and
Discussion: MON 4:10-5 pm (W208) *or* WED 4:10-5 pm (W208) *or* THU 4:10-5 pm
(W208)

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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 two online components of the class that are required: Blackboard and Top Hat.

1. We will use **Blackboard** regularly to communicate information, post assignments, slides 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. Finally, you will be submitting an electronic copy of each of the three essays via the "Turnitin Assignment" function within Blackboard. (Your essay will **not** be graded until you submit an electronic copy in addition to the paper copy due in lecture.) 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) 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 you don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/998266> Note: our Course Join Code is 998266. Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: 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), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

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.
- Three-page paper due September 18th (10%)
- Five-page paper due October 12th (20%).
- Seven-page paper due November 13th (25%)
- In-class final exam on: December 18th (25%)

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 68th and 69th):

1. Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (4th or 5th or 6th edition)
2. Richard Reeves, *Dream Hoarders*
3. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett)
4. Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Hackett)

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

Schedule of Classes and Reading Assignments:

I. Introduction: Mapping Political Arguments

M 8/28 Introduction to contested political ideas

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

→ Take the Online Political Ideologies Quiz at www.politicalcompass.org

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

TH 8/31 Core themes of Liberalism: Individualism and Liberty

Heywood, chapter two, pp. 24-53

M 9/4 NO CLASS

TH 9/7 Classical Liberalism and the “State of Nature”

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* chapters I-V

M 9/11 Minimal Government and the Rule of Law

Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters VII(93) VIII(95), IX, XI, XII

TH 9/14 Right of Rebellion; From Classical to Modern Liberalism

Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters XVIII(199-202), XIX(211-227)

Heywood, chapter two, pp. 53-64

Lawrence Glickman, <http://bostonreview.net/politics/lawrence-b-glickman-conservative-con-gave-us-trumpcare>

M 9/18 Core Themes of Conservatism: Tradition and Authority

Heywood, chapter three, pp. 65-85

→ 3 page paper due in lecture

TU 9/19 Conservatism

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France** excerpt (pp. 1-9, 14-26, 45-51)

TH 9/21 NO CLASS

M 9/25 Burke and the New Right

Burke, *Reflections*, cont'd, pp. 55-99

Heywood, chapter three, pp. 86-97

George Lakoff, <https://georgelakoff.com/2017/07/01/two-questions-about-trump-and-republicans-that-stump-progressives/>

TH 9/28 Core Themes of Socialism: Equality and Community

Heywood, chapter four, pp. 97-118

Karl Marx, "Alienated Labor" in *Selected Writings*, pp. 58-68

M 10/2 Marx's Critique of Liberalism

Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Selected Writings*, pp. 1-21

TH 10/5 From Marx to Social Democracy

Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Selected Writings*, pp. 157-176

Heywood, chapter four, pp. 116-139

M 10/9 NO CLASS

TH 10/12: → 5 page paper due in lecture

III. Democratic Equality

M 10/16 What Kind of Inequalities Exist in the Contemporary World?

Richard Reeves, *Dream Hoarders*

TH 10/19 What does political equality require?

Reeves, *Dream Hoarders* cont'd

TH Marshall,* "Citizenship and Social Class"

M 10/23 Modern (Welfare) Liberalism and the Restraining of Inequality

John Rawls*, "A Well-Ordered Society," and "The Veil of Ignorance"

TH 10/26 From Welfare Liberalism to Property-Owning Democracy

Rawls,* "Institutions of a Just Basic Structure"

M 10/30 The Libertarian Critique of Economic Egalitarianism

Robert Nozick,* *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, excerpt

TH 11/2 Libertarian Critique Take 2
Milton Friedman,* *Capitalism and Freedom* chapter 1

M 11/6 Reparations for Historical Injustice
Ta-Nehisi Coates,* “The Case for Reparations”

TH 11/9 Equality wrap-up

IV Borders, Migration and Justice

M 11/13 Immigration as a Question of Justice
Heywood, chapter 6 “Nationalism” and chapter 11, “Multiculturalism”
→ **Seven Page Paper Due in lecture**

TH 11/16 Borders as a Question of Justice
Jason De Leon,* *The Land of Open Graves*, chapter 1, 2 and 6, excerpts

M 11/20 Conservatism and Immigration
Francis Fukuyama,* “Identity, Immigration, and Liberal Democracy”

TH 11/23 NO CLASS

M 11/27 Social Democracy and Immigration
Michael Walzer,* “Membership”

TH 11/30 Liberalism and Open Borders
Joseph Carens,* “Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders”

M 12/4 Radical Democratic Cosmopolitanism
Bonnie Honig,* “Immigrant America? How Foreignness ‘Solves’ Democracy’s Problems”

TH 12/7 The Left Critique of Borders
Wendy Brown,* “Waning Sovereignty, Walled Democracy”
Ayelet Shachar,* “Selecting By Merit: The Brave New World of Stratified Mobility”

M 12/11 REVIEW

→ **FINAL EXAM: MONDAY 12/18/17 at 1:45 pm**