

## **Contemporary Nationalism and Classical Political Theory**

Polsci 256S / Classics 276S / Ethics 245S (Spring 2022)

WF 1:45-3PM | Room: LSRC D243

Alfredo Watkins | [alfredo.watkins@duke.edu](mailto:alfredo.watkins@duke.edu)

Office: East Duke 106 (shared with Dr. John Rose)

**Office Hours (held at Perkins coffee shop):** Wed. 12:30-1:30PM, Fri. 4:30-5:30pm

### **Course Description**

Ancient Greece and Rome offered competing visions of politics based on republics and the cosmopolitan idea of human beings as world-citizens. In light of classical political theory and the resurgence of nationalism in current politics, we will consider the following questions: Should politics be based on concern for the individual or the nation? Do we have stronger duties to our nations and fellow citizens than to the rest of the world? If so, can we ignore other countries and focus on our own problems? Should foreign policy further the goals of nation states or focus on global justice and development? Are nation-states necessary? Should we get rid of independent nations in favor of a single world government? Do we need a global government to protect the environment? Is economic globalization desirable or fair? Should we have open borders?

The course will cover texts from classical authors including Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Tacitus, and Augustine. We also will cover the reception of these authors in later Roman-inspired thought, including in Dante, Ockham, Hobbes, Pufendorf, Leibniz, Vattel, Kant and Mill. The goal of these readings will be to help students think about the broader principles that constitute a conception of sovereignty, the nation, the state, empire, global and national citizenship, etc. Having considered these topics at the level of theory, we will look at some contemporary work on the resurgence of nationalism in recent politics. In particular, we will consider contrasting perspectives on international affairs, economic globalization, immigration, and the environment in order to show how classical political theory can illuminate contemporary issues like these.

### **Course Goals and Objects**

- Students will gain a familiarity with the classical republican and cosmopolitan traditions of political thought.
- Students will learn to address issues in contemporary national and global politics by thinking about broader principles from history, political theory, ethics, economics, etc.
- Students will practice writing tightly argued, analytical response papers, as well as longer, research length papers on abstract subject matters.
- Students will work closely with the professor on the mechanics of paper writing. In particular, they will gain skills related to paper structure, clarity, and writing style.

- Students will be exposed to readings and lines of argument from multiple disciplines, including philosophy, history, literature, political science, international relations, and economics. Students will become familiar with the particular assumptions and writing styles associated with these disciplines.

### **General Course Requirements**

Course grades will be based on writing assignments (80%) and class participation (20%).

The writing part of the course will include one 5-7 page paper (20%), one 6-8 page paper (25%) and one 10-12 page paper (35%) (all papers double-spaced). Students also will meet with the professor to discuss outlines and drafts of papers.

Class participation will be based primarily on class discussions and/or participation in office hours. Students will be expected regularly to participate in class and to offer their questions and comments on the readings and class topics. I also may ask you on occasion to provide a very brief response to a question for the readings. In general, if you participate regularly and actively in class discussion and turn in these responses when prompted, you will get 100% on participation. (This part of your grade should be easy.)

Attendance is expected at all class sessions, except for emergencies or with notification of the professor beforehand of a sufficient reason.

### **Assessment Information**

Papers will be assessed for (1) meeting basic requirements (word/page count, spelling/grammar, formatting), (2) clarity of writing, (3) structure/organization, (4) accurately representing the positions of the authors being discussed and (5) the quality of the student's own original argumentation.

Class participation is based on the number of times students participate in class. Students who for various reasons might prefer to speak outside of class can also meet participation requirements by coming to office hours or by meetings with the professor in-person or over Zoom.

### **Required Texts**

Please purchase physical copies of the following books for the class. Especially be sure to have a copy of Judis by the beginning of class. You also will need to acquire the Cicero somewhat quickly:

- John Judis: *The Nationalist Revival: Trade, Immigration, and the Revolt Against Globalization* ([link](#))
- Cicero: *The Republic and the Laws* (Oxford World Classics, trans. Niall Rudd) ([link](#))
- John Mearsheimer: *The Great Delusion Liberal Dreams and International Realities* ([link](#))
- Ian Fletcher: *Free Trade Doesn't Work: What Should Replace it and Why* ([link](#))

The following textbooks are *strongly recommended*. However, they will also be made available in PDF on Sakai, and you may choose to use the PDF instead if you wish:

- Yoram Hazony: *The Virtue of Nationalism* ([link](#))
- Tacitus: *Agricola and Germania* (trans. by A.S. Kline) (\$5, [link](#))
- Dante: *De Monarchia* (Cambridge, trans. by Prue Shaw) ([link](#))

All other readings will be available on Sakai or via links. (If you have any trouble acquiring these readings please let me know and I can get them to you.)

### **Classroom Expectations**

This seminar will rely heavily on discussion, and depends on the active input of all participants. For that reason, it cannot be stressed enough how important respectful and open dialogue is for this class. Therefore, a few simple rules will be in effect:

- All opinions and perspectives on the issues we discuss are welcome, and civil disagreement is encouraged. No one should feel compelled to agree or disagree with the authors we are reading, but I do ask that you honestly and charitably engage with the arguments we discuss and with your peers, and that you back up your views with reasoning.
- Please refrain from interrupting others. Many of the topics we'll discuss are exciting and you may want to respond immediately to a point someone brings up. That is quite understandable, but please raise your hand and I promise you'll be called on. We want to give everybody a chance to speak and express one's thoughts.
- Laptops and tablets are permitted, but please no cell phones in the classroom. Put them away, so that others aren't distracted.

Reading List  
(Subject to some modification)

**Introduction: The Relevance of Nationalism**

Day 1 – 01/07

Please read the following before the first day of class:

John Judis: *The Nationalist Revival* (Intro: “Understanding Nationalism” pp. 14-23)

Yoram Hazony: *The Virtue of Nationalism* (Intro: “A Return to Nationalism” pp. 1-13)

**Greek Perspectives on Nation, Government, and Power**

Day 2 – 01/12

Herodotus on national identity: *Persian Wars* (selection)

Thucydides on Athenian democracy: Pericles’ *Funeral Oration*

Plato on authority and loyalty: *Crito*

(Finish readings from Day 1 if you haven’t already)

Day 3 – 01/14

Thucydides on power: *Melian Dialogue*

Plato on power and justice: *Republic* (Book 1, Book 2 up to 369a)

Day 4 – 01/19

Aristotle on human nature, the basis of government, slavery: *Politics* Book I (Ch. 1-7)

Aristotle on forms of government and constitutions: *Politics* Book III (end of Ch.6, Ch. 7-9)

Video: “How the Roman Government Worked” (watch first 5 mins only) ([link](#))

Video: “Ancient Rome in 20 minutes” (watch up to 12:30 only, [link](#))

Polybius and the Roman constitution: Atkins Chapter 1 (pp. 11-24)

**Roman Republicanism**

Day 5 – 01/21

Justinian’s *Digests* on the bases of Roman law: Book I (selection)

Cicero on the Roman constitution: *De Re Publica* Book I Sec. 13-71, Book II Sec. 1-4, 42-70

Optional: Atkins on Cicero & the Roman constitution: Atkins Chapter 1 (pp. 24-29)

Day 6 – 01/26

Cicero on natural law: *De Legibus* Book I Sec. 1-35

Cicero on moral community and duties to others: *De Officiis* Book I Sec. 50-60

Cicero on justice, just war, and empire: *De Re Publica* Book III Sec. 8 – 41, *De Officiis* Book I Sec. 33-41, Book II Sec. 23-27

The “Dream of Scipio”: *De Re Publica* Book VI Sec. 9-29

## Roman Imperialism and Commentators on Rome

Day 7 – 01/28

Video: “Marian Reforms and their Military Effects” ([link](#))

Video: “Rome: From Marius to Caesar” ([link](#))

Video: “Ancient Rome in 20 minutes” (watch starting at 8:25, [link](#))

Atkins: *Roman Political Thought*: Ch. 1 (pp. 29-34), Ch. 3 (sec. on “Roman Citizenship,” pp. 65-67), Ch. 7 (pp. 184-189)

Stoics on human nature & cosmopolitanism: Selections from Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, etc.

Optional: Augustus: imperial glory, just war, peace: the *Res Gestae* ([link](#), [link](#) w/ Latin + Greek)

Day 8 – 02/02

Tacitus on imperial administration: *Agricola* (complete work)

Video: Scene from HBO’s *Rome* [Warning: violence, blood] ([link](#))

Optional: Video: Roman training and recruitment ([link](#))

Day 9 – 02/04

Atkins: *Roman Political Thought*: Ch. 1 (pp. 34-37)

John Julius Norwich: Constantine and the unified Roman Empire (*Byzantium: The Early Centuries*: “Constantine the Great”)

Augustine on Christianity and citizenship: Letters 136 and 138 (Secs 1, 9-20)

Augustine on ‘libido dominandi’ (the lust for domination): *City of God* (selection)

Day 10 – 02/09

Ockham on empire: *Dialogue* (selection)

Dante in defense of global Imperium: *De Monarchia*, Book I

Day 11– 02/11

John Julius Norwich: Justinian and the dream of *renovatio*: (*Byzantium*: “Belisarius”)

Dante in defense of *Roman* Imperium (continued): *De Monarchia* (Bk. II sec. 1-2, 5-12)

Optional: Dante on papacy vs. empire: Bk. III sec. 1, 10-11

Optional: Video: “Belisarius: The Battle of Rome” ([link](#))

## Early Modern Perspectives: Nation, Sovereignty, and The Legacy of Empire

Day 12– 02/16

Video: The Peace of Westphalia (5 mins) ([link](#))

Hazon: *The Virtue of Nationalism* (“Nationalism and Western Freedom,” secs. I-V)

Hobbes on sovereignty, “war”: *Leviathan* (brief selection)

Leibniz on sovereignty, confederation and the Empire: *Caesarinus Furstenerius* (selection)

Vattel on non-interference: *The Law of Nations* (brief selection)

Optional: Pufendorf on the H.R.E. ‘monstrosity’: *The Present State of Germany* (selection)

Day 13 – 02/18

Kant on world peace and world federation: *Perpetual Peace*

Mill on nations and nationalism: *Considerations on Representative Government* (Ch. 16)

Hazony: *The Virtue of Nationalism* (“Nationalism and Western Freedom” secs. VI-VII)

Hazony: *The Virtue of Nationalism* (“The Myth of the Federal Solution” sec. XV)

Day 14 – 02/23

Hazony: *The Virtue of Nationalism* (“The Case for the National State” secs. VIII, X, XIII)

Hazony: *The Virtue of Nationalism* (“The Virtues of the National State” sec. XIV.3-5)

Patrick Deneen: “Community and Liberty or Individualism and Statism” ([link](#))

### **Liberal Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, and Localism:**

Day 15– 02/25

John Judis: *The Nationalist Revival* (Ch.1: “Why Nationalism Matters”)

Peter Singer: “The Drowning Child and the Expanding Circle”

Kwame Anthony Appiah: *Cosmopolitanism*, “Kindness to Strangers”

(Start reading Ingeborg Bachmann, “Three Paths to the Lake”)

Day 16 – 03/02

Martha Nussbaum: “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism”

Roger Scruton: “The Need for Nations” ([WSJ](#), [Duke proxy link](#))

Wendell Berry: “People, Land & Community” (from *Art of the Commonplace: Agrarian Essays*)

(Continue reading Ingeborg Bachmann, “Three Paths to the Lake”)

Optional: Alasdair MacIntyre: “Is Patriotism a Virtue?”

Day 17 – 03/04

Ingeborg Bachmann, “Three Paths to the Lake”

### **Nationalism vs. Internationalism in Foreign Affairs:**

Day 18 – 03/16

Video: Francis Fukuyama: “The End of History and the Last Man” (C-Span, [link](#))

President Obama: Speech at Cairo ([transcript link](#), [video link](#))

Mearsheimer: *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (Ch. 1, pp. 1-12)

Day 19 – 03/18

Charles Krauthammer: “Democratic Realism: American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World”

Max Boot: Speech: “Does America Need an Empire?” ([link](#))

Edward Luttwak: *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE to the 3<sup>rd</sup>*

Michael Lind: “The United States in the Global Concert of Powers” (5 min read, [link](#))

CNN Interview: Michael Lind on *The American Way of Strategy* (4 min clip, [link](#))

Day 20 – 03/23

John Mearsheimer: *The Great Delusion* (Ch. 5, pp. 120-139, Ch.6, pp. 152-171, Ch. 8, “The Case for Restraint”)

John Mearsheimer (Video): “Why Nationalism Trumps Liberalism Every Time” (14 mins, [link](#))

G. John Ikenberry: *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (selection)

Day 21 – 03/25

John Mearsheimer: “Why is Ukraine the West’s Fault?” ([link](#); watch up to 46:00, rest optional)

Judis: *The Nationalist Revival* (Ch. 4, pp. 117-126, “Trump and the New World Disorder”)

George Kennan: “A Fateful Error” (5 min read, [link](#))

Stephen Walt: “Why Arming Kiev is a Really, Really Bad Idea” (10 min read, [link](#))

Optional: John Mearsheimer: *The Great Delusion* (Ch.6, pp. 171-179)

Optional: Strobe Talbott: “Why NATO Should Grow (1996)” ([link](#))

Day 22: – 03/30

John Judis: *The Nationalist Revival*, pp. 126-149 (Ch. 4 cont. and Conclusion)

Liu Mingfu: “The Chinese Dream to Overtake America” (The Atlantic, 10 min read, [link](#))

Graham Allison: “The Thucydides Trap: Are U.S. and China Headed for War?” (Atlantic, [link](#))

### **Environmental Issues: Global, National, or Local Solutions?**

Day 23 – 04/01

Chart: Compliance with Paris Climate Agreement by country ([link](#))

### **Globalization and its Discontents**

Day 24 – 04/06

Tyler Cowen: “This Global Show Must Go On” (New York Times (5 min read), [link](#))

Tyler Cowen: *Stubborn Paradoxes* (Ch. 2, excerpt)

Joseph Stiglitz: “Thanks for Nothing” (The Atlantic (10 min read), [link](#))

Dani Rodrik: “Globalization’s Wrong Turn & How it Hurt America” (Foreign Affairs, [link](#))

Day 25 – 04/08

Kwame Anthony Appiah: *Cosmopolitanism*, “Cosmopolitan Contamination”

Tyler Cowen vs Benjamin Barber on globalization and culture ([link](#))

### **Immigration, Open Borders, and Duties to Humanity**

Day 26 – 04/13

Michael Huemer: “Is There a Right to Immigrate?” (5 min read, brief selection)

Chandran Kukathas: [Interview](#): “The Case for (More) Open Borders”

Bryan Caplan: “The Case for Open Borders” (5 min read, Time, [link](#))

George Borjas: “Yes, Immigration Hurts American Workers” (10 min read, Politico, [link](#))

Ian Fletcher: *Free Trade Doesn't Work* (Ch. 1, pp. 19-36)

## **Economic Nationalism vs. Economic Liberalism: Free Trade and Industrial Policy**

Day 27 – 04/15

Ian Fletcher: *Free Trade Doesn't Work* (Ch. 2, pp.37-50)

Oren Cass: “Economic Piety is a Crisis for Workers” (The Atlantic, 15 min read, [link](#))

Vaclav Smil: “Can Trump Bring Back Manufacturing Jobs?” (5 min read, [link](#))

Video: Debate w/ Ian Fletcher and Don Boudreaux (start at 11:00, [link](#))

Day 28 – 04/20

Ian Fletcher: *Free Trade Doesn't Work* (Ch. 9, pp. 183-205)

Video: Mariana Mazzucatto, “Government -- investor, risk-taker, innovator” (Ted talk, [link](#))

R. Stephen Brent: “Misunderstanding Investment in the United States and China” (*American Affairs*, [link](#))

Video: Kai-Fu Lee: “AI and Global Superpowers” (10 mins, [link](#))

Review: Robert D. Atkinson: Kai-Fu Lee's *AI Superpowers* (5 min read, [link](#))