

Liberalism and its Critics (Fall 2022)

Reuben-Cooke Room 329

MW 10:15AM-11:30AM

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Course Description: Our course will examine the development of liberalism within political philosophy and economics, and alternatives as articulated by conservative, progressive and socialist critics. We will examine the doctrines themselves and place them within the historical context in which they emerged. The liberal tradition will be represented by such thinkers as Locke, Hume, Smith, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, Paine, Constant, Condorcet, J. S. Mill, Hayek and Friedman. Conservative critics will include such writers as Burke, Maistre, Schmitt, Meyer, Kirk, Scruton, and Deneen. Socialist and progressive critics will include Marx and Engels, Lange, Gramsci, Bellamy, Lenin, Galbraith, Harrington and Marcuse. This course is part of the “Transformative Ideas” curriculum.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

- Students will gain a familiarity with the historical development of the classical liberal tradition in economic and political thought.
- Students will gain familiarity with the historical development of arguments raised by critics of the liberal tradition, and their alternative visions of a preferred political and economic order, including varieties of socialism, Marxism, conservatism, and progressivism.
- Students will learn to address issues in contemporary affairs by thinking about broader political and economic principles underlying them.
- Students will be exposed to readings and lines of argument from both political philosophy and economics. They will become familiar with the particular assumptions and writing styles associated with these disciplines.
- Students will write a research length paper on an appropriate topic.

Grading/Assignments:

1. Short “What-did-you-learn, what-did-you-think-about-what-you-learned” and class participation: 30%

These will be short (minimum 1 page, double-spaced) reflections on the readings or other assignments, responding to a brief prompt that will be given to you ahead of time. You will turn these in to your Sakai Drop Box as Word DOC or PDF before class, on the due date indicated in the prompt.

The grade for these is either 100% or 0. You will get 100% on these so long as you put in an honest effort (do not worry so much about style, formatting, etc. for these). These are meant to be informal reflections that let us know what people are thinking about the readings.

Note: We will discuss the participation policy in class on the first day.

2. In-Class Exam: 20%

Mid-term exam (see reading schedule below for date). Study guide will be provided ahead of time.

3. Final Exam: 20%

Note: This final in-class exam will be cumulative. Study guide will be provided.

4. Final Paper: 30%

A 10+ page research paper on a research topic of your own interest. Each student will need to consult at least once with one of the instructors about their topic.

Course Expectations:

Note that 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, we have a few simple rules:

- 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, or with your professors or your peers.
- However, we do ask that you honestly and charitably engage with the arguments of authors and classmates, 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 – we

promise you will be called on. We want to give everybody a chance to speak and express their thoughts.

- Laptops and tablets are permitted, but please no cell phones in the classroom. Put them away, so that others aren't distracted.

Other than that, come to class having done the assigned readings. Turn in assignments on time. Participate in class. Be civil. Do not cheat or plagiarize. Enjoy adult conversations while learning and having fun!

Reading Schedule

Assigned readings are to be completed before coming to class on the assigned date. **Note:** *This schedule is subject to change.* For the most recent and up-to-date reading list, see the Syllabus section on Sakai.

I. Introduction

Day 1: 08/29 Monday – Introduction to class; please watch these two videos and come to class prepared to discuss them.

- Watch “The Future of Liberalism” panel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQuJJ-0EbsY>)
- Watch “The Future of Conservatism” panel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kPyESv4xJo>)

II. What is liberalism?

Day 2: 08/31 Wednesday

- Watch “The Future of Progressivism” panel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeYVGPR-6yl>)
- L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* [1911] Reprinted in *Liberalism and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapters 1 – 2.
- John Charvet, *Liberalism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2019), chapters 1-2
- Rose and Milton Friedman, *Free to Choose*, Ch. 1, pp. 9-27

III. Pre-liberal political thought

Day 3: 09/05 Monday [Labor Day, but we still have class!]

- Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan* (very brief selection)
- Locke: *Second Treatise* (secs. 4-13, 26-32, 119-122)
- David Hume: “Of Justice and Property” (brief selection)
- Montesquieu: *Spirit of the Laws*, Book 11, Chs. 1-6
- US Bill of Rights
- Optional: Hume ‘On the Original Contract’ (brief selection)

Day 4: 09/07 Wednesday [guest speaker Professor Aurelian Craiutu on Deneen and the many deaths of liberalism]

- Aurelian Craiutu and Daniel H. Cole: “The Many Deaths of Liberalism” (Aeon:) (<https://aeon.co/essays/reports-of-the-demise-of-liberalism-are-greatly-exaggerated>)
- Debate with Patrick Deneen: “Has Liberalism Failed?” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmg60sC8S5E>)

IV. Pre-liberal Economic Thought: Mercantilism vs Adam Smith

Day 5: 09/12 Monday

- Jacob Viner, “Mercantilist Thought” (1968), in Jacob Viner, *Essays on the Intellectual History of Economics*, ed. Douglas Irwin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 262-76.
- Handout: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, excerpts.

Day 6: 09/14 Wednesday

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Book I, Introduction and Plan of the Work, chapters 1, 2, 3, 7 (sections 1 – 29), 8 (sections 10-14, 18-21, 43), 10.c (sections 1-2, 12-14, 17-18, 27), 11.p (sections 7-10). Book II, chapter 3 (sections 1 -3, 12 -18). Book IV, chapters 2 (sections 1-15, 23-24, 31, 37-38, 40, 43), 9 (51-52). Book V, chapter 1.e, (sections 5-7, 18), 1.f (sections 50, 52-57), 1.g (sections 1-8). http://files.libertyfund.org/files/220/0141-02_Bk.pdf.

Day 7: 09/19 Monday

- Finish discussion of Smith readings.
- Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* (brief selection)
- Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (brief selection)

V. French Revolution and its Effects

Day 8: 09/21 Wednesday

- Handout on the French Revolution
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)
- Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
- Marquis de Condorcet: “Progress of the Human Mind” (selection)

Day 9: 09/26 Monday

- Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (selection)
- De Maistre, *Considerations on France* (selection)

Day 10: 09/28 Wednesday [guest speaker Professor Stephen Vincent on the French Revolution]

- The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns,” in Fontana, pp. 307-28.
- (Optional) Benjamin Constant, “The Spirit of Conquest and Usurpation and their Relation to European Civilization,” in Biancamaria Fontana, ed. *Benjamin Constant: Political Writings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), pp. 85-165.

VI. Classical Economics

Day 11: 10/03 Monday

- Lionel Robbins, *The Theory of Economic policy in English Classical Political Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 11-19, 68-82, 169-86.
- Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Ch. 1

Day 12: 10/05 Wednesday – Midterm exam

[10/10 Monday – **Fall Break – no class**]

VII. Marxian and Other Socialisms

Day 13: 10/12 Wednesday

- Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific” (1880), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/index.htm>
- Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” (1848), Omit section <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>

Day 14: 10/17 Monday

- Marx, “Preface: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy” (1859), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm>
- Handout: “The Laws of Motion of the Capitalist System”

Day 15: 10/19 Wednesday – [guest speaker Professor Eric Schliesser, readings TBA]

- Hobson, *Imperialism* (selection)
- Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (selection)

VIII. John Stuart Mill

Day 16: 10/24 Monday

- John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (selection)
- John Stuart Mill, *Notes on Socialism* (selection)

IX. The Social Problem, New Liberalism, New Socialisms

Day 17: 10/26 Wednesday

- L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, Chapter 8.
- Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* [1888], chapters 5-7, 9, 10, 19, 22, 24, 25.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/Looking_Backward/xpHtvz4bNZ0C?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover
- J. M. Keynes, "The End of Laissez-Faire" [1926] and "Am I a Liberal?" [1925]. Reprinted in *Essays in Persuasion* (London: Macmillan, 1931).

Day 18: 10/31 Monday [guest speaker Professor Sandra Peart on Mill]

- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* Ch.5

X. The Interwar Period

Day 19: 11/02 Wednesday

- James Burnham, *The Machiavellians* [On "the Italian School of Elitism"]
Ch. 3: "Gaetano Mosca: The Theory of the Ruling Class," pp. 63 - 78
Ch. 5: "Robert Michels: The Limits of Democracy," pp. 97 - 124
Ch. 6: "Vilfredo Pareto: The Nature of Social Action," pp. 124 - 126, 134-138, 151 - 163

Day 20: 11/07 Monday

- Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (selection)
- Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology* (selection)
- Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (selection)
- Adrian Vermeule, "All Human Conflict is Ultimately Theological" ([link](#))
- Optional: Adrian Vermeule, "Integration from Within: Review of Patrick Deneen's *Why Liberalism Failed*" (American Affairs, [link](#))

Day 21: 11/09 Wednesday

- Roger Woods, *The Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic*, "Introduction" pp. 1-3; Ch. 2: "Nietzsche as Mentor," pp. 29-46
- Burnham, *The Machiavellians*: Ch. 4: "Sorel: A Note on Myth and Violence"
- Zeev Sternhell, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology*, pp. 7-8, 10, 19-31
- Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism"
- F.A. Hayek, "Nazi-Socialism" [1933]. Reprinted in *The Road to Serfdom: Texts and Documents*, ed. Bruce Caldwell, vol. 2 (2007) of *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 245-48.
- Optional: Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (selection)

XI. Hayek and Socialism

Day 22: 11/14 Monday

F. A. Hayek, "Socialist Calculation: The Competitive 'Solution'" [1940]. Reprinted in *Socialism and War*, ed. Bruce Caldwell, vol. 10 (1997) of *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 117-40.

F. A. Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society" [1945] Reprinted in *The Market and Other Orders*, ed. Bruce Caldwell, vol. 15 (2014) of *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 93-104.
Bruce Caldwell, "The Road to Serfdom after 75 Years," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Sept. 2020, pp. 720-48.

XII. Emergence of American Conservatism

Day 23: 11/16 Wednesday

- F. A. Hayek, "Why I Am Not a Conservative" [1960]. In *The Constitution of Liberty*, ed. Ronald Hamowy, vol. 17 (2011) of *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 519-33.
- Frank Meyer, "Why Freedom?" in *In Defense of Freedom and Related Essays*
- Russell Kirk, "Libertarians: Chirping Sectaries"

XIII. Post-war Ascendance of American Welfare Liberalism

Day 24: 11/21 Monday

- John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958), pp. 1-11, 152-60, 197-99, 251-61, 266-69.
- Roger Scruton on Galbraith (from *Fools, Frauds and Firebrands*)
- Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (Macmillan Publishing Company, 1962) (brief selection)
- Lyndon Johnson, Speech on "The Great Society" ([clip](#))

[11/23 Wednesday **No Class - Thanksgiving Break**]

XIV. The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory

Day 25: 11/28 [guest speaker Emily Evans, readings TBA]

• Friedrich Pollock, "State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations", *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 1941. Found here at pp. 200-225: <https://archive.org/details/ZeitschriftFrSozialforschung9.Jg/page/n217/mode/2up>

- Max Horkheimer, “The Authoritarian State”, 1942.
<https://cominsitu.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/authoritarian-state-horkheimer1973.pdf>
- Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1947. Please read: ‘Preface to the New Edition (1969)’ pp. xi-xii and ‘The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception’ pp. 94-136.
https://monoskop.org/images/2/27/Horkheimer_Max_Adorno_Theodor_W_Dialectic_of_Enlightenment_Philosophical_Fragments.pdf
- [OPTIONAL] Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, ‘Towards a New Manifesto: Conversations between Adorno & Horkheimer’, 1956. Please read: Sections 1-5.
<https://newleftreview-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/issues/ii65/articles/theodor-adorno-max-horkheimer-towards-a-new-manifesto>

XV. The New Left

Day 26: 11/30 Wednesday

- Antonio Gramsci, Selections from “Prison Notebooks”
- Roger Scruton on Gramsci (from *Fools, Frauds and Firebrands*)
- Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance.” 1965.
<https://www.marcuse.org/herbert/publications/1960s/1965-repressive-tolerance-1969.pdf>
- Port Huron Statement
<https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111huron.html>

XVI. Neoliberalism and its Critics

Day 27: 12/05 Monday

Daniel Rodgers, “The Uses and Abuses of ‘Neoliberalism’,” *Dissent*, Winter 2018.

<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/uses-and-abuses-neoliberalism-debate>

Philip Mirowski, “Neoliberalism: The Movement that Dare Not Speak its Name,” *American Affairs*, February 2018.

Bruce Caldwell, ed. “Preface,” “Introduction,” and selected chapters, *Mont Pèlerin 1947: Transcripts of the Founding Meeting of the Mont Pèlerin Society* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2022).

Day 28: 12/07 Wednesday [to be determined]