

POLSCI-255 Great Issues of Politics: Liberty

3:30pm-6:10pm, Mondays, Cunningham Hall 107

Spring 2014

**Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

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Bolton Hall 650

Office Hour: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2pm-3pm, and by appointment

Course Description

Freedom, an idea that has long been dominant in the history of human politics, is perhaps one of the most fundamental and yet contradictory concepts in the tradition of political theory. States are formed in the name of freedom; power is justified in the name of freedom; and rebels are led in the name of freedom. Liberty has become such an invaluable and disputable ideal that countless wars have been fought and innumerable blood has been spilled over it. "I fight for freedom" has already turned out to be a truism in solving many issues of politics. However, to engage the complexity of this concept, there are more questions to be answered. What is freedom? What is the origin of freedom? What are the conditions that freedom is based upon? What types of freedom do we possibly have? How is freedom understood in the relationship between social individual and state? How might liberty be differently conceptualized, culturally speaking? What if liberty is achieved at the expense of something else? How should we weigh against one another?

To answer these questions, we will spend a semester reading and discussing. The readings are structured into three sections. The first section deals with various conceptualizations of liberty. It explores different ways in which and on what ground liberty is defined. This section emphasizes the western tradition in understanding liberty. The second section is about how freedom is approached from the perspective of Eastern philosophy (Confucius, Chuang Tzu and Gandhi). The third section concerns the critics of classical liberalism and its implication.

Your grade will be evaluated based on class participation, paper assignment and final exam. First, class participation consists of both in-class and D2L participations. You are expected to come to class with questions and thoughts to share with the class. In addition, there will also be weekly discussion questions on D2L and you are required to respond to either my questions or other students' feedback. Please avoid simple answers like "yes, I agree or no, I disagree" as your posts will be evaluated in terms of substance. Second, there will be a paper assignment approximately at the middle of the semester. The length is 4-5 pages. I will distribute the topic two weeks prior to the due date. Third, there is also a final exam at the end of the semester.

Your grade depends on the following:

Class participation	30%
Paper assignment	30%
Final exam	40%

Required Readings

The following books are required. The required books are available for purchase at the People's Book Store (804 E Center St/414-962-0575). The rest readings will be uploaded on D2L course site under "Content."

John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government* (Dover)
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Oxford)
Confucius, *The Analects* (Dover)
Chuang Tzu, *The Book of Chuang Tzu* (Penguin)
Michael Sandel (editor), *Liberalism and Its Critics* (NYU)

Course Schedule

1/27: Introduction

2/3: Locke, *The Second Treatise*, pages 1-59

2/10: Mill, *On Liberty*, pages 5-128

2/17: Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in Sandel eds., pages 15-36/ Rawls, "The Right and the Good Contrasted," in Sandel eds., pages 37-59

2/24: Film Screening and discussion: *Hero* (2002)

3/3: Confucius, *The Analects*

3/10: Chuang Tzu, *The Book of Chuang Tzu*, pages 1-20, 82-104, 26-36, 133-135

PAPER TOPIC DISTRIBUTED

3/17: Spring Recess

3/24: Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, pages 37-93 **PAPER DUE**

3/31: Film Screening and discussion: *A Clockwork Orange*

4/7: Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, pages 163-177/ Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, pages 123-150

4/14: MacIntyre, "The Virtues, the Unity of a Human Life, and the Concept of a Tradition," in Sandel eds., pages 125-148/ Sandel, "Justice and Good," in Sandel eds., pages 159-176

4/21: Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, selected chapters/ Arendt, "The Revolutionary Tradition and its Lost Treasure," in Sandel eds., pages 239-260

4/28: Film Screening and discussion: to be announced

5/5: Conclusion

5/12: Final Exam (tentative date)