

Political Science 255
Great Issues in Politics
Political Ideologies

Spring 2022

Prof. Ivan Ascher

Bolton B84
Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm

Office Hours: 640 Bolton Hall
Thursday 3:30-5:00 and by appointment

(Syllabus subject to revision – 1/25/22)

Writing in the 1930s, at a time when Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin were each in power in their respective countries and beyond, the British economist John Maynard Keynes noted that “the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood.” Indeed, he went on to explain, “the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voice in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.”

As a course on of political ideologies, this course is an introduction to “the ideas of economists and political philosophers” that have shaped the world in the last two centuries. In particular, we will engage the writings of academic scribblers associated with the ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, fascism and communism, among others. In so doing, hopefully, we will learn something of our own worldviews and those of others. And by engaging the original texts from which these ideologies derive, we may even get a sense of what possibilities they contain.

Readings

As befits an introductory course, we will reading short selections from major texts. These are found in *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader* (11th edition) by Terence Ball, Richard Dagger, Daniel I. O’Neill (ISBN 9780429286827). The book is available for purchase from the campus bookstore for about \$85. The book is also available for rent for \$47, but if you can at all afford it, I would strongly advise purchasing the book outright. This way you can not only scribble on the book, but you can keep it. There’s chance you might actually find these texts interesting, and it would be a shame not to be able to leaf through your old book on a cold and wintry night when you’re in your mid-thirties and reminiscing about the old days.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, save for a willingness to come to class prepared, having done the reading and willing to discuss it with your colleagues.

Time commitment

This course should require a total time commitment of approximately ten hours per week. Of this, students will spend two hours and forty minutes in class; they will spend the remaining time engaged in reading, study, and preparation.

UWM Policies and Procedures

In this course, we will abide by the UWM policies and procedures as described in the following document. <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

UWM Writing Center

Students are encouraged to make use of the UW writing center. Appointments can be made via the website: www.writingcenter.uwm.edu. Walk-ins are welcome, too, in CRT 127 and LIB East Wing.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities should notify the instructor immediately so that we can make appropriate accommodations. We will follow university procedures as described in the following document. <http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf>

Religious observances

Students who plan to observe religious holidays should notify the instructor immediately so that we can make appropriate accommodations. We will follow university procedures as described in the following document: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

Students called to active military duty

Students who are called to active military duty should notify the instructor immediately so that we can make appropriate accommodations. We will follow university procedures as described in the following document: www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

Assignments

The structure of assignments for the class is pretty straightforward. You will be asked to write:

Twelve-or-so reading responses

Every week, we will be reading short selections from a variety of authors (typically about five to eight per week). To help focus your attention and enrich our class discussions, please address the following prompts for at least *five* texts every week.

1. In your view, what is the most important passage or sentence in the text?
2. Please explain the sentence in your own terms
3. Please explain *why* you think it is so important.

These are due on Canvas by 11:00am on Thursday.

Two 5-page papers

I will propose essay topics as the deadline nears, but you might be asked to place our authors in conversation on topics of present-day relevance. For instance, how might reading John Locke and Thomas Hobbes help us understand protests against police brutality? What might be a coherent “liberal” or “conservative” position on vaccine mandates? What would a Marxist say about the minimum wage? Would John Stuart Mill approve of social media? Can one be both a Marxist and a feminist?

The draft for the first paper is due in class on Tuesday, March 1st; the polished version is due on Canvas by Saturday, March 5th. The draft for the second paper is due in class on Tuesday, April 19th; the polished version is due on Saturday, April 23rd. **Please note that you are required to turn in a draft** in order to get full credit for your paper, for we will be engaging in a peer-review exercise in class.

One in-class exam on May 10th

One take-home final exam due May 20th.

The final in-class exam and take-home exam are comprehensive; they may draw on material from the previous 15 weeks.

The assignments are weighted as follows:

Reading responses	20% of final grade
Papers (drafts & final copies)	40% of final grade
In-class final exam	15% of final grade
Take-home final exam	15% of final grade
In-class & online participation	10% of final grade

Reading Schedule

Week 1. Introduction to course.

by Thursday, 27 January: please take the following online ideological self- placement quiz:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/?group=6cca1a966e5e21075188610be49f202b>

You may also play around with these other two quizzes: <http://www.politicalcompass.org/>, and <http://www.politopia.com/>. Then, prepare a brief statement describing your ideology and how well you feel the quizzes capture your worldview and beliefs. This assignment will not be graded, but it is required. It will not only serve as the basis for class discussion; it may well be useful down the road in a later assignment.

Week 2. The Democratic Ideal

Tuesday, 1 February

2.2 Euripides—Democracy and Despotism

2.3 Pericles—Funeral Oration

2.4 Aristotle—Democratic Judgment and the "Middling" Constitution

Thursday, 3 February

2.5 Niccolò Machiavelli—What's Wrong with Princely Rule?

2.6 John Adams—What Is a Republic?

2.7 Bill of Rights of the United States

2.8 Alexis de Tocqueville—Democracy and Equality

2.9 John Stuart Mill—Democratic Participation and Political Education

Week 3. Liberalism (1)

Tuesday, 8 February

3.13 Thomas Hobbes—The State of Nature and the Basis of Obligation

3.14 John Locke—Toleration and Government

Thursday, 10 February

3.15 Thomas Paine—Government, Rights, and the Freedom of Generations

3.16 Declaration of Independence of the United States

3.17 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens

3.18 Adam Smith—Private Profit, Public Good

3.19 Immanuel Kant—Freedom and Enlightenment

3.20 John Stuart Mill—Liberty and Individuality

Week 4. Liberalism (2)

Tuesday, 15 February

3.21 William Graham Sumner—According to the Fitness of Things

3.22 T. H. Green—Liberalism and Positive Freedom

3.23 Franklin D. Roosevelt—Commonwealth Club Address (1932)

3.24 Lyndon B. Johnson—"To Fulfill These Rights": Speech at Howard University

Thursday, 17 February

3.25 Paul Krugman—The Conscience of a Liberal

3.26 Donald Allen—Paternalism vs. Democracy: A Libertarian View

3.27 Murray Rothbard—Libertarian Anarchism

3.28 Terence Ball—A Libertarian Utopia

Week 5. Conservatism

Tuesday, 22 February

4.29 Edmund Burke—Society, Reverence, and the "True Natural Aristocracy"

4.30 Joseph de Maistre—Conservatism as Reaction

Thursday, 24 February

4.31 Michael Oakeshott—On Being Conservative

4.32 Russell Kirk—Ten Conservative Principles

4.33 Ronald Reagan—Modern American Conservatism

4.34 Irving Kristol—The Neoconservative Persuasion

4.35 Max Boot and David Brooks---Conservatives Assess Trump

Week 6. Paper #1 due

Tuesday, 1 March. Draft due

Thursday, 3 March. Discussion

Week 7. Socialism and Communism (1)

Tuesday, 8 March

5.36 Thomas More—Utopia

5.37 Robert Owen—Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark

5.38 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels—The Communist Manifesto

5.39 Karl Marx—On the Materialist Conception of History

Thursday, 10 March

5.38 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels—The Communist Manifesto

5.39 Karl Marx—On the Materialist Conception of History

Week 8. Socialism and Communism (2)

Tuesday, 15 March

6.40 Eduard Bernstein—Evolutionary Socialism

6.41 V. I. Lenin—Revisionism, Imperialism, and Revolution

6.42 Leon Trotsky—The Permanent Revolution

6.43 Mao Zedong—On the People's Democratic Dictatorship

Thursday, 17 March

- 6.44 Mikhail Bakunin—Anarcho-Communism vs. Marxism
- 6.45 Emma Goldman—Anarchism: What It Really Stands For
- 6.46 Eugene V. Debs—Speech to the Conference for Progressive Political Action
- 6.47 Bernie Sanders—On Democratic Socialism in the United States

Week 9. Spring Break

Week 10. Fascism

Tuesday, 29 March

- 7.48 Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau—Civilization and Race
- 7.49 Benito Mussolini—The Doctrine of Fascism

Thursday, 31 March

- 7.50 Alfredo Rocco—The Political Theory of Fascism
- 7.51 Adolf Hitler—Nation and Race
- 7.52 Robert Kagan—This is How Fascism Comes to America

Week 11. Liberation Ideologies and the Politics of Identity (1)

Tuesday, 5 April

- 8.53 Frederick Douglass—What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?
- 8.54 Cornel West—Race Matters
- 8.55 Erik Loomis—A New Chapter in the Black Liberation Movement
- 8.56 Black Lives Matter—A Vision for Black Lives

Thursday, 7 April

- 8.57 Mary Wollstonecraft—A Vindication of the Rights of Woman
- 8.58 Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions

Week 12. Liberation Ideologies and the Politics of Identity (2)

Tuesday, 12 April

- 8.59 Marilyn Frye—Oppression
- 8.60 bell hooks—Feminism Is for Everybody
- 8.61 Josephine Livingstone—The Task Ahead for Feminism

Thursday, 14 April

- 8.62 John Corvino—Homosexuality: The Nature and Harm Arguments
- 8.63 Vine Deloria, Jr.—On Liberation
- 8.64 Gustavo Gutierrez—Liberation Theology
- 8.65 Peter Singer—All Animals Are Equal

Week 13. Paper #2 due

Tuesday, 19 April. Draft due in class

Thursday, 21 April. Discussion

Week 14. Green Politics: Ecology as Ideology

Tuesday, 26 April

9.66 Leslie Paul Thiele—Sustainability in the Age of Ecology

9.67 Wendell Berry—Getting Along with Nature

9.68 Val Plumwood—Feminism and the Mastery of Nature

9.69 James H. Cone—Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?

9.70 Pope Francis—*Laudato Si'*: On Care for our Common Home

Thursday, 28 April. No reading

Week 15. Radical Islamism

Tuesday, 3 May

10.71 Sayyid Qutb—Signposts Along the Road

10.72 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini—The Necessity for Islamic Government

10.73 Osama Bin Laden and Others—Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders

10.74 Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (ISIS)—Declaration of a Caliphate

Thursday, 5 May. No reading

Week 16. Conclusion

Tuesday, 10 May. In-class final exam

Thursday, 12 May. Wrap-up

Week 17. Finals week

Friday, 20 May. Take-home final due