

# POLITICAL SCIENCE 701

## LIBERALISM AND ITS CRITICS

Fall 2005  
Wednesdays, 2–4 p.m.  
Walker Seminar Room

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Office hours:

7640 Haven  
Mondays, 2–3 p.m., Tuesdays, 1–2 p.m., & by appointment.  
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Course website accessible via CTools.

### OVERVIEW

This seminar explores the development of the many varieties of liberalism from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on to the present. We focus on liberal thinkers and writers, self-identified and not, and on their critics, self-identified and not. Some of the writers are canonical and the themes they address canonical “liberal” themes (whatever that means). Others — other authors, other themes — are somewhat more obscure, but useful for that very reason. Many of the texts we read are “literary,” as opposed to theoretical; we’ll discover why as we go. Our goal is to improve our understanding not only of the virtues and weaknesses of liberalism, but of the many different things liberalism has meant and can mean. What is the relationship between liberalism and toleration? rights? capitalism? democracy? religion? What can liberal theory say about gender? education? We can’t cover any of these themes exhaustively. Instead, we’ll raise questions about them along the way, touch some here and others there.

The seminar combines its substantive goal with a professional one: assignments in the seminar emulate the types of work academics do.

### PREREQUISITES

There are no formal prerequisites, but I expect you to have some familiarity with canonical political theory. You should have read some Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and Mill. If you haven’t, it’s not the end of the world, but we will not stop for crash courses on the harm principle, for example, or the basics of social contract theory. You also should have some experience in writing political theory papers. There are many surface differences from other kinds of social-scientific writing, although the basic idea is the same: political theory is a mode of *inquiry*.

## SEMINAR MECHANICS

### Expectations

#### PARTICIPATION

- Each seminar session will begin with a little bit of lecturing, but after that, joint discussion will be our primary mode of engagement. Active participation — speaking and listening — is important. There are varying degrees of background knowledge among seminar participants, but don't let the (apparent) erudition of (apparently) more experienced participants to deter you from engaging the material and others. If you do, you won't learn, and your grade will suffer radically.
- Be in class on time, and stay until the end. If you anticipate needing to leave — even for a bathroom break — you *must* tell me before the seminar starts.
- Come prepared: you must have done the reading for the day, and you must have something to say about it. One recurring question on which I'll expect — different — answers is "Why are we reading this text?" Bring the texts we are discussing to the seminar.
- You have *zero* unexcused absences from the seminar. If you have to miss more than three times, you will need to drop the seminar.
- Participation counts for 20% of your final grade.

#### WRITING

All writing assignments emulate the sort of work academics do.

#### *Argument Review*

The purpose of the argument review is to hone one's skills in identifying an argument and characterizing it *briefly* but intelligibly. This models something scholars have to do in book reviews, survey articles and, of course, in articles and books, although in the latter the reviews don't always have to be brief.

During week 2–9, each seminar participant has to write *two* argument reviews. The assignment remains the same:

Identify one important argument in the reading for this week and summarize it in one page (250 words). You can imagine that your summary is a part of a book review, encyclopedia entry or something similar aimed at a scholarly audience. Your review is due in class (but it can be submitted electronically in advance).

During the first few weeks, I will provide guidance on where and what the main arguments might be. After that, people are on their own. It doesn't matter which weeks one chooses; the only requirement is that two get written. One cannot write on a reading from previous weeks.

Seminar participants may be asked to circulate their summaries and/or present them briefly in the seminar.

The two reviews together count for 15% of the final course grade.

### **Concept Analysis**

The purpose of the concept analysis is similar to the argument review, but the assignment is broader. It can incorporate more than one source, it will be longer (3–4 pages or 750–1,000 words), and it may involve a brief evaluative component.

Each seminar participant will have to write one concept analysis during weeks 2–11. Again, during the first weeks, I will make suggestions on possible candidates; after that, people are on their own.

The concept analysis paper will count for 15% of the final course grade.

### **Term Paper**

The term is your most important piece of work in the seminar; it counts for 50% of your course grade. I'll distribute a specific handout on the term paper; here are the basics.

**Stage 1: Abstract.** One-paragraph abstract (of at least 100 words) of the proposed paper is due on **October 26**. The abstract should briefly outline the proposed topic and the paper's main thesis. I will provide examples of them. It is important to realize it is virtually impossible to know exactly what one will argue or how the argument will go — *and that's the way it works in the business*. The abstract must be interesting and manageable enough to get accepted, but it is not a contract. No one will ever demand that the final product be exactly what was described in the initial proposal. It almost never is.

**Stage 2: Draft.** A required draft is due on **November 23** (the Wednesday before Thanksgiving when we *don't* have a meeting). The draft is *required* and *graded*; your grade for the term paper will be a weighted average of the first and second draft, 25% and 75%, respectively.

There is a lot of confusion on what counts as an acceptable draft; make sure you read the handout on drafts available on the website.

**Stage 3: "Finished" draft.** Few things are ever finished — even after they are published — but for the purposes of this seminar, the final draft is what people must submit to me on the last day of the final exams, **December 22**. It need not be perfect nor publishable, but it needs to be your most complete good-faith effort at that point.

### **Formal requirements**

All written work in the seminar must conform to the Chicago Manual of Style (15<sup>th</sup> edition). Papers that don't won't be accepted. In most cases, the style is the same as in the 14<sup>th</sup> edition.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

The following books have been ordered through Textbook Reporting Service:

Jane Austen. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2002.

John Dewey. *The Political Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.

David Hume. *Political Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.

John Locke. *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983.

Azar Nafisi. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. New York: Random House, 2004.

George Orwell. *A Collection of Essays*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1981

Wilhelm von Humboldt. *The Limits of State Action*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1993.

Make sure you get *these* editions of the work.

The following ebooks are also required:

John Ruskin. *Unto this Last*. ElecBooks, 2001.

Friedrich v. Schiller. *Letters upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Kessinger Publishing, 2004; available digitally for purchase at <http://www.kessingerpub.com/>.

Other readings are available either on the library’s electronic reserves or in other electronic resources. They are all accessible through the seminar website.

## GENERAL RULES OF THE GAME

### Grading

Here’s what my grades mean:

	On a paper	As the final grade
A+	Send it for publication.	Absolutely brilliant and extremely rare.
A	Excellent work.	Excellent work.
A–	Good work; you are satisfying all expectations, although there are some problems with the paper.	Good work; you are satisfying all expectations, although you can — and likely will — improve.
B+	Decent work, although there are some significant problems with the paper. Perfectly fine on early papers.	There are some real issues about your ability to do work in this field. You may want to consider whether this should be your major field.
B	There are some real problems in the paper: it’s insufficiently detailed, its argument is badly off the mark, prose is problematic. Don’t panic if this is a grade on an early paper, but try to see what the problems are.	You may want to consider whether grad school is the thing you’ll want to pursue.
B–	The paper is just about unacceptable. If you put in a lot of effort into it, you’ll want to talk to me immediately; if you didn’t, shame on you.	I don’t think grad school is for you.

## Late Work and Incompletes

No late work will be accepted. You can't write an argument review or a concept analysis on past themes (except if your concept *also* uses past readings). Term paper drafts submitted after November 23 will earn you an E for 25% of the term paper grade, and those late drafts won't be read.

I will issue *no* incompletes in this course. If you have done satisfactory work — including the term paper draft — but don't turn in your term paper by December 22, you will get a B– as a placeholder grade. You then have until January 31, 2006, to finish the work. If you don't finish it by then, the B– stays on your transcript.

## Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are becoming a problem even at the graduate level. The seminar website has links to resources on academic integrity; make sure you know about the issues.

This should go without saying, but, alas, it doesn't: if you engage in academic misconduct, I will make sure you will never practice as an academic.

## SCHEDULE

Readings marked with an asterisk are available through the seminar website.

### WEEK 1: SEPTEMBER 7

Introduction. No reading.

### WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 14

“An Exhortation Concerning Good Order, and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates.”\*

John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, all.

### WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 21

David Hume, *Political Writings*:

Part I, pp. 1–47

Part II, pp. 98–100, 127–135, 142–149

Part III, pp. 184–189

Part IV, pp. 230–240

### WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 28

Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Limits of State Action*, all.

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WEEK 5: OCTOBER 5

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, all.

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WEEK 6: OCTOBER 12

Friedrich von Schiller, *Letters upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*, all.

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WEEK 7: OCTOBER 19

John Ruskin, *Unto this Last*, all.

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WEEK 8: OCTOBER 26

Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility," parts I and II.\*

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WEEK 9: NOVEMBER 2

John Dewey, *The Political Writings*

Part II, pp. 38–47

Part III, pp. 59–96

Part IV, pp. 97–132

Part V, pp. 173–183

Part VI, pp. 210–218

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WEEK 10: NOVEMBER 9

George Orwell, *A Collection of Essays*, all.

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WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 16

*Wisconsin v. Yoder* (406 U.S. 205, 1972) [**Assignment: locate this yourself.**]

Eamonn Callan, "Discrimination and Religious Schooling," in Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, eds., *Citizenship in Diverse Societies*. Oxford: OUP, 2000.\*

Margaret Talbot, "A Mighty Fortress." *The New York Times Magazine*. February 27, 2000. [**Accessible via Lexis-Nexis.**]

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WEEK 12: NOVEMBER 23

Thanksgiving, no meeting.

**Term paper draft due.**

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WEEK 13: NOVEMBER 30

J. M. Coetzee, "Taking Offense."\*

Coetzee, "The Problem of Evil."\*

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WEEK 14: DECEMBER 7

Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, pp. 79–153, 255–339.