

# Power, Justice, and the State

Political Science 112 (3 credits)  
Fall Semester 2021  
meets 9:40-11:10 TTh in Sage 3215  
Office Hours: M 3-4:30, Th 1:30-3  
or by appointment

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Kabul International Airport, August 26 2021

Photo Credit: *The Wall Street Journal*

**Course Description:** Power, Justice, and the State invites you to consider critical themes of public interest. Why do we have a state? What should the state do and why? What should it not do and why should it not? State power may obviously be used for ill, but when and how can it be used for good? Does citizenship create obligations about how to treat others as well as benefits for citizens? We will consider several major schools of thought about this, which we call theories of justice. We will discuss the strengths and shortcomings of these theories in practice, looking at various arenas of state involvement.

**Signature Question:** How do people understand and engage in community life?

**Essential Learning Objectives for the Quest I (Society) course:**

- develop civic knowledge
- objectively evaluate theories and their assumptions
- engage in critical and creative thinking

**Format:** We will be meeting in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This class is an introduction to political theories. We will be reading a good deal about various major options about how to organize society that people have debated and discussed—some for many centuries now. We will discuss their implications and how they address challenging political dilemmas from the real world. I do take attendance and expect you to attend and actively contribute to the class.

**Reading Material:** In some college courses you will be expected to read a lot; in others, not at all. In this course I am shooting for a manageable amount of reading, with the clear expectation that you will do it before class on the day it is assigned. You do not have to purchase any books or a course packet, as our readings will either be on line, as noted below, or posted to Canvas.

## Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance	40 points
Participation	40 points
Reading Reaction Papers	70 points (10 each)
Longer Analytical Paper	50 points
First Exam	50 points
Second Exam	<u>50 points</u>
	300 points

Like many professors, I will use a standard **scale for grading** where 93% and above is an A, 90-93% is an A-, 88-89% is a B+, etc. At any point you can figure out your grade to that date by dividing the number of points earned by the total number possible.

Professors have different **attendance** policies. I expect you to attend class and I record attendance because attendance and higher grades are strongly correlated. It is good to get in (or stay) in the habit of attending class. If you are ill, required to quarantine, experience a family emergency, have a religious holiday, or you are participating at a University-sponsored event it is University policy that your teacher must excuse you from attendance, understanding that you are still responsible for the material covered that day and any make up work. Please let me know if you are in one of those situations before class, and I will mark you excused. After one unexcused absence, each unexcused absence will be a loss of 4 points from your attendance grade.

You may **participate** in class in a variety of ways: ask questions, make comments, respond to a peer, work actively in groups, display an interest in learning, and/or see your teacher during office hours. You should contribute actively in class. I know that can be a challenge, but it is best to face that challenge now, very early in your college career. Most of you will need to think actively and participate in conversations on the job with your peers; consider this a time to practice that skill. Asking questions about what you may not understand is just as important as making a point. Attitude matters as well; learning can be fun, but even if and when it isn't, you should respect your peers, the classroom setting and try to appreciate what your professors hope to get you interested in.

**Reading response papers:** You will write 7 short response papers about the materials we go over. Your paper is on Thursday's assigned reading and is *due by 9AM on Thursday*. A first paragraph should summarize the main points of the philosophy or view offered; a second paragraph is your

reasoned analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of this way of thinking; a third paragraph should either raise and discuss something from class that you would like to examine further, or pose and discuss a new question, problem, or dilemma associated with the philosophy.

The weeks eligible for writing these papers are Week 2's ("liberalism" excerpts in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), Week 3 (The United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"), Week 4 (Michael Green's TedxTalk on the Social Progress Index), 5 (Milton Friedman's "The Role of Government in a Free Society"), 7 (Michael Sandel's "Aristotle"), 8 ("Feminist Political Philosophy" excerpts from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*), 11 (two readings on the US and Afghanistan: a *Washington Post* article "It's not our fight vs. we owe them" and Blake "America's Moral Responsibility"), and 13 (Coates' "The Case for Reparations")—these are 8 weeks, so you pick the week among these 8 to skip.

Each paper is to be one page, single-spaced Word document posted to Canvas by 9 AM on Thurs. (i.e. before class). Each is worth 10 points. You will get feedback on Canvas. Absent an approved excuse, late papers will not be accepted. Here is a rough idea of what various grades mean:

- 10 all three aspects of the assignment are well done; characterization of the philosophy is accurate; analysis is thorough, thoughtful, careful and well written
- 9 all three aspects of the assignment are tackled; only minor mistakes of understanding; analysis is well written and has significant value
- 8 all three aspects of the assignment are written; there may be a significant misunderstanding of the philosophy; analyses are valuable, but are shorter and of less depth than a 9 or 10
- 7 all three aspects of the assignment are attempted, but there are significant misunderstandings and the analysis is limited
- 6 the assignment may not be attempted in the form outlined; there are substantial errors of understanding, such that the philosophy is not understood or productively analyzed
- 5 the paper has almost no redeeming value in any of its three facets; the philosophy at hand is not understood and there is no serious analysis
- 0 paper is not turned in

Here is our department's tutorial on **writing in Political Science** that you should familiarize yourself with: [https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/04/Writing\\_Tips.pdf](https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/04/Writing_Tips.pdf)

**Analytical Paper:** The second part of the course introduces alternatives of thinking to the philosophy of liberalism. Your analytical paper is designed to discuss one of these alternatives in depth. After a short summary of the philosophy concentrate on describing the importance and utility of this way of thinking. Here are some questions to consider in your writing: How is this philosophy relevant to the present day? How might it specifically apply to and be applied in the United States? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Is this philosophy a true alternative to liberalism or would it only supplement or correct it in some way, allowing liberalism to work better? Why? In short, write a serious consideration of one of the alternatives to liberalism.

My expectation is that your paper should be at least 8-10 pages double-spaced; it should specifically reference readings and additional sources (more on this in class), but it should primarily feature your own analysis. The paper is to be submitted to Canvas in a Word document by 9 AM on November 4<sup>th</sup>. We will discuss your thoughts in class that day. Late papers will be docked one full grade. I encourage you to discuss your paper ideas with me and with your peers. It can also be helpful to have a friend, relative, or classmate read a draft and offer feedback.

There are two **tests** in the course that are scheduled for **October 14<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>**. Tests will encompass a variety of assessment mechanisms, essay, multiple choice, identification of terms, etc. The tests will be open note. Please be advised that open note exams increase the difficulty of the questions that I can legitimately ask. Your own diligence in taking notes when reading and in class correlates with a higher grade.

## **Daily Readings, Assignments, and Topics for Discussion**

\*denotes a class prior to which you should be turning in a reading response paper

- September 9** welcome and meet each other; the syllabus, your learning contract; discuss reading reading: Bruni, “How to get the Most out of College” found at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/opinion/college-students.html>
- September 14** introduction to political theory; basic terms in pol. Theory; Student Success Center reading: Roberts and Sutch, “Introduction” (all readings without links are in Canvas)
- September 16\*** the philosophy of liberalism, a foundational modern paradigm reading: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Liberalism” Introduction, parts 1 and 2 found at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberalism/>
- from 6-7:30 attend our Constitution Day Speaker’s talk Sage 1210, Dr. Sara Benesh
- September 21** liberalism option #1: rights-based liberalism, self-protection and mutual care? reading: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Human Rights” Introduction; parts 2, 3, 4 found at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-human/>
- September 23\*** liberalism option #1: rights-based liberalism, continued reading: the United Nations’ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”
- September 28** liberalism option #2: utilitarianism, the greatest good for the greatest number? reading: Nathanson, “Act and Rule Utilitarianism” read Intro. and parts 1, 2, and 5 also advice from a professor: <http://matt.might.net/articles/college-tips/>
- September 30\*** liberalism option #2: utilitarianism, continued view podcast: Michael Green TedxTalk on the Social Progress Index [https://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_green\\_what\\_the\\_social\\_progress\\_index\\_can\\_reveal\\_about\\_your\\_country?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_green_what_the_social_progress_index_can_reveal_about_your_country?language=en)
- October 5** liberalism option #3: libertarianism, minimal government, maximal freedom? reading: Sandel, chapter 3 “Do we own Ourselves?”

- October 7\*** liberalism option #3: libertarianism, continued  
reading: Friedman, “The Role of Government in a Free Society”
- October 12** class discussion: Which form of liberalism is best and why?  
What might be missing from liberalism; what might it be supplemented with?  
reading: “Students...don’t Pick Useless Majors” found at:  
<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/students-at-most-colleges-dont-pick-useless-majors/>
- October 14** **first exam**
- October 19** alternative #1: Plato, defense of expertise in politics  
reading: Roberts and Sutch, chapter 1: “Plato”
- October 21\*** alternative #2: Aristotle, finding and realizing the true end of life and community  
reading: Sandel, chapter 8 “Aristotle”
- October 26** alternative #3: socialism and Marxism, envisioning a cooperative world  
reading: Roberts and Sutch, chapter 5 through page 142 “Owen and Marx”
- October 28\*** alternative #4: feminism, empowering the disempowered  
reading: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Feminist Political Philosophy”  
Introduction, part 1 and part 2 through 2.4 found at:  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-political/>
- November 2** alternative #5: conservatism, seeing the good in tradition  
reading: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Conservatism,” Introduction and parts 1.1  
through 1.3 found at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/conservatism/>
- November 4** **analytical paper due at 9 AM; class discussion on results**
- November 9** dilemma #1—how does this relate to non-humans? the environment  
reading: “For Better Learning in College...” found at:  
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/for-better-learning-in-college-lectures-lay-down-the-laptop-and-pick-up-a-pen/>
- November 11** dilemma #1—how does this relate to non-humans? animals  
reading: Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
- November 16** dilemma #2—are obligations and benefits local or universal? trade & human rights  
Watch video “Nike Sweatshops: Beyond the Swoosh” found at  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5uYCWVfuPQ>  
reading: “How Class and Social Capital Affect the University Students” found at  
<http://theconversation.com/how-class-and-social-capital-affect-university-students-92602>
- November 18\*** dilemma #2—are obligations and benefits local or universal? US security interests  
readings: Fisher et al *Washington Post*, “It’s not our fight vs. we owe them”  
and Blake “America’s Moral Responsibility” found at  
<https://theconversation.com/americas-moral-responsibility-for-the-tragedy-unfolding-in-afghanistan-16624>

**November 23** dilemma #3: multiculturalism within political communities  
reading: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Multiculturalism” Intro., parts 1 and 2

**November 25** Enjoy Thanksgiving break

**November 30** dilemma #4: history and fairness  
reading: Coates “The Case for Reparations” parts 1-5 found at  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

**December 2\*** dilemma #4: history and fairness, continued  
reading: Coates “The Case for Reparations” parts 6-10  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

**December 7** dilemma #5: the power of money and its limits  
reading: Walzer, “Money and Commodities”

**December 9** dilemma #5: the power of money and its limits  
read or listen: Zoloth, “The Ethics of Covid-19 vaccine distribution” found at:  
<https://news.uchicago.edu/big-brains-podcast-ethics-covid-19-vaccine-distribution>

**December 14** course summary and conclusion; study session for exam  
reading: “New College Grads: Who Employers Want to Hire” found at:  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-college-grads-who-employers-want-to-hire/>

**December 16** second exam

\* Note that there are two **co-curricular events** that you will be expected to attend. This is a requirement in all Quest I classes, and it helps to acquaint you with the huge number of events here at UW Oshkosh during every semester. The first of these is already scheduled—our Constitution Day Speaker, Dr. Sara Benesh from 6-7:30 on Thursday Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>. The second will be announced in class. Grant Steffen, your Peer Mentor will also be offering optional events that he would be pleased for you to join.

## **The University Studies Program and Liberal Arts Education**

The USP is UW Oshkosh’s general education program. All accredited Universities have a general education program, consisting of an array of courses outside of a major. The purpose of the USP is to ensure that you get a broad education, something that acquaints you with the world, science, literature, writing, and the arts in a deeper way than you did in high school. This is what is meant by a “liberal arts” education. A good liberal arts background typically makes you more desirable to employers and a more well-rounded person.

In three “Quest” classes, you will examine up to three different questions. The question at issue in this Quest I class is “how do people understand and engage in community life?” All Quest I and Quest II classes are paired with either a writing class or speaking class. Both classes are small in size and together constitute a “learning community,” as you take the two classes with the same group. Learning beyond your major is important. It makes you more versatile and knowledgeable; it helps develop skills that a single major or concentration can’t. This Quest I course’s 3 credits count toward the “Explore” Society requirement.

## Additional Policies and Information

**On Writing** Writing well is an important skill, one that will help you succeed and advance in almost any profession. Writing well allows people to know what you think and for you to make a persuasive case for your point of view. This is a lifetime endeavor and I want to help you to improve your writing, no matter the level of proficiency that you are at now. You will be writing several short papers, and one longer analytical essay. I would be very happy to work with you outside of class to improve. Just ask.

If you quote or paraphrase anyone's argument you must cite their work (more on citations as you prepare for the first paper). Papers that are late by one class period will be docked by one grade increment (i.e. an A- becomes a B+); after that, a late paper is docked a full grade. Any outside sources you use on your paper should be reputable and cited.

**Expectations for a Good Class:** The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. James Krueger. He can be reached at [kruegerj@uwosh.edu](mailto:kruegerj@uwosh.edu). Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

The **APSA Style Manual** is an important reference. On pp. 37-41 it covers in-text citations and starting on p. 42 it describes how to write bibliographical entries: <https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/>

**Office Hours:** On Thursdays I will be in the office. If I am not in the office on Monday afternoons office hours you will find me on the digital platform Microsoft Teams. Teams is available to all UWO students. Find Teams by clicking on the 3 by 3 set of dots to the immediate left of the UWO banner toward the top left of your Outlook email. When logging into Teams, look closely at the status symbol. A green dot means I am available. A red dot means I am on another call. You can leave a message on email or on Teams and we can connect later. *The main point to remember is that I am available to you. Please use the office hours that professors provide. We are here to help.* If you have a schedule conflict with my office hours send me a message and we can work things out, including finding an alternative time.

**Expectations for Academic Honesty:** A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team. More information can be found here: <https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/08/Academic-Honesty.pdf>

**Peer Mentor:** Every Quest I class comes with a peer mentor, an upperclass UW Oshkosh student who is here to help introduce you to the campus and its resources. **Grant Steffen** is your Peer Mentor. He will regularly attend class on Tuesdays, and lead informational class activities. He is available to you by email or appointment. It helps to have an experienced student to talk to, and your conversations with Grant about the class or anything else are confidential.

**Civic Knowledge and Civic Engagement:** Civic knowledge consists of an awareness and understanding of the various political and social processes that impact the nature and quality of life in local, state, national, or global communities. It also encompasses the cultivation of skills that may be useful in public life, like effective communication and ethical reasoning. Civic engagement means having an appreciation for and applying the values gained from civic knowledge in real world settings, directed at improving the quality of life in the communities of which one is a part. Civic knowledge and civic engagement emphasize learning, reflection and action in order to create better communities.

**Early Alert:** This report will indicate if you have academic performance or attendance problems and, if so, will help you to remedy these issues. It is common for students to be unaware of their academic performance in classes or even overestimate their performance. This is a check, offered during Week 5, that will help you know if you are on track for passing this class and others.

**Learning Outcomes and Core Abilities:**

- know the major tenets of key theories of justice and evaluate them analytically
- articulate why thinking about justice is important
- apply concepts of justice to real-world situations
- constructively respond to and critique the work of peers

**Barring documented necessity, tests must be taken at the scheduled time.**

**Classroom electronics policy:** Using a computer to take notes is tempting, but studies show it is less effective than taking notes by hand. Barring a demonstrated need to take notes by computer, I will ask you to take hand written notes. Cell phones should be put away and not accessed during the class. If you do need to use your phone for some reason, try to inform your teacher beforehand and it is probably best to leave the room when you use it.

**Political Science majors (and prospective majors):** You should be taking Political Methodology (PS 245) in your sophomore year, or, if you cannot, in the first semester of your junior year at the latest. PS 245 is a prerequisite for our capstone course Political Analysis (PS 401) and cannot be taken concurrently with PS 245. You should save your graded work from this class and others in the major, as you compile a portfolio of your written work in PS 401.

**Disability Accommodations:** It is the policy and practice of UW Oshkosh to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please notify me. You are also welcome to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 920-424-3100 or dean1@uwosh.edu. For more information, visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website: <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/disability-services>.

**Syllabus Changes:** If any major changes are made to this schedule and these policies, I will announce them in a timely manner via your UW Oshkosh email account and post the revised syllabus on Canvas.

The following URL contains a description of students' consumer protection rights required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>