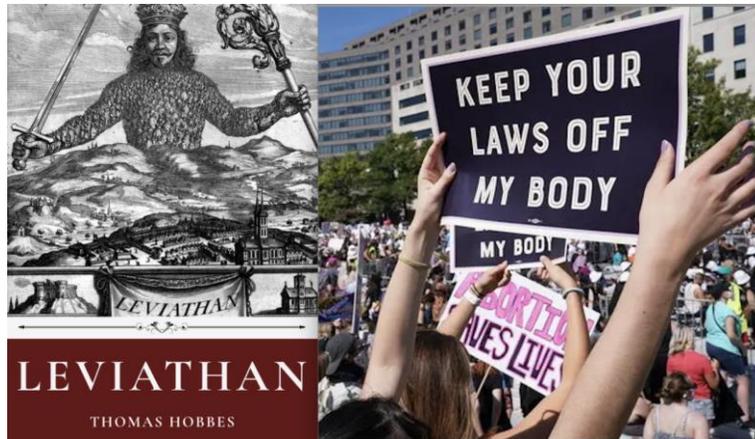


Power, Justice, and the State

Political Science 112 (3 credits)
Fall Semester 2022
meets 9:40-11:10 TTh in Sage 3234
Office Hours: M 3-4:00; TTh 1:45-2:45
or by appointment

Professor David Siemers
Office: Sage Hall 4622
Phone: 424-3456 (PS office)
email: siemers@uwosh.edu
Peer Mentor: Madison Horstman
email: horstm95@uwosh.edu



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 3 credit Quest I (Society) course:

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

Subject Matter: This class is an introduction to some theories about politics and ethical decision making. We will be reading and thinking about various options about how to organize society and approach ethics that people have debated and discussed—some for many centuries. We will discuss their implications and how they address challenging dilemmas from the real world.

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. Our readings will either be on line, as noted below, or posted to Canvas.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade consists of five components, each worth 20% of your final course grade. I will give you a letter grade for each component. The letter grade corresponds to the numbers typically used for them (A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3.0 etc.). To calculate your final grade I add the total points that you earned and then divide that by the total number of assignments. I'll be happy to talk with you about how you are doing in the class at any time. The five components are as follows:

Attendance and Participation in Class
Reading Reaction Papers and Small Group Assignments
Position Paper #1 (due October 13th)
Position Paper #2 (due Friday December 9th)
Exam on the three liberal theories of justice and alternatives to them (November 3rd)

Attendance and Participation: Professors have different attendance policies. I expect you to attend class and I record attendance. Why? Because you came to college to take classes and learn stuff (I hope!); attendance and higher grades are strongly correlated. It is good to get in (or stay) in the habit of attending class. Some professors say, “well, you are an adult, so you make your own decision about whether to go to class or not.” And that’s true in this class as well, it’s just that as an adult there are consequences to your decisions. Being an adult means taking responsibility, as well as having greater personal freedom, which is something to celebrate about college life!

If you are ill, experience a family emergency, observe a religious holiday, or you are participating at a University-sponsored team event it is University policy that your teacher must and will 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.

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. I invite you to participate actively in the class. I know that talking in front of others can be a challenge, but it is best to face that challenge now, early in your college career. Most of you will need to think actively and participate in conversations on the job with colleagues; this is 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. You can ask me how you are doing in this part of the grade anytime. This grade, in the end, is a judgment call by me, but I have good judgment. I will know who you are and will have carefully assessed what you added to the class and know how frequently you attended.

Reading response papers and small group work: You will write 4 short response papers of a single-spaced page about reading materials (you have 5 opportunities to do these, so you choose which reading response you want to skip). You will be placed into either a Tuesday group or a Thursday group for these. Submit papers in a Word file to the Canvas dropbox provided prior to class. A response paper should be three significant paragraphs. The first paragraph should summarize the philosophy or view offered in the reading; a second paragraph is your own analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of this argument or way of thinking; a third paragraph should outline

something that you would like the class to examine or discuss further, or pose a question you have about the philosophy. Absent an approved excuse, late papers will not be accepted.

The final three short assignments consist of small group work, with the question or assignment listed below.

These short assignments will be graded either ++, +, 0, or -. ++ means you have done well, clearly read the material or taken a serious approach to the assignment, you summarize well and are making good comments and asking good questions. + means you have taken less care with your summary or assignment than is hoped; commentary and questions may be elementary or short; 0 means that you have handed something in but it is brief and/or hard to distinguish whether you read or got much out of the text or assignment; a - subtracts from your total points and is only assessed when the assignment is not completed. I comment on/grade your papers on Canvas.

To calculate your grade I total the amount of plusses that you have and subtract the minuses. 12 and above equals an A; A- = 11; B+ 10; etc.

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| #1 Sept. 20 or 22 | “A Very Brief Overview of Modern Human Rights” or the UN’s “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” |
| #2 Sept. 27 or 29 | “Introduction to Utilitarianism” or “Act and Rule Utilitarianism” |
| #3 Oct. 4 or 6 | “Libertarianism” or “The Role of Government in a Free Society” |
| #4 Oct. 18 or 20 | “The Responsive Communitarian Platform” or “Conservatism” |
| #5 Oct. 25 or 27 | “Marxism” or “Philosophical Feminism” |
| #6 November 17 th | What obligations are universal and what are particular (with a partner) |
| #7 December 1 st | What are the right blocked exchanges and why? (with a partner) |
| #8 December 13 th | Presentation of Papers in class (with a partner) |

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

Position Paper #1: After describing each of the three major liberal theories of justice, argue for which is best, giving your reasoning why it is better than the others by frankly discussing the strengths and weaknesses of all three. My expectation is that you will write 8-10 double-spaced, typewritten pages.

We will have read about and discussed each of these theories, but keep in mind that many people have talked about and written on these (for centuries, actually), and it is one of the most lively debates in human history, more important even than who the Kardashians are dating at the moment. You are encouraged to learn more about them (the theories of justice, not the Kardashians) by searching for and reading reputable sources on them. What random people post to the internet is often not reputable; nor is most media content, even when it is not luring you to love your favorite politician, movement, or political party even more. One goal of the class is to help you distinguish between what is reputable and what is not. Some additional directions will be delivered in class.

The paper is to be submitted to Canvas in a Word document before class on **October 13th**. Citations and bibliography should follow the **APSA Style Manual**. 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/>

Position Paper #2: With a partner, you are tasked with taking a clear position on one of the 5 significant dilemmas in political theory that are laid out in the last part of our course. Your paper will first lay out the problem or challenge, then will argue for applying one of the political theories that we have learned about to this problem. You will explain how that political theory would approach the dilemma: what would it advocate?; what laws and policies would its adherents favor and work to enact?; what would it teach its citizens? Finally, why would this be a better approach to the dilemma than two other major ideas you have encountered? Be specific. My expectation is that this paper should be at least 10-12 pages double-spaced in length.

Again, you should specifically reference readings. You should also add additional sources to help identify the scope of the problem as well as favored approaches by the various theories, provided they are reputable, but this paper should feature your own analysis. You will present your perspective to the class in our final week. Late papers will be docked one full grade. We will be discussing this topic extensively in class, but I encourage you to discuss your paper ideas with me and with your peers outside of class as well. It can also be helpful to have a friend, relative, or classmate read a draft and offer feedback.

This paper is **due December 9th** in Word format, submitted to the appropriate Canvas dropbox. References should again follow the APSA Style Manual linked above.

Test: There is one exam in the course that are scheduled for **November 3rd** that will cover the three liberal theories of justice and the four alternatives to them. The test will use a variety of assessment mechanisms, including essay, multiple choice, and identification of terms, etc. and it will be open note in format. Please be advised that open note exams increase the difficulty of tests, because it changes the expectation for learning away from the amount that you can cram into your brain on any given day and toward all of what we have gone over in the class and what you could write down. Your diligence in taking notes when reading and in class correlates with a higher grade.

Daily Readings, Assignments, and Topics for Discussion

September 8 welcome and meet each other; the syllabus, your learning contract; why do we have a state; what is political theory

Part I: Liberalism as a Predominant Political Theory and its Variations

September 13 what is liberalism?;
reading: "Liberalism," read up to "World War I & the Great Depression" (Canvas)

- September 14** ****Constitution Day speaker Dr. Tricia Zunker, 6 – 7:15 PM in Sage 1210****
 Note this is one of our two special co-curricular events during the semester
- September 15** modern liberalism and its three main strands: libertarianism, utilitarianism, and positive liberalism
 reading: read Sept. 13th reading “Liberalism” to the end as well as
 Bruni, “How to get the Most out of College” found at
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/opinion/college-students.html>
- September 20** liberalism option #1: positive liberalism: personal liberty plus mutual care
 reading: McFarland, “Modern Human Rights” (Canvas)
- September 22** liberalism option #1: positive liberalism, continued
 reading: the United Nations’ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” found at:
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- September 27** liberalism option #2: utilitarianism, the greatest good for the greatest number
 reading: “Introduction to Utilitarianism” (Oxford University) found at:
<https://www.utilitarianism.net/introduction-to-utilitarianism>
- September 29** liberalism option #2: two versions of utilitarianism and utilitarianism in practice
 reading: Nathanson, “Act and Rule Utilitarianism” Intro, parts 1, 2, and 5 (Canvas)
 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
- October 4** liberalism option #3: libertarianism, minimal government, maximal freedom
 reading: Boaz, “Libertarianism” (Canvas)
- October 6** liberalism option #3: libertarianism, continued
 reading: Friedman, “The Role of Government in a Free Society” (Canvas)
- October 11** class discussion: Which of the three major forms of liberalism is best and why?
 What might be missing from liberalism; what might it be supplemented with?
 View video: US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvIFxfOOKdM>
 and read “Underclassmen Need More Freedom” (Canvas)
- October 13** **position paper #1 due**

Part II: Alternatives to Liberalism: Helpful or Not, Thick or Thin?

- October 18** Alternative 1: communitarianism—the quest for strong community from Aristotle to today
 Reading: “The Responsive Communitarian Platform” (Canvas)
- October 20** Alternative 2: conservatism—an appreciation for the use & value of culture and tradition
 Reading: Minogue et al, “Conservatism” (Canvas)

- October 25** Alternative 3: Marxist socialism—a theory to end social division and economic competition
Reading: “Marxism” up to “Lenin before Leninism” at <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/marxism-overview>
- October 27** Alternative 4: feminism—empowering the disempowered
Reading: Meyers, “Philosophical Feminism” (Canvas)
- November 1** class discussion: are the alternatives to liberalism helpful or not, thick or thin? and college so far—what have I learned, what have I learned about how to learn
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 3** exam on the three liberal theories of justice and the four alternatives to them
- November 8** dilemma #1—do we have obligations beyond those to living humans?
reading: Weiss, “Our Rights and Obligations to Future Generations...” (Canvas)
and view video on the rights applied to inanimate objects:
https://www.ted.com/talks/kelsey_leonard_why_lakes_and_rivers_should_have_the_same_rights_as_humans?language=en
- November 10** dilemma #1, continued—do we have obligations beyond those to living humans?
reading: Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” (Canvas)
- November 15** dilemma #2—what/when are political obligations local and what/when global?
view movie (100 min.) “Bending The Arc,” available through Polk Library:
https://video-alexanderstreet-com.www.remote.uwosh.edu/watch/bending-the-arc?utm_campaign=Video&utm_medium=MARC&utm_source=aspresolver
- November 17** dilemma #2—are obligations and benefits local or universal? discuss group work assignment: watch video “Nike Sweatshops: Beyond the Swoosh” found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5uYCWVfuPQ>
reading: “Students...don’t Pick Useless Majors” found at: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/students-at-most-colleges-dont-pick-useless-majors/>
- November 22** dilemma #3: multiculturalism
reading: “Multiculturalism” at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiculturalism/>
Introduction and Parts 1 and 2
- November 24** Enjoy Thanksgiving break
- November 29** dilemma #4: money and its power—the concept of blocked exchanges
reading: Meyer, “Money, Politics, Power” (Canvas)
- December 1** dilemma #4: discuss group work—what are the right blocked exchanges and why?
- December 6** dilemma #5: history and racial justice, continued
reading: Coates “The Case for Reparations”
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- December 8** dilemma #5: discussion of alternatives—racial justice...what to do?

December 9 position paper #2 due

December 13 presentation of papers in class

December 15 continue with presentations; course summary and conclusion
reading: “New College Grads: Who Employers Want to Hire” found at:
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-college-grads-who-employers-want-to-hire/>

* 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 large number of events held here at UW Oshkosh every semester. The first of these is already scheduled—our Constitution Day Speaker, Dr. Tricia Zunker from 6-7:15 on Wednesday Sept. 14th. The second will be announced in class. Your Peer Mentor Madison Horstman will also be offering optional events that she would like you to join her in.

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. 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: **These are times professors set aside to meet with students in their office.** I will be in my office the hours listed at the top of the syllabus. 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. There are other times I will be in, but be advised that professors do a lot of work at home, away from their campus office. *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.*

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. **Madison Horstman** is your Peer Mentor. She will regularly attend class on Tuesdays, and lead informational class activities and is available to you by email or appointment. It helps to have an experienced student to talk to, and your conversations with Madison 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, the test must be taken at the scheduled time and papers must be handed in to pass the course; if you have trouble meeting these expectations for any reason, please talk to me.

Classroom electronics policy: Using a computer to take notes is tempting, but studies show it is less effective than taking notes by hand. I strongly recommend that you take hand written notes. Cell phones should be put away and not accessed during the class. If you need to use your phone for some reason, try to inform me (or more generically) your teacher beforehand. Your teacher will typically understand and then you can slip out of the room when you have to.

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/>