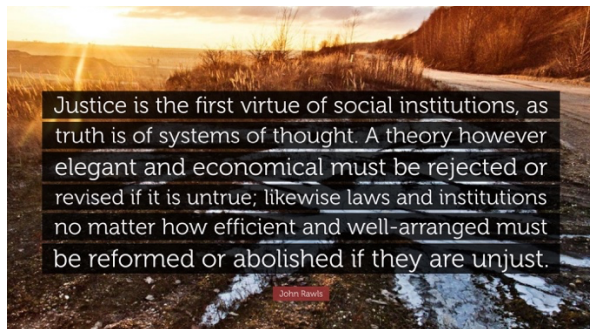


Political Science/Social Justice 378
Spring 2023
office hours: M 1:50-2:50; W 10:15-12:15
or by appointment

Dr. David Siemers, Sage 4622
email: siemers@uwosh.edu
phone: 424-3456 (PS office)

Modern American Political Thought (3 credit in-person class, Sage Hall 2215, MW 3-4:30, no prerequisites)

Course Description: An exploration of key themes, dilemmas, and decision points in American political history from the New Deal to the present. The ideas of influential thinkers and political practitioners like John Dewey, Milton Friedman, Michael Walzer, Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama are featured, as well as those who present alternative visions of the American political landscape.



“The ethics of care begins with a conception of moral life as a network of relationships with specific people, and it sees ‘living well’ as caring for those people, attending to their needs, and maintain their trust”

Feminism and the ethics of care, from *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. Rachels (2010, p. 153).

Learning Outcomes: The proximate goal in this course is to have you encounter, understand, and react to some important, thoughtful writings about American politics and society from about 1945 to the present. In a larger sense the course is in service of developing skills—close reading and careful analysis; knowledge of historical contexts; facility in writing and speaking; an appreciation for various theories of social interaction, justice, and how Americans might best organize themselves.

These outcomes map on to the department’s Student Learning Goals, found here: http://www.uwosh.edu/political_science/information-for-students/student-learning-goals

Format: We meet in person. Political Theory consists of writing that is often dense and difficult that carefully parses major perspectives and introduces important new ideas in politics. I want you to develop the skill of reading this difficult material and considering the varied perspectives it has to offer as best you can. Read the works assigned carefully before class, as we spend much of our time discussing them.

Course Readings: There is one book to buy, available in the UWO bookstore, on line, or from a library.

Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*

There are additional readings, all provided through Canvas or available via listed links. The schedule of readings and where to find them is listed below.

Course Requirements and Grading: There are five components to your grade. Each is worth 20% of the total. Two exams, reading reaction papers, a dialogue paper, and attendance/participation. Each of these are explained below. You will receive a letter grade for each item that corresponds to a typical grade point (A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3 etc.). You can calculate your own grade any time by adding up the grades given and dividing by the number of total assignments, and then assigning the nearest letter grade to that average. When all five assignments are complete, this is the way I calculate your final grade.

Daily Topics, Readings, and Assignments

- January 30 course introduction—American Political Thought—some themes, as of 1945
- February 1 consensus thinking in American political thought
reading: Daniel Boorstin’s *Genius of American Politics*, intro. & ch. 1 (Canvas)
- February 6 moderate liberal incrementalism
reading: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Second Inaugural Address, Address on Little Rock, and Farewell Address found at these links:
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/second-inaugural-address>
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-and-television-address-the-american-people-the-situation-little-rock>
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/farewell-radio-and-television-address-the-american-people>
Monday group reaction paper due prior to class
- February 8 1960s academic critical theory
Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, ch. 1 “The New Forms of Control” (Canvas)
Wednesday group reaction paper due prior to class
- February 13 the paranoid style in American politics
reading: Richard Hofstadter’s essay found at:
<https://harpers.org/archive/1964/11/the-paranoid-style-in-american-politics/>
Monday group reaction paper due
- February 15 civil rights movement
reading: Martin Luther King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail (Canvas) and speech at Oberlin College, “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution”
<https://www2.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/BlackHistoryMonth/MLK/CommAddress.html>
Wednesday group reaction paper due
- February 20 market-oriented libertarianism
reading: Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Introduction; chapters 1 and 2
Monday group reaction paper due
- February 22 market-oriented libertarianism, continued
reading: Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, chapters 6 and 7
Wednesday group reaction paper due

- February 27 market-oriented libertarianism, continued
reading: Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, chapters 10 and 12; Conclusion
- March 1 second-wave feminism
reading: Betty Friedan's "Our Revolution is Unique"
and *The Feminine Mystique*, excerpt (Canvas)
- March 6 communitarianism
reading: Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, chapter 1 (Canvas)
Monday group reaction paper due
- March 8 communitarianism, continued
reading: Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, excerpt of chapters 4 & chapter 9 (Canvas)
Wednesday group reaction paper due
- March 13 John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*
reading: none
- March 15 **midterm exam**
- **week of March 20 and 22 – Enjoy Spring Break!**
- March 27 conservative resurgence
Reading: Barry Goldwater's 1964 convention speech found at
http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/barry_goldwater-1964rnc.html
Ronald Reagan "A Time for Choosing" campaign speech video
<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/october-27-1964-time-choosing>
& 1st Inaugural Address: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-11>
Monday group reaction paper due
- March 29 ethic of care feminism
reading: Held, *The Ethics of Care*, Introduction, chapter 1
(available as an eBook through Polk Library)
Wednesday group reaction paper due
- April 3 ethic of care feminism, continued
reading: Held, *The Ethics of Care*, chapters 4 and 7
Monday group reaction paper due
- April 5 multiculturalism
reading: Will Kymlicka's *Politics in the Vernacular*, Introduction
(available as an eBook through Polk Library)
Wednesday group reaction paper due
- April 10 multiculturalism, continued
reading: Kymlicka's *Politics in the Vernacular*, chapters 1 and 2

- April 12 multiculturalism, continued
reading: Kymlicka's *Politics in the Vernacular*, chapter 4 OR 5
- April 17 multiculturalism, continued
reading: Kymlicka's *Politics in the Vernacular*, chapter 7 OR 16
Monday group reaction paper due
- April 19 intersectionality
reading: Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, from *Mapping the Margins* (Canvas)
Wednesday group reaction paper due
- April 24 contemporaneous race politics and racial reconciliation
reading: TeNehisi Coates' "The Case for Reparations" at
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- April 26 writing and writing workshop day
- May 1 **dialogue paper due**
- May 3 moderate liberal incrementalism revisited
Reading: view Barack Obama speech "A More Perfect Union" found at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWe7wTVbLUU>
First inaugural address: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-5>
Address on health care:
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-joint-session-the-congress-health-care-reform>
- May 8 the new nationalism
Reading: Donald J. Trump inaugural address and remarks at the UN
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-14>
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-city-13>
- May 10 **final exam**

Attendance and Participation: Political theory is a dialogue and that is what I hope for in class. Dialogue works best when it is active and involves as many people as possible. I have several considerations in assessing your participation grade. Being engaged with the material is paramount—you don't need to get all of what each thinker is saying (there are disputes over that which can last for decades or centuries), but you do need to show that you are reading and trying to understand, and that you want to learn what these people have to say and discuss the implications.

At stake in political theory are big things: what is just, how should we treat each other, what laws should we pass, and what are the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. I aim to gauge the quality of observations and their frequency, but there is a limit to how far this goes—more is not necessarily better. I will call on people, but I do hope you volunteer—volunteering allows you to speak when and where you are most comfortable. If you volunteer

I will call on you less, because I know of your engagement. Asking insightful questions is valuable. Taking seriously the observations of others and responding to them thoughtfully and respectfully is expected, though agreement is not.

Half of this grade will be given for attendance and half for your participation. You may ask me at the midterm how you are doing. In an upper-level course you must earn participation points, they are not automatic.

Reading Responses: I will split up the class into two groups, one of the groups will write reading responses on Mondays and the other will write them on Wednesdays. You will produce six reading reaction papers that follow the directions below. The weeks that you are expected to write response papers are weeks 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 11. Keep in mind you choose which one of these weeks to skip, because there are seven weeks listed.

The reaction should be approximately one single-spaced page, three paragraphs in length. The first paragraph should be a summary of the reading; the second should feature a meaningful commentary from you on the reading—about any particular thing in it, about the meaning or implications of the reading—with an explanation of your commentary; the third paragraph should ask a question that is prompted by the reading, one that you are genuinely curious about—not something you likely know the answer to, along with an explanation of why you are asking it. Each of these paragraphs should make it clear that you have read the assignment. The clearer that is, the better your assessment will be. When you refer to something in the text, please cite the page number, if possible.

Papers will be graded either ++, +, 0, or –

- ++ a well-executed response that clearly shows you read the assigned material;
- + a moderately successful response that has some successful relation to assigned material
- 0 a poorly executed response with little understanding or relationship to assigned material
- reaction paper is not done (yes, this does count as a minus for the purposes of the grade)

At the end of the semester I add up how many + you have and your grade is determined by that: A = 11 or 12 total; A- = 10; B+ 9; B = 8 etc. Reaction papers must be submitted to the appropriate dropbox in Canvas by class. I hope to read (or at least skim) them before class, so handing them in at least a couple hours before class is preferred.

Exams: There will be two exams, one scheduled for March 15th and the second for May 10th. There will be a variety of assessment mechanisms including multiple choice, short-answer/term identification, and essay. Exams are designed to gauge your level of mastery of the material and your thoughtful reactions to it.

Dialogue Paper: Your major paper in this class will consist of an imagined dialogue. The dialogue will be between two of the individuals we have encountered in the class and you. It should be true to all involved, i.e. the subjects raised and positions taken by all should be true to the individuals chosen and, as well as you are able, you should try to “speak in their voice” (with only sparing use of quotes). A successful dialogue requires actual back-and-forth and responses to particular ideas raised. Positions must be taken and arguments made for this dialogue to have meaning, and it won’t be much of a dialogue if everyone agrees and uses

similar reasoning, so you should choose your two figures carefully. You are required to reveal and develop your own views through this dialogue. The deeper and more well-reasoned the dialogue, the better.

At least one of the individuals you choose must be someone we have spent multiple days on: Milton Friedman, Michael Walzer, Virginia Held, or Will Kymlicka. You are expected to read further in the views of the individuals you choose, as necessary, to develop your understanding of them. With a lot of back-and-forth it is difficult to put an expected page expectation on this assignment, but a good dialogue will likely be about 15 pages.

Course and University Policies-The Fine Print!

Early Alert takes place in the fourth or fifth week of the semester. We do this to make students in danger of performing poorly in a class aware of their status and to suggest that you take advantage of additional resources offered to boost your grade.

Tests and Papers: Tests must be taken on the day scheduled barring documented necessity. In a practical sense, both tests and the paper must be turned in for you to receive a passing grade in the course. Barring prior agreement, if you are late in turning in the paper I will penalize one grade increment (B+ becomes a B) if you are late by one class period and a full grade thereafter.

Expectations: All written work is to be your own, unless you are explicitly instructed to work together. If you are ill or have a University-recognized event, please let me know as soon as possible and I will excuse you from attendance for the relevant date(s), understanding that it is your responsibility to get information from class and do any make-up work. If you would have repeated or prolonged illness, I will ask you for documentation.

Academic Honesty: A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Assignments are designed to work on these very things. Taking others' work as your own, having others do work for you or copying their answers, quoting or paraphrasing without attribution, and other forms of academic dishonesty short-circuit the learning process and are not acceptable. Plagiarism is using others' ideas without giving them credit. Most of it is inadvertent; some is intentional; some covers a small amount of text, others involve a whole paper. If you have plagiarized, University rules require me to meet with you, to show you what I believe has occurred and ask you for your explanation. Examples of academic dishonesty and possible sanctions are here (see UWS 14.03 and 14.04):
<https://www.uwosh.edu/stuaff/images/Chapter%20UWS%2014.pdf>

Office Hours: If you want to meet remotely we can do so 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. *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 out an alternative time.

Class Quality and Feedback: 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.

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 as soon as possible. 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 at: <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/disability-services>.

Note: 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 make a revised syllabus available.

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/>

Note to Political Science Majors: Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. If you have questions about this requirement, your course schedule, possible internships, or career preparation please reach out to your faculty adviser. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisers at least once per year. If you are unsure who your adviser is, you can check Titanweb or email Ms. Angelee Hammond at hammond@uwosh.edu.