

Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics

PLPT 4070
Liberalism: Problems and Debates
FALL 2020
Hours: Wed.. 11 AM-1 PM
and by appointment

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The course has four main themes and an organizing principle. The themes are: (1) central concepts in liberal political theory; (2) development of the liberal tradition from "classical liberalism" to contemporary liberalism, based on the welfare-state (to which I will refer as "new liberalism"); (3) major criticisms of liberal political theory, both internal and external; (4) liberal discourse: the distinctive way liberal political theory supports its claims, and why it uses this form of argument.

The organizing principle, which will be explored throughout the semester, is that major differences between classical and new liberalism center on conceptions of rights. Classical liberalism emphasizes Lockean rights and negative liberty. New liberalism emphasizes the distinction between formal and substantive rights, and so social conditions needed to allow rights to be exercised effectively.

Books have been ordered at the University Bookstore. All books are on reserve in Clemons Library. Shorter readings are on the class collab page

I. Introductory: Lockean Liberalism

J. Locke, *The Second Treatise on Civil Government*, in *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge, paperback).

J. Waldron, "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism," *Philosophical Quarterly*, 37 (1987), 127-50 (collab).

recommended: J. Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear," in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, N. Rosenblum, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) (collab)

II. Utilitarian Liberalism

J. Bentham: "Selections from *Principles of Legislation*," in *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (collab)

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (Hackett, paperback), Chaps. 1-2 (This is also available on the internet; one site is: <http://www.bartleby.com/130/>)

P. Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1 (1972) (collab).

J. Thomson, "Turning the Trolley," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 36 (2008) (collab).

Recommended: Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, Chap. 1, "The Doctrine of Liberty in General"

(collab).

Recommended: J. Harris, "The Survival Lottery," *Philosophy*, 50 (1975) (collab).

III. Liberal Freedom

I. Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (collab).

Recommended: B. Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients and the Liberty of the Moderns," in *Constant: Political Writings*, B. Fontana, ed. (collab).

IV. "New" or Welfare-State Liberalism

T.H. Green, "Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract," in *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation and Other Writings* (collab).

L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, in Hobhouse, *Liberalism and Other Writings* (Cambridge, paperback).

V. John Rawls

J. Rawls, "Justice as Fairness," *Philosophical Review*, 67 (1958) (collab).

J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard, paperback) (either edition, though I prefer and have ordered the original),
Chaps. I - III; IV: Secs. 31-35, 38-40; V: Secs. 48, 49; VII: Secs. 63, 66-67; VIII: Secs. 69, 77;
IX: Secs. 78-82, 86-7.

J. Raikka, "Reflective Equilibrium," *IVR Encyclopedie* (collab).

VI. Libertarian Alternative

R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books, paperback): pp. 1-231.

G. Hardin, "Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* (1968) (collab).

G. Klosko, "Presumptive Benefit, Fairness, and Political Obligation," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 16 (1987) (collab)

VII. Communitarianism

M. Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," *Political Theory* 12 (1984) (collab).

VII. Rawls's "Political Liberalism"

Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, (1987) (collab).

IX. Feminist Critique

S. Okin, *Justice and Gender* (New York, 1991): Chaps. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 (pp. 11 0-17, 124-33), 7,

J. Rawls, "Idea of Public Reason: Revisited" (collab), pp. 787-93.

X. Legal Enforcement of Morality

Waldron, "Dignity and Defamation: The Visibility of Hate," Lecture 1 (pp. 1597-1617)
(collab)

recommended P. Devlin, 'Morals and the Criminal Law' (collab).

S. Brison, "'The Price We Pay'? Pornography and Harm" in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, A. I. Cohen and C. H. Wellman, eds. (collab).

Wed. 4/27 X. Global Justice: II

T. Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33 (2005) (collab)

T. Pogge, "Real World Justice," *Journal of Ethics*, 9 (2005) (collab).

G. Klosko, "Cosmopolitanism, Political Obligation, and the Welfare State," *Political Theory*, 37 (2009)
(collab)

Requirements:

1. Midterm, and final examinations.

Tentatively, **Midterm** posted on collab **Thursday Oct 1**; due **Monday Oct. 5 (11:59 PM)**.

Final Exam Posted on collab, **Monday Nov. 30**; due **11:59 PM Monday Dec. 7**.

2. Analytical paper, 12-15 pages; due last day of class, **Tuesday Nov. 24 (11:59 PM)**.. Papers must be handed in on time. Late papers will be penalized. Incompletes will not be given.

3. You must do the reading, come to class, and be prepared to discuss it. Class participation is taken into account and weighed heavily in grading. Multiple unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the course or penalties on course grades.

Grading: Midterm will count 25% of your grade, with paper and final exam each counting 37.5 Class participation will figure in on top of this, with good participation significantly helping your grade.