

POLS 170: Foundations of Political Thought
The Meaning of Liberty
TR, 11:00-12:15, McGannon Hall 122

Instructor: Dr. Amber Knight

Office: 153 McGannon Hall, Department of Political Science

Phone: 314-977-3892

Email: aknight8@slu.edu

Office hours: TR, 9am-10:30am

Course Description

What is liberty, and should we want it? This introductory political theory course considers various approaches to the study of political theory, and students are invited to explore and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches through close study of canonical texts about liberty. The readings will focus on the foundations, meanings, and implications of what it is to be free. Students will question the power of political institutions, and the legitimacy of the constraints they impose. Freedom and liberty are also examined from multiple perspectives, including women in our culture.

Course Goals

- To learn about the field of political theory, and its multiple methods and objectives
- To examine the meaning of liberty, and consider how political freedom (or lack thereof) affects one's lived experience
- To develop verbal dexterity in the classroom through engaged participation with classmates
- To develop the writing skills necessary to articulate one's ideas in a clear, comprehensive, and concise manner

General Expectations

Because this course is about ideas—which are to be analyzed and applied critically rather than memorized—the format emphasizes opportunities for students to process ideas through discussion and writing. The format is organized around structured discussions, which are supplemented by occasional short lectures.

The format of this course places a great deal of responsibility on students. All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings (*you should bring the assigned reading to every class session*). Your work for this class will involve both autonomous and collaborative learning. The idea of *autonomy* stresses your personal responsibility for your own learning. This requires you to “do the reading”—read the text carefully, think through the underlying assumptions and implications of the arguments made, and apply a note-taking system which will allow you to quickly consult the readings during class discussions. The idea of

collaboration stresses your responsibility for teaching and learning from one another. It is my responsibility as the teacher to secure the necessary conditions in which both types of learning can occur, and to engage in analytic thinking with you.

A few general guidelines for class discussions:

- 1) Critical engagement with the readings through active participation requires that we treat one another respectfully. Listening is as important as talking.
- 2) We can only have a successful discussion if all voices and perspectives are heard. Thus, it is my goal to ensure that all students feel comfortable to participate.
- 3) Do not be afraid to ask questions for clarification. Before we critique the arguments within the text, we need to first obtain a comprehensive understanding of them.

Class Policies

Regular attendance is important for class discussion. You are allowed one “free” absence in the course. Every subsequent absence will result in a full letter grade deduction off of your final participation grade. Absences will be considered “excused” in accordance with University Policy, in the event of extreme circumstances.

Cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. In keeping with the 5 principles of Jesuit education at SLU, I take it that conduct in the classroom will be good-natured, considerate and intellectually disciplined. I also expect that you will come to class on time.

The easiest way to contact me is through e-mail, which I check frequently. In most cases I will be able to get back to you within 24 hours. I also retrieve phone messages when I am in my office, but I am not on campus every day. I’m also delighted to talk to you in person, so if you are unable to come to my office hours email me to arrange an alternative time.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz

with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in *an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment* and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty:

<http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

Disability Services

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Writing Services

I encourage you to take advantage of the writing services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with any kind of writing project, multimedia project, and/or oral presentation. They offer one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-3484 or visit <http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml>.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

1. Participation (including attendance, in-class participation, quizzes, etc.) – 25%
2. Midterm analytic essay- 35%
3. Final exam take-home paper– 40%

Your grade will be based on your performance on the assignments listed above. You must submit all assignments in order to pass the class. There is no extra credit available for the completion of additional work. Also, **I do not accept late papers**, unless you have contacted me ahead of time or it is an emergency.

I give letter grades, corresponding to the following assessment criteria:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	Below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Books

The following required texts have been ordered through the SLU Bookstore:

Aristotle, Politics
 Locke, Second Treatise
 Locke, Letter Concerning Toleration
 Rousseau, Selected Writings
 Mill, On Liberty and Other Essays
 Hirschmann, The Subject of Liberty

- January 17** Introduction, Adrienne Rich, “Claiming an Education”
- January 19** Benjamin Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns” (BB), pp. 309-329
- January 24** Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (BB), pp. 1- 32
- January 26** Aristotle, Politics, Bk. 1, Chaps 1-7, 12-13, pp. 1-12, 21-25
- January 31** Aristotle, Politics, Bk. 3, Chaps. 1-10, pp. 65-82; Bk. 5, Chaps 9, pp. 156-158; Bk. 6, Chaps. 1-5, pp. 175-182
- February 2** Thucydides, “Pericles’s Funeral Oration” (BB)
 In-class film— *Athens: The Dawn of Democracy*
- February 7** Locke, Second Treatise pp. 5-18
- February 9** Locke, Second Treatise pp. 18-42

- February 14** Locke, Second Treatise pp. 42-65
- February 16** Locke, Second Treatise pp. 65- 91
- February 21** Locke, Second Treatise pp. 91- 107
- February 23** Locke, Second Treatise pp. 107-124
- February 28** Locke, Letter Concerning Toleration pp. 21- 58
- March 2** Rousseau, The Social Contract pp. 141- 150
*****Midterm Essay Due*****
- March 7** Rousseau, The Social Contract pp. 150- 170
- March 9** Rousseau, The Social Contract pp. 170-190
- March 14** **NO CLASS- Spring Break**
- March 16** **NO CLASS- Spring Break**
- March 21** Rousseau, The Social Contract pp. 190- 203
- March 23** Rousseau, The Social Contract pp. 203-227
- March 28** Mill, On Liberty pp. 5-19
- March 30** Mill, On Liberty pp. 20-43
- April 4** Mill, On Liberty pp. 43-61
- April 6** Mill, On Liberty pp. 62-82
- April 11** Mill, On Liberty pp. 83-103
- April 13** **NO CLASS- Easter Break**
- April 18** November 12 Mill, On Liberty pp. 103-128
- April 20** Hirschmann Chap 3, The Subject of Liberty pp. 75-93
- April 25** Hirschmann, Chap 3, The Subject of Liberty pp. 93-102
- April 27** Hirschmann, Chap 4, The Subject of Liberty pp. 103-121
- May 2** Hirschmann, Chap 4, The Subject of Liberty pp. 121-137

May 4 Hirschmann, Chap 5, The Subject of Liberty pp. 138-169

*****Final essay due May 16th at noon*****