

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

POLITICAL SCIENCE 4050: SPRING 2018 CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

Instructor: Alena Wolfink

Class: Wednesdays and Fridays 12:00-12:50, P113

Office Hours: Mondays 12-2pm, Bizzini 132-B

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This course engages various theoretical perspectives in the study of identity and political action by engaging the concepts of politics and ideology. Thinking systemically about the dilemmas posed by political ideologies, we will ask, “Is ideology a condition of, or an end goal of political action? What distinguishes the two? How does politics as an abstract, university category compare and contrast to politics as a particular relation to a specific community? Are nationalism, socialism, liberalism unified concepts? Do they rely upon one another, or are they distinct or even in conflict with one another? Is democracy an ideology? What does democracy look like as an ideological construction, and what does it look like as an everyday practice? Who decides the practical answers to questions such as these, and what can and ought we do with disagreements about them? What is the role of theory in guiding these answers, decisions, and actions?” In this course, we will discuss and write about the meaning of ideology, and of politics. We will draw on analysis of historical and present-day formations, events, and debates, through a study of works of political thought from Marx and Mill to recent scholarly writings. We will do this to develop and articulate theoretical and practical perspectives on politics and ideology.

Learning Objectives

My objectives for student learning in this course include both knowledge and skills. By the end of the quarter, you will:

- Be familiar with the arguments and ideas presented in the readings, in lectures, and in classroom discussions.
- Understand some main theoretical debates around ideology and be familiar with examples from the political world to which the debates speak.
- Thoughtfully read complex texts and analyze arguments.
- Communicate your own ideas and arguments, verbally and in writing.

Requirements

I expect you to attend all class meetings, and to thoughtfully read all course materials. Your course grade will include the following components:

1. Participation – 25%
2. Five discussion posts – 10%
3. Exam 1 – 20%
4. Exam 2 – 20%
5. Final paper – 25%

Extensions and incompletes are only for emergency cases. Contact me immediately – and in advance of any due dates – should urgent, unavoidable, and unforeseen circumstances interfere with your completion of the requirements.

Expectations

Readings:

The readings are the foundation of the course. Much of the reading is dense and difficult, and full of unfamiliar ideas. You must give sufficient time to actively **read and re-read** the materials slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully. You should plan to spend a number of hours a week reading and re-reading the course materials and preparing for class discussion.

There are no textbooks for the course and all readings are available online.

Class Discussions:

Discussions provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussion and analysis of the material. Attendance and participation is required, and you are expected to be an active and consistent contributor. You must come to class prepared to analyze and reflect on the readings—this means you must complete the assigned readings prior to class. Come to class on time, and bring a copy of the readings with you.

You will be expected to raise questions related to the material, share perspectives on and interpretations of the readings and discussion topics, and engage in respectful and thoughtful debate. The following guidelines will be used to evaluate your daily work in class discussion:

A: Present. Solid, consistent, outstanding contributions in discussion, active listener. Comments in class were firmly grounded in the texts, and provided creative points of departure for our thinking about them.

B: Present. Participated well with textually-grounded contributions and as an active listener; or someone who made solid contributions, but contributed too often or took over conversations

(A student arriving late or leaving early under emergency circumstances but who otherwise consistently did really outstanding ('A'-level) work might merit a B as well)

C: In attendance but not much more- i.e. little to no participation, just showed up to class and breathed.

D: Left late and/or arrived early. Did average work or less, or who was present/breathing but came to class without the texts.

F: Absent

Writing:

I take the responsibility of grading your work seriously, and will always strive to be fair and accurate in my evaluations. I will use the following standards for the evaluating written work in this course:

- A: Excellent work, with clear, challenging, original ideas supported by sufficient, appropriate, logically interpreted evidence. The essay should engage the reader in the inquiry, convincingly answer opposing views, be well organized, and free of significant flaws. An 'A' paper should be not just good but outstanding in ideas and presentation.
- B: Good to very good work, with a clear thesis supported by sufficient, appropriate evidence, organized and interpreted logically. The 'B' paper may have some outstanding qualities but be marked by significant flaws which keep it from being an 'A'; or it may be all-around good work, free of major problems but lacking the deeper insight necessary for excellence.
- C: Satisfactory work, but not yet good. The 'C' paper meets the basic requirements of a thesis supported by interpretation of specific evidence, but it needs work in thinking and/or presentation. There may be a lack of clarity, the evidence may not always be sufficient and appropriate, or the interpretation may have logical flaws. The essay may have organizational or mechanical problems that keep it from being good. The 'C' paper may be good in some respects but poor in others, or it may simply be adequate but not noteworthy overall.
- D: Barely passing work that shows effort but is so marred by serious problems that it cannot be considered a satisfactory paper.
- F: Failing work—for example, a hasty, sloppy paper that shows little or no thought, effort, or familiarity with the text.

Some Classroom Practices and Policies

- Your curiosity and participation are essential to your learning success in this course. Please feel free to raise your hand during lectures if you have a question—every question brings something of value to the class.
- Bring your readings to every class.
- I have a strict **no internet** policy in my classrooms (computers, tablets, etc). The evidence is conclusive that use of the internet in the classroom inhibits student focus and learning, both for the student using the device and for others nearby.
- If you require accommodations because of a disability, please submit necessary paperwork from the Disability Resource Services office to me ASAP.
- Be on time. Do not leave midway through class except during break or in case of emergency.

Note: Any form of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will be met with a failing grade and referral to the university for further discipline.

Reading Schedule

PART ONE: Concepts, Definitions, & Contestation

Friday, January 26

Course Introduction

January 31: No class

February 2 & 7

Orr, "The Political," in *Beautiful and Pointless*
Dean, "Technology," in *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*

February 9

Williams, "Ideology"
Marx, "The German Ideology"

PART TWO: Nations, Boundaries, & Property

February 14

Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (selections)
Schuck, "Liberal Citizenship," *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*

February 16

Mill, *On Liberty*

February 21 & 23

Taylor-Mill, "On Property;" "The Same Subject Continued," sections 1-3, 5-7; "The Stationary State;" and "Probable Future of the Laboring Classes" in *Principles of Political Economy*

February 28

In-class exam

March 2 & 7

Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (selections)

March 9 & 14

Coates, "The Case for Reparations"
Shklar, "American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion"
Mills, "The Racial Contract"

March 16, 21, & 23

"Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen" (1789)
De Gouges, "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen" (1791)
Tomba, "1793: The Neglected Legacy of Insurgent Universality"
"Égalité for All: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution" (on YouTube)

March 28

In-class exam

SPRING BREAK March 30-April 8

PART THREE: Democracy as Ideology?

April 11 & 13

Pitkin, "Representation"

April 18 & 20

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

April 25 & 27

Mouffe, The Democratic Paradox

May 2 & 4

Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy"

May 9 & 16

Course Conclusions

Final paper due by email on Monday, May 21st at 12pm.