

**PROGRESSIVE AND LIBERAL POLITICAL THOUGHT**  
**American University**  
**School of Public Affairs**  
**Department of Government**

GOVT-396-001  
Mondays 17:30-20:00  
KRWN 101

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Office Hours: By Appointment

This course traces the development of American progressive and liberal political thought in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with a view to understanding the philosophy and politics of contemporary progressive-liberalism. The course will introduce students to the writings of leading American progressive and liberal thinkers. Particular attention will be paid to the transformation of American liberalism that began in the 1960's.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify and understand the major iterations of American progressive and liberal political thought.
2. Compare and contrast the philosophical foundations of the major iterations of American progressive and liberal political thought.
3. Understand the major fault lines in contemporary American progressive-liberalism.
4. Compare contemporary liberalism to classical liberalism.

### **Required Texts**

There is no required text for this class. All readings will be distributed at least one week prior to class and will also be posted on Blackboard. Students who have to miss a class can pick up a copy of the readings in my office (KRWN 304).

I strongly recommend you not bring a computer to class and work off of the printed readings. Studies show that taking notes by hand helps you retain information much more effectively than simply transcribing classroom discussion on your laptop.

### **Course Grading**

- Attendance, Participation, and Reading Quizzes (10%)
- Midterm (25%)
- Essay (25%)
- Final Exam (40%)

The grade ranges are defined as follows:

- A= unusual excellence (A- 90-92; A 93-100)
- B= work distinctly above average (B- 80-82; B 83-86, B+ 87-89)
- C= work of average quality (C- 70-72; C 73-76; C+ 77-79)
- D= below average work, the lowest passing mark (D 60-69)

F= Failure, no course Credit (59 and below)

### **Attendance, Participation, and Reading Quizzes**

Please turn off your cell phone before coming to class (i.e. don't just silence them).

I will take roll call each class promptly before we begin. Please be on time. If you are late 3 times, that will count as an absence.

The course will include quizzes based on the week's reading. These will take less than 5 minutes and will be administered promptly at the beginning of class. If you do the readings carefully, you will have no trouble with these (for how to read carefully, see the hand-out "How to Read"). **Expect one every week.**

### **Absence Policy**

Attendance is crucial. This is a small class which benefits from the contributions of all students and much of the learning will derive from our discussion. If you need to miss a class, please notify me ahead of time. Repeated absences will affect your final grade.

### **Exams**

There will be one **midterm (March 19)** and one **final exam** that will be held during the regularly scheduled exam period for this class (**on May 14**). Both exams will be cumulative of material covered to the date of the exam and will require you to demonstrate your knowledge of the assigned texts and the issues covered in class. The format will be short answer and essay questions.

### **Essay**

You will write one 2,500-3,000 word essay either on a topic of your choice that I will have approved or on one of the topics I will assign. **The essay is due on April 16.** If you wish, you may submit a draft of the essay to me by April 2 (but no later) and I will gladly offer suggestions on how to improve it.

### **Contact Info and Office Hours**

The best way to contact me is via email. I typically will respond within 24 hours. If you would like to meet in person, I am generally available before and after class. We can also try to schedule a time to meet or to speak over the phone during the week.

### **Academic Integrity (<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>)**

All students are required to follow the University's Academic Integrity Code. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the standards and requirements of the University's Academic Code of Conduct. Violations of the Code of Conduct will not be

tolerated and will be reported immediately. Please see me with any questions on the Academic Integrity Code.

**Emergency Preparedness (<http://www.american.edu/emergency/>)**

In an emergency, AU will use the communication tools the university has at its disposal in as timely a manner as possible using *AU Alerts*. These messages will provide information on what is happening, what to do, and links to available additional information. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. Our communication tools include text and email alerts, the university's home page, Facebook, and Twitter, the general information line 202-885-1100, indoor yellow AlertUs emergency beacon boxes and outdoor speakers located throughout campus. You can customize whether you receive alerts as e-mail and/or text messages. Add additional work or home phone numbers and e-mail addresses so AU Alerts reach you no matter where you are when an emergency occurs.

**Academic Support (<http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/>)**

The Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) supports the academic development and educational goals of all American University students and is committed to providing access for individuals with disabilities within the university's diverse community. Location: Mary Graydon Center (MGC), Room 243x3360; [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu); M–F: 9am–5pm

## Schedule of Topics and Assignment Due Dates

*Note: readings may change, in which case you will be notified ahead of time.*

### I. Introduction (Jan 22)

### II. Classical Liberalism: The Political Theory of the American Founding (Jan 29)

- **First Principles**
  - *The Declaration of Independence* (1776).
  - James Madison, “[Property](#)” (1792).
  - [Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom](#) (1786).
- **Government**
  - *The Constitution of the United States* (1787)—including the first 15 Amendments.
  - James Madison, *Federalist* No. 10 (1787).
  - Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist* No. 35 (1788), excerpt.
- **Religion and Morality**
  - George Washington, “[Proclamation: A National Thanksgiving](#)” (1789).
  - George Washington, “Farewell Address” (1796), excerpt.
- **Marriage and Family**
  - John Witherspoon, “Lecture XI,” in *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* (1774).
- **Support of the Poor**
  - Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson (1753), excerpt.
  - Arator [Benjamin Franklin], “On the Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor,” *The London Chronicle* (1766), excerpt.
- **Slavery and the Question of Race**
  - John Jay, [letter](#) to the President of the [English] Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves (1788).
  - Frederick Douglass, “[What Shall be Done with the Slaves if Emancipated?](#)” (1862) Volume 3 of *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, ed. Philip S. Foner, pp. 188-191.
  - Justice Harlan, dissent in [Plessy v. Ferguson](#) (1896).

### III. Progressivism (Feb 5 – Feb 19)

- **The New Science of Politics**
  - Charles Merriam, “Recent Tendencies,” Chapter 8 of *A History of American Political Theories* (1903), pp. 305-333.
- **The New Ethical Ideal and the Positive Conception of Freedom**
  - Richard T. Ely, *Social Aspects of Christianity* (1889), pp. 123-32.
  - Woodrow Wilson, “The Objects of Government,” Chapter 21 of *The State: Elements of Historical and Practical Politics* (1898), pp. 629-639.
  - John Dewey & James H. Tufts, “Social Organization and the Individual,” Chapter 20 of *Ethics* (1908), pp. 436-449 only.

- **The Progressive State**
  - Walter Weyl, “The Political Program of the Democracy,” Chapter 18 of *The New Democracy* (1912), pp. 298-319.
  - Frank Goodnow, *Politics and Administration: A Study in Government* (1900), pp.7-20; 85-86.
  - James Landis, *The Administrative Process* (1938), pp. 1-17; 23-24; 66-70; 75-80.

*Contrast with*

  - James Madison, *Federalist* No. 47 (excerpt) and *Federalist* No. 51 (1788).
- **The Progressive Economy**
  - Walter Weyl, “The Industrial Program of the Democracy,” Chapter 17 of *The New Democracy* (1912), pp. 279-297.
  - R. G. Tugwell, “[The Principles of Planning and the Institution of Laissez Faire](#),” *The American Economic Review* (1932), pp. 75-92.
- **Progressive Society**
  - Dewey and Tufts, “The Family,” Chapter 26 of *Ethics*, pp. 594-606 only.
  - Frank Taussig, *Principles of Economics*, Volume 2, Third Edition (1921), 332-333.

**Reread:** Section 1533 on “The Family and the State” in Wilson’s *The State*, p. 638.

#### IV. The New Left (Feb 26 – Mar 26)

- **The New Psychology and the Sexual Revolution**
  - Norman Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959), pp. 23-7; 307-8.
  - Wilhelm Reich, “General Survey” of *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy* (1942), pp. 3-19.
  - Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure* (1945), pp. 3-9.
  - Paul Goodman, “The Politics of Being Queer” [1969] in *The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman* (1977), pp. 216-225.
- **The New Left**
  - Tom Hayden, “A Letter to the New (Young) Left” [1961] in *Writings for a Democratic Society: The Tom Hayden Reader* (2008), pp. 19-26.
  - Students for a Democratic Society, *The Port Huron Statement* (1962), pp. 45-55; 165-169.
  - Herbert Marcuse, “Repressive Tolerance,” in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (1969), pp. 81-123.

**March 12: No Class / Spring Break**

**\*\*\*MIDTERM (March 19)**

- **The Counterculture**

- Allen Ginsberg, "[America](#)" in *Howl and Other Poems* (1956).
- Charles Reich, "[Reflections: The Greening of America](#)," *The New Yorker* (1970), pp. 42-111.

## V. Identity Politics (Apr 2 – Apr 16)

- **The Civil Rights Movement and Black Nationalism**

### *Integration*

- Martin Luther King, "[I have a dream](#)" (1963).
- Martin Luther King, "The Ethical Demands for Integration" (1962), excerpts.
- Martin Luther King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (1968), pp. 1-19.

### *Black Nationalism*

- Malcolm X, "[The Playboy Interview](#)" (1963).
- Malcolm X, "[A Declaration of Independence](#)" (1964).
- Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, "Black Power: Its Need and Substance," Chapter 2 of *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (1967), pp. 1-11.

### *Contemporary Thinkers*

- Cornel West, "Nihilism in Black America," Chapter 1 of *Race Matters* (1993), pp. 9-20.
- Ta Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (2015), pp. 68-71; 78-79; 93-99; 105-108.

- **Feminism**

### *The First Wave of Second Wave Feminism*

- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), pp. 299-306; 321-325.
- National Organization for Women, "[Statement of Purpose](#)" (1966).
- Susan Moller Okin, "Toward a Humanist Justice," Conclusion of *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (1989), pp. 170-86.

### *The Second Wave of Second Wave Feminism*

- Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (1969), pp. 31-44; 85-87.
- Shulamit Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970), pp. 232-242; 256-274.
- National Organization for Women, "[Declaration of Sentiments](#)" (1998).

- **Identity Politics**

- Carl Wittman, "[Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto](#)," *San Francisco Free Press* (1970).

- Armando B. Rendon, “Chicano Manifesto” [1971] in *Takin’ it to the streets”: A Sixties Reader*, ed. Bloom and Breines (2003), pp. 135-38.
- The Combahee River Collective, “[The Combahee River Collective Statement](#),” (1977).
- Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (2001), pp. 1-11; 15-32.
- **The Anti-Discrimination State**
  - The United States Commission on Civil Rights, “[Statement on Affirmative Action](#)” (1977), pp. 1-12.
  - Congressional Research Service, “[Federal Civil Rights Statutes: A Primer](#)” (2012).
  - The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (2009), sections 4702, 4704, 4710 only.

**\*\*\*ESSAY DUE (April 16)**

**VI. John Rawls and Contemporary Liberal Theory (Apr 23 – Apr 30)**

● **John Rawls’s Theory of Justice**

*The Original Position*

- Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), I.1-4 (pp. 3-22), III.24 (pp. 136-8 only).
- Rawls, *Justice as Fairness* (2000), II.16.1 (pp. 55-56).

*Principles of Justice*

- TOJ, II.11-12, (pp. 60-65, 72-75 only).
- JAF, II.13.1 (pp.42-43); II.17 (pp. 57-61).
- TOJ, III.29 (pp. 178-179 only), VII.67 (pp. 440-442 only); II.17 (pp. 100-108).

*The Family*

- JAF, IV.50 (pp. 162-168).

● **Contemporary Liberal Theory**

- Ronald Dworkin, “Liberalism,” Chapter 8 of *A Matter of Principle* (1986), pp. 181-204.
- Martha Nussbaum, “The Central Capabilities,” Chapter 2 of *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (2011), pp. 17-45.

**VII. The Future of Liberalism (May 7)**

- Richard Rorty, “A Cultural Left,” Chapter 3 of *Achieving our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (1998), pp. 75-107.
- Michael Walzer, “[Can there be a decent left?](#)” *Dissent* (2002).
- Mark Lilla, “[The End of Identity Liberalism](#),” *The New York Times* (2016).

**\*\*\*FINAL EXAM (May 14)**