



New Course

Catalog Course Title: GOVT 404/604 Burke's Political Thought

Name and contact information for future correspondence:

Alan Levine alevine@american.edu; Saul Newman snewan@american.edu

Academic Unit - School/College:

- CAS
- KSB
- SOC
- SIS
- SPA
- SPExS
- Other:

Teaching Unit - Department or Program: GOVT-SPA

Date effective: Spring 2017

Required Signatures	Name	Signature	Date
Teaching Unit Chair or Director	Saul Newman	<i>[Signature]</i>	5/25/16
EPC Chair	Susan Glover	S. Glover ^{Bm}	7/6/16
Primary Academic Unit Assoc. Dean	Saul Newman	<i>[Signature]</i>	7/6/16
Second Academic Unit Assoc. Dean	Vicky Wilkins	V. Wilkins	7/6/2016
Faculty Senate Chair			
Provost's Designee (VPUG or VPGR)			

Date sent to the Office of the University Registrar:

I. Identifying Information

- a) Proposed effective date: Spring 2017
- b) Academic Unit: SPA
- c) Teaching Unit: Government
- d) Course Title (Generally a limit of 30 characters including spaces): Burke's Political Thought
- e) Course Number: GOVT 404/604
- f) Credits: 3
- g) Prerequisites: GOVT 105 or permission of the instructor
- h) Course description for University Catalog (Generally a limit of 50 words)

GOVT-404 Burke's Political Thought (3) The first and arguably greatest ever conservative thinker, Burke was an anti-philosophic philosopher and an influential statesman skeptical of what states can do. This course analyzes Burke's political and moral writings in conversation with leading contemporaneous thinkers. Comparisons are made to current varieties of liberalism and conservatism. Meets with GOVT-604. Usually offered every fourth semester. *Prerequisite:* GOVT-105 or permission of the instructor, and minimum 2.5 GPA.

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i) Grade type: A/F only

i. A/F only

ii. Pass/Fail only

iii. A /F and Pass/Fail

j) Expected frequency of offering: irregularly, averaging every two or three years

i. Every Fall

ii. Every Spring

iii. Every Summer

iv. Alternate Falls

v. Alternate Springs

vi. Alternate Summers

vii. Every term

viii. Irregularly

ix. Other

k) Note all that apply: **N/A**

i. General Education course

ii. Online course

iii. Hybrid course

- iv. Rotating topics course
- v. Individually supervised course, such as Internship, Independent Study, Research Course, Thesis, Dissertation
- vi. Research Methods course
- vii. AU Abroad Programs course
- viii. Other study abroad course (offered directly by Academic Unit, not through AU Abroad)

II. Rationale

a) Please explain the main purpose of the new course, including whether it will be a requirement for an existing or proposed program or an elective, and how the new course relates to the existing courses in the program and department. *Note: if the course will be required for an existing program, submit a corresponding Minor Change to Program proposal.*

Edmund Burke is arguably the greatest ever conservative thinker, yet not only is no existing course at AU dedicated to his thought but he is barely taught at all in any systematic way anywhere in the university. This class aims to fill this gap by adding a course that will critically and systematically examine his thought. The course will be an elective that supplements the current political theory offerings in the Department of Government.

b) Will the course require students to pay a special fee associated with the course? If so, please provide a justification for this additional cost to students. No.

c) Has the course previously been offered under a rotating topics course or an experimental course number? Yes, variations of this course have been offered three times.

If so:

- i. Semesters/year offered: Fall 2013; Fall 2009; Fall 2008
- ii. Course number GOVT 496.003/696.003; 496.001/696.004; 496.002/696.001
- iii. Instructor: Levine
- iv. Enrollment: 13; 12; 14

v. What observations and conclusions were derived from the previous offering(s) that now lead to proposing this course as a permanent part of the curriculum?

This course has been offered three times as a rotating topics course and has been very popular with students, many of whom have told the professor of the important effect it has on them. It also fills an obvious gap in the university's course offerings.

d) Please indicate other units that offer courses or programs related to the proposed course and provide documentation of consultations with those units: None do.

e) Estimate the enrollment per semester: 12-20

f) Does your teaching unit's classroom space allotment support the addition of this course? Yes

- g) Are present university facilities (library, technology) adequate for the proposed course? Yes
- h) Will the proposed course be taught by full-time or part-time faculty? Full-time
- i) Will offering the new course involve any substantial changes to the scheduling of existing courses? No.
- j) What are the learning outcomes for the course?

Learning Outcomes: Over the course of this semester, students will have the opportunity to consider diverse perspectives and competing philosophical traditions on the nature of governance and other issues that have shaped the modern Western world. This course emphasizes critical inquiry using fundamental texts in Western philosophy and will help students develop their reading and communications skills. Upon successful completion of this course, **all students** will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the main issues and controversies about which Edmund Burke wrote, including topics such as why Burke supported the American but not the French Revolution, Burke's critique of Enlightenment rationalism, and his critique of the political and philosophical grounds of the movements for democracy and liberalism;
2. Explain and assess some major alternatives to Burke's conservative viewpoint, both in terms of later kinds of conservatism as well as contemporaneous and later kinds of liberalism;
3. Apply Burke's arguments to today's issues and events;
4. Reflect deeply on the nature of political ideology (then and now);
5. Demonstrate the ability to use critical tools necessary to read fundamental texts in political philosophy;
6. Make coherent theoretical arguments from a variety of points of view about core topics in political philosophy in writing and in speech.

Additionally, **graduate students** will demonstrate two additional learning outcomes:

1. Mastery of one specific topic of their own choice (in consultation with the professor) through writing a longer single term paper instead of two shorter ones;
2. Demonstrate basic familiarity with the scholarly debates over Burke through reading of supplemental secondary scholarship.

k) How will those outcomes be assessed?

Grading:

- **25%** Attendance and Class Participation, including weekly 1-2 pp. papers or quizzes.
- **25%** 8-10 pp. Paper on Burke and the American Revolution
- **25%** 8-10 pp. Paper on Burke and the French Revolution
- **25%** Final Exam. The cumulative Final Exam will be held during the university's officially scheduled time: December 9th, 2:35-5:05 p.m.

Graduate Student Requirements:

So that they may delve more deeply into a single scholarly or philosophical issue, students taking the course for 600-level credit will write one 25 pp. paper instead of the two 8-10 pp. papers. These students will also have supplementary meetings with the professor in which relevant

scholarship and secondary literature will be read and analyzed. These small-group meetings will give graduate students an appreciation of the issues and debates in the scholarship.

1) What are the competencies that students are expected to demonstrate for the course? Please attach a draft syllabus.

Syllabus Attached.

III. Catalog Copy

a) Please attach a course description as it is to appear in the University Catalog, following the format of the current catalog.

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The Political Thought of Edmund Burke

GOVT 496.003/696.003

Professor Alan Levine

American University

Fall 2013

Contact Information: Ward 220; 885-6257; alevine@american.edu

Office Hours: M: 5:15-7:00; TH: 2:30-4:00; and by appointment

Edmund Burke is the West's first and arguably greatest conservative thinker. He is an anti-philosophic philosopher and an influential statesman skeptical of what states can do. This course analyzes Burke's main political, philosophical, economic, and satirical writings to understand the paradoxes of his thought in the context of both the Enlightenment in which Burke lived and today's issues and events.

This course gives special attention to analyzing the debates Burke provoked on the moral and political implications of the American and French Revolutions. These revolutions are arguably the greatest political events of modern times, and this course focuses on the deepest contemporaneous debates on the nature of these revolutions – in which Burke is central. To bring alive the Enlightenment debates and to help us think through the fundamental alternatives for today, we read works by many of Burke's contemporaries, such as Paine, Price, Turgot, Condorcet, Wollstonecraft, and Macaulay, as well as several lesser-known pamphleteers who specifically addressed Burke. Burke was the only thinker of the times to support the American Revolution but not the French. Why? Answering this question involves understanding Burke's critiques of Enlightenment rationalism and the political and philosophical grounds of the modern movements for democracy and liberalism. In shedding light on the exact nature of Burke's conservatism, we will also attempt to compare it to contemporaneous and current strands of conservatism and liberalism in order to meditate deeply on the nature of political ideology itself.

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Required Books:

- Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful and Other Pre-Revolutionary Writings*, ed. David Womersley (Penguin);
- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Frank M. Turner. Part of the series *Rethinking the Western Tradition* (Yale University Press).

Other Required Readings will be available via a packet or Blackboard.

Honors supplements can be arranged for students in the Honors Program. This should be discussed with me by week three and will result in students being treated like graduate students.

Weekly Written Work: Every class will have either a 1-2 page paper due or a quiz, and these grades will count toward the class participation grade. Papers should be typed (double spaced, normal fonts, normal margins) and analyze some portion of the assigned text for *that day*. You must be in class to turn them in. You might note a contradiction, explore a paradox, or draw the implications of a quotation, argument, or idea. Do not only summarize the text or simply state your own opinion on a subject. The aim is to reflect critically on the text and think-through the author's view. Expectations for these papers are more fully explained in the attached "Guide to

The Political Thought of Edmund Burke

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Writing Weekly Papers,” with which you should familiarize yourself.

Quizzes will be held during the first five minutes of class. Failure to attend class or late arrival will result in a zero for that day’s quiz. There are no “make ups” for a missed quiz.

The Final Exam on December 9th, 2:35-5:05 p.m., is cumulative. It will consist of both short answers and essays, testing your mastery of the material from the entire course.

Readings typically range from 100-125 pages per week. It is more or less depending on the length and difficulty of particular texts. Please budget sufficient time to do them well.

Late Policy: The 1-2 page papers are due at the beginning of the class in which we discuss that material. You must be in class to turn them in. No late papers will be accepted (without prior arrangement). Lateness on the 8-10 page papers is penalized 1/3 grade per day late.

Suggested Background: I encourage you to read some historical background if you are unfamiliar with the basic events in America from 1754-75 or with the American and French Revolutions. You might also like to watch the PBS documentary “The War that Made America,” which is on the French-Indian War of 1754-63. This first global war created the conditions that are debated in the pamphlet wars on America. It is available in the library’s media lab as DVD 4696.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to read and abide by AU’s Academic Integrity Code. Copies of the Code are available from the Registrar’s Office or can be downloaded at <http://www.american.edu/american/registrar/AcademicReg/New/reg80.html>. The Code provides AU’s policies about academic dishonesty and plagiarism. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, multiple submissions, and unauthorized collaboration. If you have any questions about whether some action may violate these standards, talk to me beforehand. Standards of academic integrity are strictly observed in this class and violations will be followed up rigorously.

Emergency Preparedness:

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. 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. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/ college-specific information.

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Readings and Class Schedule:

8/26: Intro: Burke's Life and Times

Harvey Mansfield, "A Sketch of Burke's Life" in *Selected Letters*, 29-35.

9/2: ***No Class. Labor Day.***

I. Burke's Early Writings

9/9: Burke, "A Vindication of Natural Society" (1756) (46 pp)

Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the... Beautiful and Sublime* (1757), Preface, Introduction, & Pt I (50 pp)

9/16: Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the ... Beautiful and Sublime* (1757), Pt II-V (99 pp)

9/23: Burke, "An Essay Towards an Abridgement of English History" (1757) (23 pp excerpt)

Burke, "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents" (1770) (74 pp)

Macaulay, "Observations on a Pamphlet, Entitled, Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents" (1770) (26 pp)

Burke, "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity" (1795- later work to glimpse his econ views) (pp. 1-20 state most of the main points)

II. Burke and the American Revolution

9/30: Burke, "Speech on American Taxation" (1774) (54 pp)

10/7: Responses: Shebbeare (1774, 56 pp), Cartwright (1775, 15[+28] pp), Wilkie (1776, 7 pp)

10/14: Burke, "Speech on Conciliation with American Colonies" (1775) (61 pp)

Response: Tucker (20 pp)

Paine, *Common Sense* (54 pp)

10/21: Burke, "Letter to Sheriffs of Bristol on the Affairs of America" (1777) (41 pp)

Responses: Topham (10 pp), Chalmers (31 pp), Croft (22 pp), Abingdon (23 pp)

10/28: Responses to Abingdon by Cartwright (1778, 11 pp) and Chalmers (1777, 36 pp)

Price, "Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of Making It a Benefit to the World" (35 pp)

Turgot, "Letter to Price" (21 pp)

Condorcet, "On the Influence of the American Revolution on Europe" (13 pp)

Raynal, *History of the Two Indies* (excerpts) (6 pp)

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III. Burke on Slavery, Equality, and Natural Law

- 11/4: Burke, "Sketch of the Negro Code" (1780/1792) (18 pp)
Burke, Speech from Hastings Trial (1788) (5 pp)
Burke, Speech on Fox's East India Bill (December 1, 1783) (57 pp)

IV. Burke and the French Revolution

- 11/11: Burke, "Letter to the Earl of Charlemont" (August 9, 1789) (1 p)
Price, "A Discourse on the Love of Our Country" (1789) (20 pp)
Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) (pp 3-95)
11/18: Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (pp 95-210)
Price, "Preface to the Fourth Edition" (1790) (6 pp in ed. Clark)
11/25: Paine, *The Rights of Man, Part I* (1791) (107 pp)
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) (59 pp)
Macaulay, "Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, on the
Revolution in France, in a Letter to the Right Hon. The Earl of Stanhope" (1790)
(37 pp)
12/2: Burke, "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs" (1791) (34 pp excerpt)
Burke, "A Letter to a Noble Lord" (1795) (47 pp)

12/9: Cumulative Final Exam. 2:35-5:05 p.m.

Guide to Writing the Weekly Papers

Professor Alan Levine

American University

Topics. Sometimes topics will be suggested, other times not. Unless specified otherwise, you are free to write on anything that interests you (and is relevant to the course). Papers should, however, be rooted in and an *analysis of text*. Possibilities include analyzing a theme, concept, or contradiction or a comparison to an author previously discussed. You might explore a paradox, follow out the implications of one of the author's claims, or compare/contrast the author's view to something today. You may choose to confront the central issue of a text or merely be provoked by something in passing. But when choosing your topic, choose something with important or interesting implications. In other words, show why the reader should care about your discussion. Show what hinges on your analysis. If what you say is correct, but nothing is at stake, the paper will seem pointless or trivial.

Content. Each paper should have a thesis and an argument. Do not simply summarize the text. While a short summary may be useful or necessary, it is not sufficient to receive a good grade. Probe the author's view. What assumptions does s/he make? Is his argument valid? Does it contradict itself or something that s/he says elsewhere? What are the implications of the claims? Any **ONE** of these questions could be the basis for a paper. In short, analyze and assess the texts. A good paper might weigh the diverse statements on some issue in order to show how they relate and, therefore, what the author's final view on the topic must be. Another possibility is to explore the implications of an author's view. For example, if Burke is right in asserting X, then our society is wrong in believing Y. You might then reflect on the relative merits and drawbacks of X and Y. However, be circumspect when making accusations against our authors. They are some of the smartest people who have ever written. If an objection is obvious to you, it probably was obvious to them, too. Think about how the author would respond to your objection; it is probably addressed somewhere in the text. By creating a dialogue between yourself and the author, you might realize that your objection might not be about the claim that first captured your attention, but that it is based on a deeper, underlying issue. If you make criticisms that the author acknowledges elsewhere, it shows either that you anticipated well or read sloppily, depending on where the author acknowledges the point. In short, I want to see you thinking not simply repeating. **A tip:** whether you find the author's views compelling or troubling, it is easier to write on something about which you care.

Structure. Because the papers are only 1-2 pp. long, you must be direct and concise. There is little, if any, space for biographical or historical background. Nor is there room for fuzzy thinking. Sometimes it will seem easier to write your thoughts in five pages, but concision is part of the exercise. Careful editing, sharp thinking, and clear structure are necessary to write short papers well. You have to get right to the root of the problem. The best papers state the thesis in the very first sentence.

Bad thesis statement: Burke is a great thinker who lived in eighteenth-century Britain.

This is true, but probably has little to do with your analysis.

Mediocre thesis statement: Burke discusses "x"

This is true, but what about "x" do you want to say? Get right to the point.

Good thesis statement: In discussing "x," Burke assumes "y" (or implies "y").

This sets up your problematic. Is "y" a valid assumption? Why or why not?

If "y" proves troublesome, what does this imply about the original claim "x"?

Or explore the ramifications of "x" implying "y." What important consequences does this have? If "x" implies "y," does this make you accept or reject "x"? Explain.

Good thesis statement: If Burke is right in thinking "x," then we Americans are wrong about "y."

This sets up a nice confrontation. Explain why Burke thinks "x" is true and how this implies some current opinion/view/policy/institution is wrong. Then, take a stand.

Upon reflection, who, in your view, is correct: us or Burke?