

POLS 3373-01 (Political Science)—Ideologies and Democracy (3 credit hours)

Spring 2018—MWF: 1.00-1.50; CHSS 232

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Office Hours: M, W: 2.00-3.00; T: 1.00-2.00; or by appointment

Course Description

In this course we will study a variety of ways of thinking about political community and political action. For better or worse, the contemporary term for these various ways of conceiving political life is 'ideology'. Thus, the first thing we will attempt to accomplish is to figure out what the term means, or, at least, to sort out the various meanings of 'ideology' so that we aren't confused when we use it. The term has been used in at least three different ways, and each of these usages has been criticized for being inadequate. The term 'ideology' has meant at various times and to various people a blueprint for the ideal political community, a mask which hides an oppressive power structure, or a set of more or less consistent beliefs about political life held by some significant portion of a political community.

After our initial investigation into the complexity of the meaning of the term, we will examine a variety of ideologies including liberalism, conservatism, and socialism, but also more radical ideologies like communism and radical Islam, and contemporary ideologies like feminism and environmentalism. We will be actively asking ourselves whether all of these are really the same thing or if, instead, what they share is merely a common suffix (e.g. -ism). We will also be enquiring into the question of whether there is some fundamental essence to each of these ideologies or whether they change substantially through time.

In the last quarter of the course, we will examine the question of whether democracy is an ideology or not. If it is, what does that imply for our political life? Is democracy a competitor of liberalism, conservatism, or socialism or is it a complementary aspect of any of them (e.g. does the term 'liberal democracy' make any sense?)? If it isn't an ideology, what is it? Is it a set of procedures, which, if followed, provide a source of legitimacy for a government, or is it a set of substantive results guaranteeing each member of the community an equal share of rights, material goods, or something else? In order to answer these questions, we will be reading a variety of contemporary theories of democracy, and a variety of critiques of democracy.

Course Objectives

Students will gain factual knowledge about contemporary political ideologies and theories of democracy, develop the facility to think and write critically about the various ideologies, and apply these concepts to various contemporary questions about political life and democratic forms of government. They will also understand the distinction between historical explanation, philosophical elucidation, and practical recommendation; and will be able to offer accounts of both the context and content of the political ideas of the writers we study. Goals include the development of critical thinking, the

development of writing skills, and the cultivation of the study skills requisite for success in undergraduate classes. We will accomplish these objectives in the context of studying:

- different types of evidence and argument (e.g. historical, logical, theological, etc.)
- diverse conceptions of the political community (e.g. a large quasi-biological family, an artificial construct resulting from a contract between citizens, an historical artifact, etc.)
- various conceptions of the origins and character of political authority (wisdom, expertise, divine appointment, noble blood, common consent of the citizenry, squatter's rights, etc.)
- several distinct definitions and scales of political values (e.g. order v liberty, liberty v equality, justice v order, etc.)

Texts

Ideology: A Very Short Introduction, Michael Freeden

Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader, Tenth Edition, edited by Terence Ball, Richard Dagger, and Daniel O'Neill

Democracy: A Reader, Second Edition, edited by Ricardo Blaug and John Schwarzmantel

Course Requirements

All members of the class are expected to attend all sessions of the class and to have completed the assigned readings during the week on which they are listed. Attendance is important because it is closely correlated with academic success. Having the readings done ahead of time is the only way you will be able to participate fully in the lectures and discussions that will take place during class time.

There will be two short paper assignments (3-4 pages) during the term, and there will be a comprehensive take-home final examination. I will hand out both the paper assignments and the final examination at least a week before they are due (they will also be placed on Blackboard). The final exam will be due by 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 9 May 2018.

Late papers will be penalized at one-third of a grade deduction per late day (e.g. a paper due on a Monday will receive a deduction of one-third of a grade if turned in on Tuesday, and a deduction of two-thirds of a letter grade if turned in on Wednesday, etc. I don't count weekends.). Late final exam papers will not be accepted without prior permission from the instructor (that is, from me).

Make-up policy

See course requirements for make-up policy.

Evaluation

The course requirements will contribute to the overall course grade in the following proportions:

Papers:	50%
Final:	50%

Plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the appropriate honor board.

When reading the texts and preparing your papers, it will be helpful to consider some of the following questions:

1. What is the character of the argument? Is the author concerned to describe and analyze existing political arrangements and social conditions or to recommend changing those arrangements? What sorts of evidence does the author appeal to for answers (history/fact; logic/reason; divine will/revelation)?
2. What understanding of the nature of political community is implicit or explicit in the text? How does the theorist envisage the relationship between the individual and the community? Is the community merely an association of independent individuals or is it a supra-individual organism? Does the political community provide the necessary conditions for achieving the 'good life' or does it merely restrain human nature? Is the political community a good in itself or is it merely a necessary evil?
3. What is the nature of political authority? On what basis does the claim to political authority rest: inheritance, superior knowledge/wisdom, divine will, conquest/power, contract, consent? What is the scope of political authority: are there any spheres of human activity excluded from the ruler's exercise of authority; are there any other restraints on what a ruler might legitimately do; are there any legitimate appeals against authority; is there a right of resistance?
4. What are the political 'values' implicit or explicit in the text? How does the theorist define and rank concepts like justice, freedom, and equality?

Course Outline

Weeks 1, 2—Introduction, What is an Ideology?

- *Ideals and Ideologies (Henceforth, II)*, 1-3.
- *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, 1-66.
- Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*:
 - <http://cwanderson.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/The-German-Ideology.pdf>, 1-11, 16-19.
- Michael Oakeshott, 'Political Education':
 - Handout; posted on Blackboard

Weeks 3, 4—Liberalism: Classical, Contemporary, or Completely Discontinuous?

- *II*, 65-68; 77-98; 106-109; 113-125.
- *II*, 126-144; 164-170.

Weeks 5, 6—Conservatism: Ideology or anti-Ideology?

- *II*, 187-201.
- *II*, 202-235.

First Paper Assignment

Weeks 7, 8—Socialism and Communism—Ideologies *par Excellence*?

- *II*, 247-248; 257-280.
- *II*, 281-328, 356-362.

Weeks 9, 10—Liberation Ideologies (Feminism, Critical Race Theory, etc.): Ideologies or Critiques?

- *II*, 417-419.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., ‘Letter from the Birmingham County Jail’:
 - https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf
- Malcolm X, ‘The Ballot or the Bullet’:
 - http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches/malcolm_x_ballot.html
- Martin Luther King, Jr., ‘Where Do We Go from Here?’:
 - http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/where_do_we_go_from_here_delivered_at_the_11th_annual_sclc_convention/
- *II*, 430-452.

Week 11—Environmentalism: Ideology or Interest Group?

- *II*, 499-541.

Second Paper Assignment

Week 12—Radical Islam: Religion or Ideology?

- *II*, 553-578.

Weeks 13-15—Theories of Democracy

- *Democracy: A Reader (Henceforth, D)*, 1-18, 58-76,
- *D*, 111-116, 130-139, 145-158, 177-191.
- *D*, 239-251, 268-281, 315-324.

Take-home final exam due by 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 9 May 2018.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration (e.g. copying answers on an exam, using ‘cheat sheets’, gaining access to an exam prior to its administration, using computers or other electronic devices to access answers) will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the appropriate honor board. Such academic dishonesty will result in immediate disciplinary action by the professor, which could involve failing the examination alone or the whole course. Students who are caught cheating are also subject to further disciplinary action from the university which could lead to academic probation, suspension, or expulsion.

The following are links to university policies and/or statements regarding academic dishonesty:

<https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>

<http://www.shsulibraryguides.org/plagiarism>

<http://www.shsu.edu/academics/english/graduate/of-professional-interest/academic-honesty.html>

Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to treat each other and the professor with respect and courtesy. Cell phones and other electronic or distracting items should not be visible or audible (keep in pockets, purses, or bags and on silent).

If you are bothered or distracted by other students during class, inform me and I will address the problem.

Students with Disabilities Policy

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. ***NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. Requests for accommodations must be initiated by the student. A student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner.***

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable

time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Caveat Emptor

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

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