

Freshman Writing Seminar: Liberalism and Neoliberalism

Instructor: Erin Gerber
TR 9:40a-10:55a in Kennedy Hall 105
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Texts:

Unless otherwise noted, all reading materials will be available at the course Canvas page: <https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/34099>. Please do not distribute these materials without first contacting me.

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the role of political liberalism in the modern history of the United States. This involves teasing apart three interdependent but separate elements: the *theory* of political liberalism, the *use* of that theory in the genesis of the United States, and the role that liberalism plays in our current neoliberal political order. We will combine investigation into the historical development of liberalism and neoliberalism with criticism of existing states of affairs and brainstorming possible new ways of being.

Course Objectives:

The primary objectives of the Fall 2021 course in liberalism and neoliberalism are:

1. To impart students with a broad-based understanding of the concept of political ideology,
2. To learn and practice basic principles of clear, effective writing,
3. To develop and strengthen research skills through guided reading projects and summary practice, and
4. To encourage and practice engaging in modern political affairs with a contextualized and critical eye, toward the aim of becoming model citizens and leaders in students' communities.

Course Requirements:

1. Register for the class on the Cornell Canvas website and check it regularly. All readings should be completed before they are discussed in section.
2. Enable your Cornell email account and check it regularly. Important announcements and updates to the class will be sent to your Cornell email account. Please send any correspondence to my Gmail or Cornell address from your Cornell email account.
3. You are required to attend section regularly. I expect you to participate actively in class; less extroverted students are welcome to participate in office hours. You will also be expected to attend scheduled one-on-one meetings to discuss work and progress in the class. Attendance and participation will account for 15% of the

course grade. Feel free to stop by my office hours even if you do not have a specific question– I will be happy to start talking!

4. Short-writing assignments: 25% of course grade. There will be eleven graded shorter writing assignments due (roughly) each week of the course. Some of these assignments will be stand-alone pieces, others will consist of multiple weeks of drafts culminating in a larger finished project. The bottom paper grade will be dropped from calculating final score.
5. First long paper (including several stages of drafting and revision) 30% of course grade: 4-6 pages due October 29, 2021.
6. Final paper (including several stages of drafting and revision) 30% of course grade: 8-10 pages due by scheduled final exam.
7. Class participation can influence the outcome of borderline grades. Please note: late work will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day (or portion thereof) that they are late. Extensions should be requested at least 24 hours prior to the due date/time.

Grading System:

1. Attendance and participation: 15% of course grade.
2. Short writing assignments: 25% of course grade.
3. Midterm paper: 30% of course grade; 4-6 pages.
4. Final paper: 30% of course grade; 8-10 pages.

The grading schema will be as follows:

- the grade of “A” is approximately 90% or above;
- “B” is approximately 80-89%;
- “C” is approximately 70-79%;
- “D” is approximately 60-69%;
- “F” is below 60%.

Academic Honesty:

“Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources...

A Cornell student’s submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student’s own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student’s academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers.” For further information, see the complete Code of Academic Integrity (<https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/dean/academic-integrity/code-of-academic-integrity/>).

Accommodation of Disabilities:

“Cornell values diversity and inclusion within its campus community and seeks to provide an affirming environment for all its students. Student Disability Services (SDS) provides the opportunity for you to disclose your disability status, as well as to request any needed accommodations or services. You are an important part of Cornell and we are here to support you in your success.”

If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the instructor with an accommodation notification letter from Student Disability Services. Cornell SDS can be reached at <https://sds.cornell.edu/>.

Reading Schedule: Introduction and Liberalism

The following is the planned schedule for reading in our first unit, on political liberalism. All reading is to be completed prior to the seminar meeting for which it is assigned, and should be brought, printed out and annotated, to section.

Please note that this schedule is provisional and subject to revision as the course progresses.

1. Introduction to Political Ideology

Week 1 **Chapter 7: The Role of Ideology in Politics and Society.** Kevin Harrison and Tony Boyd (2018). *Understanding Political Ideas and Movements*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 135-153

2. Political Liberalism

Week 2	§§1 & 2. John Rawls (1971). <i>A Theory of Justice</i> . Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press	Writing #1
Week 3	§§3 & 4. John Rawls (1971). <i>A Theory of Justice</i> . Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press	Writing #2
Week 4	Parts II & III. Immanuel Kant (1793). “On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but is of no use in practice”. In: <i>Practical Philosophy</i> . Ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen. Trans. by Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 273–210	Writing #3
Week 5	Martha Nussbaum (1997). “The Feminist Critique of Liberalism”. In: <i>The Lindley Lecture</i> . Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas, pp. 1–46	Writing #4
Week 6	Tommie Shelby (2007). In: <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 35.2, pp. 126–160	Writing #5

- Week 7 Kwame Anthony Appiah (1994). “Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction”. In: *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Ed. by Amy Gutman. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 149–163 Writing #6
- Week 8 Francis Fukuyama (1989). “The End of History?” In: *The National Interest* 16, pp. 3–18 First draft of midterm due
- Week 9 Please read your editing partner’s first draft of their midterm, and come ready to talk with them about it. Revised draft of midterm due

3. Neoliberalism

- Week 10 **Chapter 1, §1: The Antithesis of Use Value and Exchange Value & §2: Constituted Value or Synthetic Value** Karl Marx (1955). *The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon*. Trans. by the Institute of Marxism Leninism. Moscow: Progress Publishers Writing #7
- Week 11 **Majority Opinion, written by Justice Kennedy.** *Citizens United v. Fed. Election Comm*, 558 U.S. 310, 130 S. Ct. 876, 175 L. Ed. 2d 753 (2010) Writing #8
- Week 12 Joe Soss and Vesla Weaver (2017). “Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race-Class Subjugated Communities”. In: *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, pp. 565–591 Writing #9
- Week 13 Alison M. Jaggar (2002). “Vulnerable Women and Neo-Liberal Globalization: Debt Burdens Undermine Women’s Health in the Global South”. In: *Theoretical Medicine* 23, pp. 425–440 Writing #9
- Week 14 Yves Winter and Joshua Chambers-Letson (2015). “Shipwrecked Sovereignty: Neoliberalism and a Disputed Sunken Treasure”. In: *Political Theory* 43.3, pp. 287–311 Writing #10
- Week 15 Francis Wade (Mar. 2018). ““The Liberal Order is the Incubator for Authoritarianism”: A Conversation with Pankaj Mishra”. In: *Los Angeles Review of Books* Writing #11