

**Political Science 581: Foundations of Political Theory**  
**Term: Spring 2019 ~ Wednesday 2:00-4:40**  
**Instructor: James Johnson**  
**Harkness 312 ~ x5-0622 ~ [jd.johnson@rochester.edu](mailto:jd.johnson@rochester.edu)**

This year the seminar will focus on theories of democracy broadly construed. It has three aims:

- (a) To help make you minimally literate regarding some important topics and approaches in contemporary political theory as well how these derive from writings published prior to say, 1980;
- (b) To get you to think about the foundations of our discipline, in particular the putative dichotomy between facts and values that most political scientists take for granted;
- (c) To familiarize you with a range of strategies for justifying or criticizing political arrangements or policies.

You have three primary tasks. First, you must actively engage in discussion in class. I want to make it clear that I expect active classroom participation - no reminders, no warnings, no cajoling. That means you need to have something to say – it should be smart and on point. *That* means you need to read and think in between class meetings. While that may sound patronizing, past experience suggests that I need to say such things bluntly. Participation will count for 20% of your grade.

Second, over the course of the term each student must submit 6 short papers that address in a critical way some aspect of or problem with the assigned reading. These papers are due in class on the day that the relevant reading has been assigned. *I will not accept them at any other time.* They may be no more than two typed pages long. Your performance on these papers will account for 30% of your grade for the course. You can write on any topic you like (or that interferes least with your other commitments) but to insure that you **do not** wait until the final weeks of the term I expect each of you to submit *at least* three of these assignments no later than week nine (March 13<sup>th</sup>).

Finally, you must write a final research paper that addresses themes in the course. (Consider this part of “the violence inherent in the system!”- see page 2 for the reference.) You each must discuss possible topics with me no later than week nine (March 13<sup>th</sup>). You should think of writing in the vicinity of 20-25 typed pages. ***I will not accept late papers absent the most dire extenuating circumstances.*** This paper will be worth 50% of your grade.

## Background – What You (almost certainly) Lack and What You Might Want

Many of you have little or no background in political theory. Should you feel the need to consult a more or less basic survey of the subject, here are some reliable candidates:

Raymond Geuss. 2001. *History & Illusion in Politics*. Cambridge UP.

Jean Hampton. 1996. *Political Philosophy*. Westview Press.

Will Kymlicka. 2001. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford UP.

Ian Shapiro. 2004. *The Moral Foundations of Politics*. Yale UP.

Jonathan Wolff. 2006. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. Oxford UP.

I list these in alphabetical order. Be warned – nearly all of the authors draw a sharper distinction between “normative” political theory and “positive” social science than I think is sustainable. And each has a point to make; they are not just reporting what this or that theorist or school of thought means. In short it is deceptive to consider these texts ‘introductory.’

I venture to guess that many of you suppose you have little or no interest in or need for political theory either. To state things bluntly, such a view is shortsighted. And going forward it will be institutionalized in the PhD curriculum. Consider this comment from a review<sup>1</sup> of a recent volume of interviews<sup>2</sup> with the most influential figures in the field of comparative politics over the past half-century:

Almost all the luminaries interviewed spent a substantial amount of time reading political philosophy, especially in their formative years. Classical works of social theory also get a great deal of attention first and foremost Max Weber, but also Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and some of his followers (notably, Antonio Gramsci). It seems that exposure to the classics of political and social theory promote the framing of important and enduring questions, though clearly this is not enough in itself. The academic work of many of these scholars seems to be motivated by solving problems about which they have strong normative concern, such as poverty (Przeworski, Bates), order (Huntington), powerlessness (Scott), violence (Moore), and despotism (nearly everybody interviewed). Empirically oriented university departments that believe political theory is best confined to departments of philosophy may inadvertently be depriving their graduate students of one of the very sources of inspiration for scientific study.

Perhaps, you don’t aspire to set the intellectual agenda in your field. That is up to you. But the evidence seems to suggest that the “luminaries” who *have* set the agenda in political science tend to be well-versed in social and political theory. This observation, by the way, simply generalizes what one might say of Bill Riker, the patron saint of the Rochester department!

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Bernhard. 2009. “Methodological Disputes in Comparative Politics,” *Comparative Politics* (July), page 511.

<sup>2</sup> Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder. 2007. *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

## Required Readings

[1] Books. A baker's dozen books - marked \* - are required. I have not ordered books for this course at the bookstore. You should be able to obtain all the required books in paperback - and probably used - from your preferred e-purveyor. I recommend the editions I indicate here because the titles are deceiving - several of these are collections and I will ask you to read specific works. In fact, many of your predecessors in the UR PhD program will be glad to empty space on their bookshelves and may even give you their copies of some of these titles for free just to rid of them. "Out damned spot!"

[2] My Papers. I have assigned a significant number of my own papers. That is because they approach political theory in ways that actively engage the "Rochester" approach to political inquiry. Mostly, they aim to deflate the pretensions of that approach. I assign them so that you know what I think and distinctly *not* because I expect you to agree with anything I say. In any case, you can find all of the papers with my name on them on my web page: <https://rochester.academia.edu/JamesJohnson>.

[3] Other Readings: In *Monty Python & the Holy Grail* there is a famous scene where King Arthur engages in heated debate over the notion of sovereignty with a handful of very contentious, muddy peasants. The peasants announce that they belong to an "autonomous collective," a "self-governing anarcho-syndicalist commune" and so have little regard for the pretenses of centralized monarchical authority. I find their arguments persuasive. (See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8bqQ-C1PSE&feature=related> if you are unfamiliar with this canonical argument.) I anticipate this course will operate in much the same way as that scene. You can think of me as King Arthur and think of yourselves as the contentious peasants. That means you will need to act as a self-governing collective.

Each week you students will "take it in turns" (by some method of your own devising) to insure the availability for the following week of any of the relevant reading materials not available via e-journals from the library. This will require that the chosen ones ascertain which readings are not easily available on the web, obtain those readings from me, scan/copy them if necessary (at my expense), and make sure they are available to the entire class. I have nearly all the papers assigned here in pdf format. All that will mean maybe the easiest way to find and distribute them will be by coordinating with me.

## Class Schedule

### Week One (January 16) ~ Introduction. Fair Warning.

James Johnson. 2014. "Models Among the Political Theorists," *American Journal of Political Science*. 58:547-60.

Jack Knight & James Johnson. 2015. "On Attempts to Gerrymander "Positive" and "Normative" Political Theory: Six Theses" *The Good Society* 24: 30-48.

James Johnson. 2019. "Formal Models in Political Science: Conceptual, Not Empirical." *Journal of Politics* 8:e6-e10.

Susan Orr & James Johnson. 2018. "The Entanglement of Methods of Policy Inquiry with Democratic Possibilities." In *Routledge Handbook of Ethics & Public Policy*. Edited by Annabelle Lever & Andrei Poama. Routledge. Pages 62-75.

### **Week Two (January 23<sup>rd</sup>) ~ Facts, Values and Their Relations**

\* Hilary Putnam. 2002. *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy & Other Essays*. Harvard UP. ISBN-13: 978-0674013803

W.V.O. Quine. 2004 [1951]. "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." In *Quintessence*. Harvard UP. [Chapter 2]

Philip Kitcher. 2006. "Public Knowledge and the Difficulties of Democracy," *Social Research* 73: 1205-24.

Elizabeth Anderson. 2007. "The Epistemology of Democracy," *Episteme* 3:8-22.

Elizabeth Anderson. 2011. "Democracy, Public Policy, and Lay Assessments of Scientific Testimony," *Episteme* 8: 144–164.

Steven Epstein. 2000. "Democracy, Expertise & AIDS Treatment Activism." In *Science, Technology & Democracy*. Edited by D.L. Kleinman. SUNY Press.

### **Week Three (January 30<sup>th</sup>) ~ "Spontaneous Order" as Libertarian Fairy Dust (I)**

\* FA Hayek. 1978. *Law, Legislation & Liberty* (Volume 1). University of Chicago Press.

F.A. Hayek. 1945. "The Use of Knowledge in Society," *American Economic Review* 35: 519-530.

Daniel D'Amico. 2015. "Spontaneous Order." In Peter Boettke & Christopher Coyne, eds. *Oxford Handbook of Austrian Economics*. Oxford.

Jon Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior*. Cambridge UP. Chapters 2,12,16-17.

H. Allen Orr. 2015. "The Biology of Being Good to Others," *New York Review of Books* (19 March).

### **Week Four (February 6<sup>th</sup>) ~ "Spontaneous Order" as Libertarian Fairy Dust (II)**

\* Michel Taylor. 1987. *The Possibility of Cooperation*. Cambridge UP.

Randall Calvert. 1995a. "The Rational Choice Theory of Social Institutions." In *Modern Political Economy* Ed. J. Banks and E. Hanushek. (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Randall Calvert. 1995b. "Rational Actors, Equilibrium and Social Institutions." In *Explaining Social Institutions*. Ed. J. Knight and I. Sened. University of Michigan.

Jack Knight. 1995. "Models, Interpretations and Theories: Constructing Explanations of Institutional Emergence and Change." In *Explaining Social Institutions*. Ed. J. Knight and I. Sened. University of Michigan.

James Johnson. 2015. "Game Theory." In *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*. Edited by Michael T. Gibbons. John Wiley & Sons.

### **Week Five (February 13<sup>th</sup>) ~ How to Justify Liberty**

\* John Stuart Mill. 2008. *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford World's Classics). Oxford University Press. ISBN-10: 0199535736

Benjamin Constant. 1804. "The Liberty of the Ancients as Compared to that of the Moderns." In *Political Writings*. Cambridge UP.

Isaiah Berlin. 1958 [1969] "Two Concepts of Liberty" In *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford UP.

### **Week Six (February 20<sup>th</sup>) ~ Marx etc.**

\* Karl Marx, 1996. *Later Political Writings* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought). Cambridge University Press. ISBN-10: 0521367395.

John Roemer. 1998. "Why The Poor Do Not Expropriate the Rich," *Journal of Public Economics* 70:399-424.

Ian Shapiro. 2002. "Why the Poor Don't Soak the Rich," *Daedalus* 131:118-28.

Charles Lindblom. 1982. "The Market as Prison," *Journal of Politics* 44:324-36.

G.A. Cohen. 2001. "Why Not Socialism?" In *Democratic Equality*. Edited by E. Broadbent. University of Toronto Press.

### **Week Seven (February 27<sup>th</sup>) ~ Pragmatism**

\*John Dewey. 1927. *The Public & Its Problems*. Swallow Press. ISBN-10: 0804002541.

Charles S. Peirce. 1877. "The Fixation of Belief." In *The Pragmatism Reader*. Edited by Robert Talisse & Scott Aikin. Princeton University Press.

Charles S. Peirce. 1878. "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." In *The Pragmatism Reader*. Edited by Robert Talisse & Scott Aikin. Princeton University Press.

John Dewey. 1939. "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us." In *The Essential Dewey: Volume 1 - Pragmatism, Education, Democracy*. Edited by L. Hickman & T. Alexander. Indiana University Press.

Jack Knight & James Johnson. 2007. "The Priority of Democracy: A Pragmatist Approach to Political-Economic Institutions and the Burden of Justification," *American Political Science Review* 101: 47-61.

Alexander Livingston. 2017 "Between Means and Ends: Reconstructing Coercion in Dewey's Democratic Theory," *APSR* 111:522-34.

### **Week Eight (March 6<sup>th</sup>) ~ Arrow, etc.**

\* Kenneth Arrow. 1970. *Social Choice & Individual Values*. Yale UP.

Amartya Sen. 2014. "Arrow and the Impossibility Theorem." In *The Arrow Impossibility Theorem*. Edited by Eric Maskin and Amartya Sen. Columbia UP. Pages 43-56.

Partha Dasgupta & Eric Maskin. 2008. "On the Robustness of Majority Rule," *Journal of the European Economic Association* 6:949–973.

W.V.O. Quine. 1981. "Success and Limits of Mathematization." In *Theories & Things*. Harvard University Press.

James Johnson. 2015 "Arrow's Impossibility Theorem." In *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*. Edited by Michael T. Gibbons. John Wiley & Sons.

### **Week Nine (March 13<sup>th</sup>) ~ No Class, Spring Break**

### **Week Ten (March 20<sup>th</sup>) ~ Misconstruing the Implications of Social Choice Theory**

\* William Riker. 1988. *Liberalism Against Populism*. Waveland.

Bernard Manin. 1994. "The Metamorphoses of Representative Government," *Economy and Society* 23:133-71.

Jack Knight & James Johnson. 1994. "Aggregation & Deliberation: On the Possibility of Democratic Legitimacy," *Political Theory* 22:277-96.

Jane Mansbridge, *et al.* 2010. "The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18: 64-100.

### **Week Eleven (March 27<sup>th</sup>) ~ Institutions Writ Small**

Adrian Vermeule. 2007. *Mechanisms of Democracy: Institutional Design Writ Small*. Oxford UP. [Introduction].

\* Jason Brennan & Lisa Hill. 2014. *Compulsory Voting: For & Against*. Cambridge UP.

Geoffrey Brennan & Phillip Pettit. 1990. "Unveiling the vote." *British Journal of Political Science* 20: 311-333.

Adam Przeworski. 2015. "Suffrage & Voting Secrecy in General Elections." In *Secrecy and Publicity in Votes and Debates*. Edited by Jon Elster. Cambridge UP. Pages 97-107.

Bernard Manin. 2015. "Why Open Voting in General Elections is Undesirable." In *Secrecy and Publicity in Votes and Debates*. Edited by Jon Elster. Cambridge UP. Pages 209-14.

### **Week Twelve (April 3<sup>rd</sup>) ~ Foucault**

\* Michel Foucault. 1979. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage.

James Scott. 2010. "The Trouble with the View from Above" <http://www.cato-unbound.org/2010/09/08/james-c-scott/the-trouble-with-the-view-from-above/print/>

Harcourt, Bernard. 2012. "Political Disobedience." *Critical Inquiry* 39: 33-55.

James Johnson. 1997. "Communication, Criticism & the Postmodern Consensus: An Unfashionable Interpretation of Michel Foucault," *Political Theory* 25:559-83.

### **Week Thirteen (April 10<sup>th</sup>) ~ Private Government (Relational Commitments)**

\* Elizabeth Anderson. 2018. *Private Government*. Princeton UP.

Elizabeth Anderson. 1999. "What is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109:287-337.

Elizabeth Anderson. 2010. "The Fundamental Disagreement between Luck Egalitarians and Relational Egalitarians," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (supplement) 40:1-23.

Ian Shapiro. 2012. "On Non-Domination," *University of Toronto Law Journal* 62: 293-336.

### **Week Fourteen (April 17<sup>th</sup>) ~ Markets**

\* Debra Satz. 2010. *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets*. Oxford UP.

Marc Fleurbaey. 2011. "Review of Satz," *OEconomia*. 2011: 467 - 471

Michael Sandel. 2013. "Market Reasoning as Moral Reasoning: Why Economists Should Re-engage with Political Philosophy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27:121-40.

Timothy Besley. 2013. "What's the Good of the Market?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 51:478-495.

Wendy Brown. 2014. "Review of Sandel & Satz," *Political Theory* 42:355-76.

## **Week Fifteen (April 24<sup>th</sup>) ~ Metrics**

\* Amartya Sen. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Knopf.

Johnathan Wolff, et. al. 2015. *A Philosophical Review of Poverty*. Joseph Roundtree Foundation.

## **Finals Week (May 10<sup>th</sup>) ~ Final Papers Due.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Some Fine (But Very Important) Print:**

**Policy on Attendance:** Class attendance is not optional. If you need to miss class for some reason (e.g., religious holidays, travel for varsity sports, etc.), please let me know. I will take attendance periodically.

Showing up is not enough. I expect that you will come to class prepared – \_having done the assigned readings and formulated questions, objections, and reactions to them. I will provide plenty of opportunity for you to articulate those questions, objections and reactions.

**Policy on Electronic Devices:** My policy on electronic devices in class (meaning *any* screen connected to silicon chips) is restrictive. *No cell phones!* Leave them in your office. I also discourage the use of laptops and tablets. If you have readings, notes etc. on your device, download them for reference prior to class. You all think you can multitask and engage social media while also doing something serious. Everything the research tells us suggests you are wrong.

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** I operate on the assumption that every student is familiar with and abide by the College policies on Academic Honesty. If you are not familiar with them please go to the Board on Academic Honesty web page and make yourself familiar. You can find that page here: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>.

I provide specific instructions for each course assignment. In any event, I take a very dim view of cheating and plagiarism and will refer any and all suspected instances to the Board on Academic Honesty. The easiest way to avoid such unpleasantness is to not succumb to temptations to cheat, plagiarize, bend the rules, exploit loopholes, and so forth. As a default, if you are unsure about whether or not something is allowed ask me. If it is not don't do it.

**Policy on late assignments:** Except in the direst of circumstances I very much frown upon late assignments. I will deduct one third of a letter grade for every day an assignment is late. (This means if your grade would have been a B+, one day late gets you a deduction to B, two days a deduction to B-, etc.). If you anticipate a problem getting an assignment in on time (due to, say, religious holidays, travel for athletic teams, etc.) please speak to me in advance.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability of any sort that you believe will impact your ability to meet the expectations laid out