

Prof. Schaeffer

Fenwick 303 (x3403)

Office Hours:

Tuesday 2-3:30

Wednesday 11:30-1

Thursday 10-11

...and by appointment

Course Description

In this course we will explore liberalism not only as a political position but as a conceptual framework that has moral as well as political dimensions. As a concept that has evolved historically, liberalism can refer to a wide range of ideas and principles—sometimes in conflict with one another. We will explore debates within liberalism about the meaning of liberty, the nature of the individual, and the proper relationship between state, society and the individual, as well as between politics and morality. We will also explore a number of criticisms of liberalism, focusing especially on the charges brought by communitarianism. Does the ideal of individualism, which was so important historically to liberal efforts to counter authoritarian regimes, ultimately present a problem for liberalism when it comes to forging a stable and cohesive non-authoritarian polity? Can liberalism remain neutral on the question of what is the best life for human beings? Does liberal theory have the resources to answer its critics?

Required Texts (available at the Holy Cross Bookstore)John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (ed. Tully)John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (ed. Rappaport)Michael Sandel, ed. *Liberalism and its Critics*Amitai Etzioni, ed. *New Communitarian Thinking*Michael Lerner, *The Politics of Meaning*Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*Willim Galston, *Liberal Purposes*

There will also be a number of articles on reserve at the library.

Requirements/Grading

Students are expected to attend all class meetings, read and think carefully about all assignments, and participate in class discussion. Class attendance is required. Excessive absences will impact your final grade. Students are responsible for obtaining assignments and notes from any missed class. Exams cannot be rescheduled. Papers are due on the due date; late papers will lose one half letter grade per day late. No exceptions or extensions except for extraordinary, documented circumstances, such as hospitalization.

Throughout the semester, our class will meet on several occasions with the class “Philosophy of State and Law” (PHIL 267), which meets in room Stein 319. These class meetings are marked on the syllabus by the phrase “JOINT CLASS.” In addition, there will be a few co-curricular

activities that the two classes do together. Specifically, all students are expected to attend a panel featuring Michael Lerner (one of the authors we will be reading this semester) at a conference on “The Anatomy of Evil,” sponsored by the Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture at Holy Cross.

You will write three papers over the course of the semester, and there will be a final exam. The papers are worth 20%, 25%, and 30% of your final grade, and the exam counts for 25%.

Assignments

Jan 16 Introduction

Jan 21 Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (in L&C) * * * JOINT CLASS * * *

Jan 23 Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*; excerpts from *Second Treatise*
(on reserve)

Jan 28 Mill, *On Liberty*

Jan 30 Mill, *On Liberty*

Feb 4 Judith N. Shklar, “The Liberalism of Fear” (on reserve)
Ronald Dworkin, “Liberalism” (in L&C)

Feb 6 Rawls, “The Right and the Good Contrasted” (in L&C)
Rawls, “A Kantian Conception of Equality” (on reserve)

Feb 7 – Friday – FIRST ESSAY DUE – by 4 p.m. in my office

Feb 11 Hayek, “Equality, Value and Merit” (in L&C)
Irving Kristol, “When Virtue Loses Her Loveliness” (on reserve)

Feb 13 Sandel, “Justice and the Good” (in L&C)

Feb 18 Berger, “On the Obsolescence of the Concept of Honour” (in L&C)
* * * JOINT CLASS * * *

Feb 20 Elshtain, “The Communitarian Individual” (in NCT)
Susan M. Okin, “Humanist Liberalism” (on reserve)

Feb 25 Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone” (on reserve) * * * JOINT CLASS * * *

Feb 27 Spragens, “Communitarian Liberalism” (in NCT)

* * * **SPRING BREAK** * * *

March 11 Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, Ch. 1 & 2 * * * JOINT CLASS * * *

Mar 13-20 Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*

*** SECOND ESSAY DUE ***

March 25 Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Introduction; Ch. 1-3
*** JOINT CLASS ***

March 27 Tamir, Ch. 4-5

April 3 Tamir, Ch. 6-7

April 8 – Lerner, *The Politics of Meaning*, Ch. 1-4 *** JOINT CLASS ***

April 10 Lerner, Ch. 7

Saturday April 13 9-10:20 Lerner panel at “The Nature of Evil” Conference

April 15 Rogers Smith, “American Conceptions of Citizenship and National Service”
(in NCT)

April 17-29 Galston, *Liberal Purposes*
April 24 *** JOINT CLASS ***

FINAL EXAM