

Syllabus for PLSC 17W, Section 001
Introduction to Political Theory
Fall 2022
MWF 10:10 am – 11:00 am, Olmsted E-212

Professor: Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

Office:	W-160K
Office Hours:	T & W 1-3 pm and by appointment
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Course Webpage	Link

Course Description: This course focuses on the concepts, principles, and values used to explain, justify, and challenge the organization and use of collective power. It introduces the field of political theory as an intellectual tradition that combines reflection on what political life is and what it should accomplish with an investigation of the values manifest through existing political institutions and how those institutions can be best organized to achieve desired outcomes. The course familiarizes students with central debates in political theory and permits them an overview of the works of some of the discipline's most pertinent thinkers. Through the course, students will learn to employ and evaluate political concepts with care and precision so they can participate in that conversation productively as democratic citizens as well as in the further study of political theory.

Prerequisites: There are no specific prerequisites for this course, however it will be very helpful to have a basic understanding of the structure and function of government in the United States.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1: Students will learn about the nature of political theory and the ways political theoretical thinking can enhance our capacities for critical reflection and democratic citizenship
- Goal 2: Students develop an appreciation of connections among political, ethical, legal, and religious views
- Goal 3: Students will recognize the challenges that historical context poses to interpretation
- Goal 4: Students will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the political philosophical views

- Goal 5: Students will strengthen their argumentative writing and command of English prose through careful practice

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This course will contain a mix of lecture and class discussion. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Reaching Our Goals

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the course and provide for meaningful discussion as a class. I will be taking attendance in order to grade participation, but also as a way to get to know you. Please contact me via [e-mail](#) if you are unable to attend class. I will follow the University's attendance policy when it comes to excused absences. See <https://handbook.psu.edu/content/class-attendance>.

Preparation and Participation: I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read. Contributing to class discussion will make the course more interesting and will enhance your understanding of the material.

Discussion Ground Rule #1 is Respect: Be respectful of your fellow students. Remember this is an academic classroom. Please listen to and respond to the opinions of others with courtesy, even and especially, when you strongly disagree with them.

Do Not Suffer in Silence: Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know — as soon as possible — what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it as soon as possible.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course, if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you right away when any changes are made.

E-mail Policy: I will work to respond to e-mails by the next business day. This means that e-mails sent on the weekends will be responded to by Monday.

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Graham, Paul and John Hoffman. 2022. *Introduction to Political Theory*. Routledge. Fourth Edition. ISBN 9781138389212.

Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the [course website](#) and Canvas prior to each class period.

Assessing Your Progress Towards Our Goals

The following assessments will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: short essays, group presentation, group paper, and participation. Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

Short Essays	40%
Group Presentation	20%
Final Paper	30%
Participation, Discussion, and Attendance	10%

We will use the following grade scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-	80 to 82
C+	77 to 79
C	73 to 76
C-	70 to 72
D	60 to 69
F	59 and below

Short Essays: You will complete four short essays throughout the course. Each essay is based on a section of the book. You will pick a chapter in that section, briefly explain the key concepts in the chapter, and illustrate those concepts with at least one real life example. Each essay should be 800-1,000 words.

Group Presentation: We will form groups who will pick from a list of selected topics from the Catherine Smit text. In November, the groups will present on their topics for up to 20 minutes. Please make the presentation interesting and interactive. Feel free to include

engaging video clips. The presentation should link the topic with the theories we are learning in class.

Final Paper: Each group will write a 2,000-2,500 word paper based on their group presentation.

Participation: Attending class is incredibly important. It not only enriches the learning experience for yourself and your classmates, but also prepares you for succeeding in the working world. Thus, attendance and participation will represent 10 percent of your final score. See Appendix A for participation grading guidelines.

Students also have an obligation to notify me within the first three weeks of the semester if they will miss any class session due to a religious observance. I am pleased to do this, but will need notification in order to plan make-up work.

Make-Up Grades: You are allowed to make-up academic work only in the case of excused absences. These absences may include missing class for a [University-sanctioned activity \(with proper documentation\)](#), [illness](#), [religious observance](#), or [family responsibilities](#). If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, please contact me before the absence to make arrangements for completing the work. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please check in with me as soon as possible. You will have one week from the day of your return to class to make up a missed assignment.

Illness: If you are not feeling well or if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. I cannot stress this strongly enough. We are counting on you to help contain the spread of the virus (and other illnesses) on campus by self-isolating if you have a fever, feel unwell, or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive or is showing symptoms.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is not limited to simply cheating on an exam or assignment. The following is quoted directly from the *PSU Faculty Senate Policies for Students* regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty: “Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.”

All University and Penn State Harrisburg policies regarding academic integrity/academic dishonesty apply to this course and the students enrolled in this course. Refer to the following

URL for further details on the academic integrity policy of Penn State Harrisburg: <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/academics/academic-guidelines-and-policies>. Each student in this course is expected to work entirely on her/his own while taking any exam, to complete assignments on her/his own effort without the assistance of others unless directed otherwise by the instructor, and to abide by University and Penn State Harrisburg policies about academic integrity and academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty can result in an assignment of “F” or “XF” as the final grade for the student.

Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Penn State values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. Every Penn State campus has a Student Disability Resources office. Student Disability Resources at Penn State Harrisburg is located in the Student Enrichment Center Room 205. The Assistant Director of Student Disability Resources, Alan Babcock, can be reached via email at aub15@psu.edu or phone 717-948-6025.

To receive consideration for accommodations, please contact Student Disability Resources (SDR), participate in an intake interview, provide documentation of your disability, and complete an online Introductory Questionnaire. Please know that you are not required to already have documentation to begin the process with SDR, as SDR can assist with the process of requesting accommodations. Additional information is available on the (<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/student-disability-resources>). If the documentation supports requests for reasonable accommodations, SDR will provide you with an accommodations letter, which you can then give to your professors. Please know that requests for accommodations and support must be initiated by the student and communication with professors regarding the approved accommodations must be initiated by the student. You will receive accommodations after you give your accommodations letter to your professors. It is recommended that you share your accommodations letters with your professors as early in the semester as possible. Professors do not provide accommodations retroactively.

Counseling Services

Success in college depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. Please recognize that some stress and anxiety is a normal part of life and the college experience, and it can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. Penn State Harrisburg has a number of support options listed in this syllabus.

If you are experiencing issues that feel unmanageable, you reach the point that you have difficulty concentrating and/or feeling motivated, or have anxiety or feelings of depression that interfere with your ability to take care of yourself or your daily responsibilities, please

consider talking with someone in CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services). We have a range of services to help you navigate issues that are impacting your ability to be healthy, well, and productive at college.

You can learn more about the confidential mental health services available on campus by visiting the [Counseling and Psychological Services website](#) or by calling (717) 948-6025 Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm. CAPS is located on the 2nd floor of the Student Enrichment Center, Suite 205. You can access crisis services 24/7/365 by calling 1-877-229-6400 or by texting “LIONS” to 741741. Find us on Instagram or on [Facebook](#).

Educational Equity

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity at the Report Bias site: <https://equity.psu.edu/reportbias>. Penn State’s Code of Conduct can be found at the following link: <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/support-safety-conduct/student-conduct/code-conduct>.

Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Penn State Harrisburg at 717-948-6016, and to Equity & Compliance at 717-948-4381 or in person in Olmsted E125.

Mandated Reporting

Penn State is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, or physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University’s educational mission, and will not be tolerated. Gender-based and sexual harassment, including sexual violence, are forms of gender discrimination in that they deny or limit an individual’s ability to participate in or benefit from University programs or activities. For reporting resources, and support, please visit titleix.psu.edu.

Penn State strongly encourages all members of the campus community to take appropriate action by providing support and encouraging those impacted by such incidents to submit a

report to the Title IX Coordinator. You may also submit a report online by using the Incident Report Form found here: Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response Incident Report Form. If the University Title IX staff receives information about an incident, they will reach out to offer information about resources, rights, and procedural options available to you.

At Penn State Harrisburg, your point of contact is:

Nicholas Paesano Sexual Misconduct Resource Person Penn State Harrisburg E-126 Olmsted Building 717-948-4385

Penn State's Title IX Coordinator is: Suzanne Adair, Interim Title IX Coordinator 222 Boucke Building University Park, PA 16802 814-867-0099 titleix@psu.edu

Other resources that are available include:

- Penn State Harrisburg Counseling and Psychological Services, SEC 205 - 717-948-6025
- Department of Safety & Police
 - Campus Police: 717-979-7976
 - Local Police: 717-543-2200 or 911
- YWCA Confidential Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services: 1-800-654-1221 (available 24/7)
- Contact Helpline: 800-932-4616 (24-hour community crisis hotline)
- Pinnacle Health Harrisburg: 717-782-3131
- Penn State Harrisburg Student Health Services, 220 Capital Union Building: 717-948-61015
- Penn State Hotline: 800-560-1637 (Anonymous reporting)

In Case of Emergency In the event of a University-wide emergency, course requirements, classes, deadlines, and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme.

For more general information about the emergency situation, please refer to:

- Penn State Harrisburg's home page at <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/>

- PSUAlert (<http://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/>). This is a service designed to alert the Penn State community via text messages to cell phones when situations arise on campus that affect the ability of the campus - students, faculty and staff - to function normally. Everyone is encouraged to sign up to receive the text alerts.
- Messages will be placed at the 717-948-6000 campus phone number

In the case of a University-wide emergency, please refer to the following about changes in this course:

- Canvas: <https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2116052>
- Instructor's email: mallinson@psu.edu

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Office of Student Affairs (syw10@psu.edu, 717-948-6180) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable him to provide any resources that he may possess.

Writing Tutoring and Other Academic Support

The Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center may have a tutor who can assist you with this course. An appointment is recommended. Appointments are available in-person or on Zoom, depending on your preference.

To make an appointment:

Visit: Student Enrichment Center Room 201 Or go to: starfish.psu.edu and click on “My Success Network” Or call: 717-948-6475 Or email: PSHLearningCtr@psu.edu

The Learning Center can help you in a variety of ways:

Academic Success Coaches Get help with time management, organization, test-taking, study skills, as well as speech and presentation preparation and delivery.

Subject Area Tutoring Courses including accounting, biological and behavioral science, computer science, economics, finance, mathematics, physical sciences, statistics, engineering, and some world languages are supported by peer and professional tutoring.

Writing Get help with the development of essays, papers, resumes, cover letters, scholarship applications and much more. We can help at any stage from brainstorming ideas to citing sources to polishing your final product.

The Lambert Undergraduate Advising Center can assist you with exploring majors and minors, understanding academic policies, and planning courses for future semesters.

Drop-in Quick Question Advising is available during the semester both in-person and online (no appointment necessary!). See dates, times, and locations at: bit.ly/whatsnextbgs

To contact the Advising Center:

Visit: Student Enrichment Center Room 204 Or call: 717-948-6604 Or email: HBGAdvisingCenter@psu.edu

Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. For this reason, a digital version of this syllabus can be found on [my website](#). Slides used in class will also be posted on the online syllabus and Canvas before class. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail and the online syllabus will be constantly up-to-date. Required course readings are listed and due dates for assignments are in bold. Links to some additional readings are included in the syllabus on my website, others will be uploaded to Canvas. If you have trouble, please do not hesitate to [e-mail](#) me.

Week 1: Introduction

- August 22: Introduction to the class and each other
 - No reading
- August 24: Syllabus Review
 - No reading
- August 26: No Class
- August 27: **Last Day of Add/Drop**

Week 2: Classical Ideas

- August 29: Reset Meeting
 - No Reading
- August 31: The State
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 1
- September 2: The State
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 1

Week 3: Classical Ideas

- September 5: Labor Day
 - No class
- September 7: Democracy
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 2
- September 9: Democracy
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 2

Week 4: Classical Ideas

- September 12: Punishment
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 3
- September 14: Political Obligation
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 4
- September 15: APSA
 - No in-person class
 - Work on first paper

Week 5: Classical Ideas

- September 19: Political Obligation
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 4
- September 21: Paper Work Day
 - No in-class meeting
- September 23: Equity
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 5
- September 25: **First Paper Due (Classical Ideas)**

Week 6: Classical Ideas

- September 26: Freedom of Action
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 6
- September 28: Freedom of Action
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 6
- September 30: Freedom of Speech
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 7

Week 7: Classical Ideologies

- October 3: Distributive Justice
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 8
- October 5: Liberalism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 9
- October 7: Conservatism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 10

Week 8: Classical Ideologies

- October : Socialism and Marxism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 11
- October 13: Anarchism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 12
- October 13: Nationalism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 13
- October 16: **Second Paper Due (Freedom, Equality, Justice)**

Week 9: Guest Speaker

- October 17: Dr. Abbas Ali
 - TBD
- October 19: Dr. Abbas Ali
 - TBD
- October 21: Dr. Abbas Ali
 - TBD

Week 10: Classical and Contemporary Ideologies

- October 24: Fascism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 14
- October 26: Feminism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 15
- October 28: Multiculturalism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 16
- October 30: **Third Paper Due (Freedom, Equality, Justice)**

Week 11: Contemporary Ideologies

- October 31: Ecologism
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 17
- November 2: Flex Day/Group Prep
 - Catch up day or group preparation time
- November 4: Group Prep
 - Group preparation time

Week 12: Group Presentations

- November 7: Group 1
- November 9: Group 2
- November 11: Group 3

Week 13: Group Presentations

- November 14: Group 4
- November 16: Group 5
- November 18: Group 6
- November 20: **Fourth Paper Due (Classical and Contemporary Ideologies)**

Week 14: Thanksgiving

- November 22, 24
 - No Class

Week 15: Global Political Theory

- November 28: Human Rights
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 18
- November 30: Human Rights
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 18
- December 2: Global Justice
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 19

Week 16: Global Political Theory

- December 5: Global Justice
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 19
- December 7: Migration
 - Graham and Hoffman Chapter 20
- December 9: Flex Day
 - Catch up day

Week 17: Finals Week

- December 14: Group paper due via Canvas dropbox

Appendices

A Participation Grading Guidelines

A = A student earning an A comes to nearly all classes prepared and can demonstrate superior comprehension of the material. They contribute to the class conversation, but don't dominate it. They make thoughtful contributions that advance conversation, showing interest in and respect for others views. They are demonstrably engaged in course material and content.

B = A student earning a B misses only a few classes, but attends having completed the readings and is able to demonstrate comprehension of the readings, perhaps lacking fully integrated views toward the material. They make thoughtful comments when called upon, show respect and interest in other students views, and occasionally contribute without prompting. This student is making a good-faith effort to participate in class, but may not have the integration of ideas of an A student or may not participate as often.

C = A student earning a C misses several classes, but arrives having completed the readings and able to discuss their most basic tenets. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and gives only minimal answers when called upon. They are putting forward some effort, but appear to be uninterested in the material and do not participate much without prompting.

D = A student earning a D misses close to half of the classes, and when present has difficulty positively contributing. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class, and when prompted, gives responses that may be off-topic and demonstrate a lack of knowledge or preparedness. They are putting forth less than average effort in the course and may be having a negative impact on others.

F = A student earning an F misses over half of the classes, and when present, cannot demonstrate they have read the material or thought about the concepts. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and does not give answers related to the question being asked when prompted. They do not appear to be interested in the content of the class and are putting forth a very minimal level of effort.¹

¹Adapted from [Dr. Zachary Baumann](#).