

**Topics in Political Theory: Capitalism, Socialism, and Localism**  
**POLS 370 / TTh 2:30-3:45pm**  
**DAV 301**

**Instructor: Professor Russell Arben Fox**  
**Office and Office Hours: Davis 313; TTh 9:30am-12:00pm and by appointment**  
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**The Topic:**

This is an upper-level political science course, which focuses on three distinct models of political economy—or, perhaps more appropriately, two distinct models, and one persistent critique/challenge to them both. “Capitalism” and “socialism” mean many different things to many different people, but at the least they are widely recognized as ways of thinking about and organizing economic activity. “Localism,” however, is something different—not so much a single way of economic thinking and organizing, but an alternative to certain (though not all) presumptions carried forward under the banners of capitalism and socialism, the foremost of which is identification of political economy with national (or international) economics. Localism, in short, suggests that in thinking about economic problems, size matters.

Moreover, it should also be noted that we will be studying theories of political economy—that is, the ways in which people imagine, attack, or justify different political ideas about the definition, organization, and prioritization of economic behavior. We will NOT be studying a great deal of economics itself, as the discipline has developed over the past couple of centuries. In fact, in many ways one of our primary themes will be the contestability of economics as a discipline, and its reality as a site for political and moral reflection. But in any case, this class should not be confused with a course in micro- or macro-economics; besides not fitting in with the stated aims of the course, I just don’t have the math.

The reading for this course will be at a fairly high level: often abstract, and making reference to political, moral, and philosophical arguments which go far beyond what one would typically encounter in a news report or a politician’s speech. Similarly, the lectures in this class, and the discussions those lectures should prompt, will be demanding and challenging. While any student who has demonstrated their competence and ability in other political science or similar classes is welcome, this course should not be treated lightly—I aim to make this class rewarding, but you’ll have to work for those rewards. Finally, successful completion of this class satisfies a requirements for the Political Science/History major.

**The Instructor:**

That’s me. My name, office phone, e-mail, and office hours are included at the top of this sheet. Please make use of them if you have a question or concern, or send me an e-mail message, which is usually the best way to get in contact with me. (But why am I saying this—don’t you all know me by now anyway?)

**The Reading:**

There are six books which are required reading for this course: Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community* (Pantheon, 1992); G.A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism* (Princeton, 2009); F.A. Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* (Chicago, 1988); Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, Lawrence H. Simon, ed. (Hackett, 1994); Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Laurence Dickey, ed. (Hackett, 1993); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, Donald Cress, ed. (Hackett, 1987). There is also one recommended book for the course, Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., (Simon and

Schuster, 1999); this book will not provide you with any material that you will be tested on, but you may find it valuable for orienting yourself as we go through the other assigned readings. Last but not least, there will also be a large number of essays and book chapters that will be made available on Blackboard which you will be expected to read in preparation for the discussion and assignments in class that day.

### **The Schedule:**

Tuesday, January 12—first day of class; course introduction

Thursday, January 14—Polanyi text (Heilbroner, 13-41); modernity, markets and “political economy”

Tuesday, January 19—Rousseau, 1-21; a critique of modern progress

Thursday, January 21—Rousseau, 33-60; equality and human nature

Tuesday, January 26—Rousseau, 60-81; equality and human progress

Thursday, January 28—Rousseau, 111-138; a diagnosis and response to the modern economic condition

Tuesday, February 2—Smith, 1-49 (Heilbroner, 42-74); the logic of “commercial society”

Thursday, February 4—Smith, 117-152; the political extension of commercial society

Tuesday, February 9—Smith, 176-205; the social expenses of a modern commercial state

Thursday, February 11—Smith text; moral underpinnings (and concerns) of modern life  
(first research paper topic due)

Tuesday, February 16—Marx, 1-26, 54-79 (Heilbroner, 136-169); Marx’s critique of the marketplace

Thursday, February 18—professor attending a student conference; no class

Tuesday, February 23—Marx, 115-153; Marx’s thoughts on alienation, production, and communism

Thursday, February 25—Marx, 157-186; the Communist Manifesto  
(first research paper rough draft due)

Tuesday, March 2—midterm examination

Thursday, March 4—Polanyi, Keynes texts; the evolution of liberal capitalism

Tuesday, March 9—Spencer text; the transformation of the libertarian response

Thursday, March 11—Walzer texts; the civil and egalitarian possibilities of a socialist political economy  
(first research paper due)

Tuesday, March 23—Cohen; a non-Marxian defense of socialism

Thursday, March 25—Hayek, 29-65; defending the rational roots of libertarian capitalism

Tuesday, March 30—Hayek, 66-105; the flawed appeal of tradition and emotion in economics  
(second research paper topic due)

Thursday, April 1—Hayek, 106-140; rational economics rather than social concern

Tuesday, April 6—McCloskey and “Free Market” texts; questioning the virtues of capitalism

Thursday, April 8—Daly and Cobb text; the revolt against economic rationalism

Tuesday, April 13—Berry, 3-43; conservation and sustainability

(second research paper rough draft due)

Thursday, April 15—Berry, 117-173; the connections between sex, community, and economics

Tuesday, April 20–Berry text; agrarianism, localism and religion

Thursday, April 22–Schumacher and Sennett texts; local socialism? local capitalism?

Tuesday, April 27–last day of class; course review  
(second research paper due)

Tuesday, May 4–final examination, 3:00pm

### The Grades:

Grading in this course will follow a strict 100-point scale:

91-100 = A

81-90 = B

71-80 = C

60-70 = D

59 and below = let's not talk about that, shall we?

In calculating the grades, however, I throw in a 10-point margin for error, as the following scale should show:

First research paper	25 points
Second research paper	25 points
Lecture response	10 points (5 points each)
Midterm examination	20 points
Final examination	30 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>110 points</b>

So, while grades will be distributed according to the 100-point scale listed above, there is actually 110 points possible in this class. Therefore, it is theoretically possible to, for example, skip the one of the research papers entirely and still just barely scrape by with an A. I wouldn't recommend that though! This margin exists to provide cover for those inevitable bad days that plague us all. Don't abuse it, for you'll find that 10 points goes quickly.

The *research papers* will be papers of medium length (10-13 pages, typed, double-spaced, at least 6 sources beyond those assigned in class—and please note that **these sources CANNOT be general information books or websites (encyclopedias, Wikipedia, etc.), but must be substantive works of journalism and scholarship which address the issue you choose to examine**) that you will write this semester. In both cases you can choose the topic; however, the first paper **MUST** address some historical theme, movement or issue involved in the evolution of one or more of the theories of political economy which we will have addressed, while the second paper **MUST** address a specific contemporary challenge to or problems with some aspect of political economic thinking in light of recent real-world political events. Some examples will be given in class as we discuss each paper. The research papers will be worth up to 25 points each, but these points are contingent upon your turning in 1) a brief (1-2 page, double-spaced) statement about your paper topic, along with a description of the paper's argument or thesis, and 2) a rough draft of your paper (at least 5 pages in length, with at least 3 sources beyond those used in class). **If you fail to follow through on either of these requirements, your final paper will still be acceptable, but you will DROP 5 points from your overall paper grade for each one you miss.** In all of the stages of your research papers, spelling, grammar, organization, and editorial consistency (in your footnotes/endnotes, source cited page, etc.) will count, in addition to the quality of your argument. (I will

provide with more guidelines for this for developing arguments and using sources correctly in research paper writing later in the semester.) The first paper is due no later than 5pm on Thursday, March 11, with the topic statement and the rough draft for that paper being due on February 11 and 25; the second paper will be due no later than 5pm on Tuesday, April 27, the last day of class, with the topic statement and the rough draft being due on April 1 and 15. **NONE of these deadlines are negotiable, and late papers will be UNACCEPTABLE, the SOLE exception being for hospital stays or other emergencies that you can provide SIGNED DOCUMENTATION for.** Also, please note that **spelling and grammar will most definitely count.**

The *lecture response* will be a short (2-3 pages, double-spaced, typed) response that you will write and turn in after attending up to two of five different lectures that will be given at different places around Friends University this semester, all of which will deal in one way or another with issues of political economy. The schedule for these lectures are:

January 25, Russell Arben Fox, “Can Only States Be Socialist?”  
February 2, John Hays, “Reflections on Markets”  
March 2, Emily Chamblee-Wright, “Katrina and Market Solutions”  
March 30, Chris Fawson, “Market Reforms in Russia, Peru, and China”  
April 20, Brian Domitrovic, “Supply-Side Economics”

(Locations for all lectures will be announced as they are worked out.)

Your response will be due to me **NO LATER** than one week follow the date of the lecture. Your response should summarize what you thought the primary point of the lecture was, any questions that you had about the speakers’ topic which you would have liked to have heard addressed, and give your basic opinion or assessment of the speakers’ conclusions. There are no right or wrong answers in these responses; I am only looking to see that you listened and thought about what the lecturer had to say. Again, please note that **spelling and grammar will most definitely count.**

The *midterm examination* will be an in-class exam, consisting of ten short-answer questions (you will choose and answer five; they will be worth up to 2 points each, for a total of up to 10 points possible) and two essay questions, both worth up to 5 points each, for an overall total of 20 points possible for the exam. The *final examination* will consist, again, ten short-answer questions (once again, you will choose and answer five, for a total of 10 points possible), and three essay questions, the first two worth up to 5 points each, the final being worth up to 10 points, for an overall total of 30 points possible in the exam. The short 5-point essay questions, in both the midterm and the final, will only deal with material that has been covered in that half of the semester; the final 10-point question on the final, however, will be comprehensive, requiring you to draw upon all the material we will have studied this semester in order to adequately respond to it. **The date of the exam is NON-NEGOTIABLE, the SOLE exception being for hospital stays or other emergencies which you can provide SIGNED DOCUMENTATION for, or scheduling conflicts which you work out with me MORE THAN A WEEK in advance.**

#### **Four Declarations:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations may be made for any student who notifies me of their needs. **It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention,** as I am not allowed to ask about such matters. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations should talk to me in order to work out the most appropriate procedures to follow.

I am sympathetic to those who suffer any sort of family emergency and/or tragedy during this semester, and I am frequently open to working out alternative ways of completing assignments when responsibilities prevent you from attending class and so forth. That being said, it must be understood that **life goes on**, and so does this course. Funerals or prolonged hospital stays for loved ones, while clearly and properly demanding of one's time and energy, are **NOT** an acceptable excuse for ignoring class expectations, policies, or grading; if it appears you must make a choice between family obligations and class assignments, **please inform me as soon as possible**, rather than simply assuming that I will be understanding and let things slide out of sympathy after the fact, because I probably won't.

I reserves the right, for the sake of maintaining class discipline and making certain an environment conducive to hearing and participating in the lectures and discussion, to take away for the duration of the class any cell phones, Blackberries, pagers, or any other kind of electronic communications device. I **REALLY** don't want to have to enforce this, because doing so is embarrassing and a hassle, but I will if I have to, for the sake of those students who are trying to get something out of class. Make it easy: simply turn off your cell phones, or turn them to silent, while in the classroom, and if you have an important call you somehow can't wait a half-hour or before returning, just politely excuse yourself.

It should go without saying that **ANY** sort of academic dishonesty is detrimental to both your own education and my ability to fairly and sympathetically administer and grade this class. Hence, **any cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data or communications, or other general malfeasance that I verify will potentially result in an automatic ZERO ("0") for the assignment or test in question, depending on the gravity of the offense**. In order to enforce this policy, I reserve the right to take whatever steps I deem appropriate, including banning cell phones and other electronic implements during test-taking, changing the wording or deadlines of assignments (with due notice), and so forth. You're grown-ups by now, so you consider the odds, and the consequences. If you feel you need more guidance or specifications on this policy, see the attached **HONOR CODE** sheet.