PS 193: American Conservatism

Fall 2024

Barnum 104

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-10:15am

Professor Hersh

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Overview

With readings drawn from philosophy, psychology, political science, and economics – with a mix of scholarly and non-scholarly sources – the question of this class is: what does it mean to be a conservative in America? We will study conservative thinkers as well as social science research on topics that are emphasized by conservative thinkers. We'll try to answer: what do conservatives think? What are the assumptions and values that underlie conservative perspectives? What are testable hypotheses that might help us evaluate the merits of conservative ideas?

All readings will be available through Canvas, except for one book to buy: Melissa Kearney, *The Two-Parent Privilege,* University of Chicago Press, 2023.

Assignments and Grading

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Active participation is a requirement of the class. Other requirements include two short (4-5 page) papers and a final exam.

Grading

Participation	20%
Paper #1	20%
Paper #2	20%
Final Exam	40%

Course Policies

1. No electronic devices, including laptop computers and phones, are permitted during class. If you have a special reason why an electronic device is necessary, please see me.
2. On-time attendance is mandatory. If you are to be late or miss a class, you should let me know ahead of time. Unexcused late arrivals or absences will result in grading penalties. Of course, in the event of a personal or family emergency, please get in touch with me.
3. Eating in class is not permitted.
4. Come to class prepared to learn.

Academic Integrity

Students must familiarize themselves with the university's policies on academic integrity. Your objective should be to stay so far away from the line of cheating that your work could never possibly be attributed to someone else and no one would ever possibly accuse you of offering someone else's work as your own. Absolutely no use of AI software (e.g., ChapGPT) is acceptable. Instructors will use software to estimate likelihood of papers making use of AI.

SYLLABUS

September 4: Introductory Meeting

PART I: Values, Dispositions, and the Law

September 9, 11, 16: Values and Dispositions

(September 10: Presidential Debate)

Readings:

1.) Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (1953), pages 3-11.
2.) William F. Buckley, "Our Mission Statement," *National Review*, November 19, 1955.
3.) Samuel Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," *American Political Science Review* 51 (2), 1957.
4.) Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian Nosek, "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96 (5), 2009.
5.) Dana Carney, et al., "The Secret Lives of Liberals and Conservatives: Personality Profiles, Interaction Styles, and the Things They Leave Behind," *Political Psychology* 29 (6), 2008.

September 18: Judicial Conservatism

Readings:

1.) Antonin Scalia, "Originalism: The Lesser Evil," *Cincinnati Law Review*, 1989.
2.) Adrian Vermeule, "Beyond Originalism," *The Atlantic*, March 31, 2020.

PART II: Individual, Community, Country, World

September 23, 25: The Individual, The Community

Readings:

A. The Individual

1.) Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), excerpt.
2.) Ayn Rand, "The Nature of Government", (1963).

Optional: Yuval Levin, "Recovering the Case of Capitalism," *National Affairs,* 2010.

B. The Community

1.) Robert Nisbet, *The Quest for Community* (1953), Chapter 2.
2.) Patrick Dineen, "Moral Minority," *First Things* (2017).
3.) William Barr, Remarks at Notre Dame, October 11, 2019.
4.) Ralph Ellison, "Harlem is Nowhere," *Harpers,* (1948/1964).

September 30, October 2: The Country, The World

Readings:

A. The Country

1.) Charles Kesler, "The Constitution, At Last," *National Review*, May 11, 2010.
2.) Glenn Loury, "The Case for Black Patriotism," *First Things*, January, 2022.

B. The World

1.) Joseph McCarthy, Wheeling Speech, February 9, 1950.
2.) Zora Neale Hurston, "Why the Negro Won't Buy Communism," *American Legion Magazine* 1951.
3.) Henry Nau, "No Enemies to the Right: Conservative Foreign Policy Factions Beyond Iraq" *The National Interest* 2004/2005.
4.) Mike Pompeo, "A Foreign Policy from the Founding," 2019

Optional: Noah Rothman, "A Conservative Foreign Policy Manifesto," *Washington Examiner* 2020.

October 7, 9: Reactive Conservatism

Readings:

1.) Michael Anton, "The Flight 93 Election," *Claremont Review of Books,* 2016.
2.) Christopher DeMuth, "Trumpism, Nationalism, and Conservatism, *Claremont Review of Books*, 2019.
3.) F.H. Buckley, "Why Not Progressive Conservatism?" *American Conservative.* 2020.
4.) Jonathan Liedl, "JD Vance is a Catholic `Post-Liberal': Here's What that Means – and Why it Matters? *National Catholic Register,* July 24, 2024.
5.) Thomas Sowell, *The Quest for Cosmic Justice,* 2002, Chapter 1.
6.) Casey Chalk, "What's Right with Christian Nationalism?" August 3, 2022.

October 9: PAPER #1 DUE

October 14: University Holiday

October 16: No class

PART III: DEEPER DIVES

October 21, 23, 28: The Family

Readings:

1.) Rick Santorum, *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good*, 2005, pp 18-39.
2.) Melissa S. Kearney, *The Two-Parent Privilege*, University of Chicago Press, 2023. Chapters 1-4, 6, 7.
3.) Kara Miller, "The College Gender Gap has Transformed the Dating World," *Boston Globe,* April 11, 2022.

October 30, November 4, 6: Morality, Religion, and Public Life

Readings:

1.) Andrew Sullivan "The Queers Versus The Homosexuals," The Weekly Dish, May 19, 2023.
2.) Irving Kristol, "Pornography, Obscenity, and the Case for Censorship," *New York Times,* 1971.
3.) Pew Research Center, "Americans Have Positive Views about Religion's Role in Society but want it Out of Politics," 2019. Pp. 4-11.
4.) Harold Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *ISRN Psychiatry* 2012.
5.) Angela K. Dills and Douglas A. Norton, "Sincerely Held Beliefs: Evidence on How Religion in the Classroom Affects Private School Enrollments," *Public Choice*, 2022.
6.) Anthony Picarello, et al., "Brief Amicus Curiae of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops," *Zubik v. Burwell.* 2016.

(November 5: Election Day)

November 12, 13: Capitalism and Regulation

(November 11: University Holiday)

Readings:

1.) Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom,* 1962. Chapter 1.
2.) Richard Epstein, "The Excessive Ambitions of Stakeholder Capitalism," *The Business Lawyer* 2022.
3.) Marco Rubio, "Industrial Policy, Right and Wrong," *National Affairs,* Spring 2024.
4.) Daren Bakst and Patrick Tyrell, "Big Government Policies that Hurt the Poor and How to Address Them," Heritage Foundation, 2022.
5.) Howard Beales, et al., "Government Regulation: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly," *Regulatory Transparency Project of the Federalist Society*, 2017.
6.) Diana Thomas, "Regressive Effects of Regulation," *Public Choice*, 2019.

November 13 PAPER #2 DUE

November 18, 20: Welfare

Readings:

1.) Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*, 1980, Chapter 4.
2.) Robert Moffitt and Stephanie Garlow, "Did Welfare Reform Increase Employment and Reduce Poverty," *Pathways* 2018.
3.) Hayden Dublois and Jonathan Ingram, "How the New Era of Expanded Welfare Programs is Keeping Americans from Working," *Foundation for Government Accountability*, 2021.
4.) Matt Bruenig, "How the Democratic Child-Care Proposal Hurts Families," *Atlantic,* November 19, 2021.

November 25, Dec 2: Crime, Incarceration, Guns

Readings:

1.) James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, "Broken Windows," *The Atlantic,* 1982.
2.) Anthony Braga and Brenda Bond, "Policing Crime and Disorder Hot Spots: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *Criminology* 46 (3): 577-607.
3.) Jason Riley, *Please Stop Helping Us,* Chapter 3. Pages 59-834.
4.) Arthur Rizer, "Can Conservative Criminal Justice Reform Survive a Rise in Crime?" *Annual Review of Criminology,* 2023.
5.) David French, "A Gun Control Measure Conservatives Should Consider," *National Review*, February 16, 2018.
6.) Darrell A.H. Miller, "Guns as Smut: Defending the Home-Bound Second Amendment," *Columbia Law Review*, 2009.

December 4, 9: Affirmative Action

Readings:

1.) Thomas Sowell, *Affirmative Action Around the World*, 2004, Chapter 6.
2.) Coleman Hughes, *The End of Race Politics*, 2024, Chapter 1.
3.) Adam Mortara, et al, "On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit." *Students for Fair Admissions v. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, 2021.

December 18, 12-2pm: Final Exam