POT4305 - The State, Society, and the Individual
Dr. Kerstin Hamann

Instructor Contact Information

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Course Description

This course addresses the question of how citizens can develop political and economic institutions that best serve their interests. The focus of the course is an examination of capitalism and democracy as institutions that have been championed as the best means of organizing, respectively, an economy and a polity. In particular, it has been argued that these systems provide the best means for aggregating individual preferences into socially desirable outcomes. We will look at arguments in favor of these institutions, as well as arguments on their limitations. Primary emphasis is on works of the 19th and 20th centuries that have had a major impact on the way we think about individuals, the state, and society. The overarching question of the course is, how can individuals organize in society so that their interests are maximized, and what is the role of the state in this endeavor?

This 3-hour course is taught entirely online; that is, no class meetings will be held.

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the UCF bookstore (if you prefer, you can also buy them at other locations, including online bookstores such as Amazon):

- Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, 1984

- John Stuart Mill, On Liberty. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978. This book is also available in full text on the Internet; website: http://www.constitution.org/jsm/liberty.txt
- Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action. Cambridge*, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965
- Robert L. Heilbroner. *The Worldly Philosophers*. New York. Simon & Schuster, 1998

Additional readings are available online:

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Optional)*:* http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca:80/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/smith/wealth/index.html
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html

Additional shorter readings are specified in the respective modules and are also available online.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will

- be familiar with some of the major writers on democracy and capitalism
- be able to formulate arguments in favor of and against democratic systems
- be able to formulate arguments in favor of and against capitalist systems
- be able to think critically about the links between democracy and capitalism

Evaluation Procedures

Assignment	Weight (towards course grade)
Course Introduction module	3%
Current event module	7%
7 additional online modules (I will drop the lowest module grade)	15% each

- Grading information on the specific assignments will be provided in the modules themselves.

- The nature of online classes requires cooperation among students. So, this class is not a "competitive sport" but should be an interesting, thought-provoking, collaborative discovery of major issues and topics in political theory.
- The class takes an active learning approach. Thus, students should be prepared to engage in discussions, read and think, write short essays and papers, complete quizzes, and identify additional sources to share with the class.
- Each module has a final deadline, but there are also "smaller" intermittent deadlines for specific parts of the module before the final deadline. I recommend you look at each module as soon as it is released so you get a sense for what is required and when the different parts of each module are due ahead of the deadlines.
- I will drop the lowest of the 7 substantive module grades. You may use this to cover for any kind of unforeseen circumstances that might come up during the course of the semester that might prohibit you from doing your best in one of the modules. This includes things such as work overload, illness, bad weather, ailing pets, computer problems, moving apartments, family gatherings, etc.

Additional Policies

Grading and evaluation	Grades will be assigned according to final points students earn in the course. There will be no + or - grades in this class. 100-90 A, 89-80 B, 79-70 C, 69-60 D, 59 or lower F.
Assignments	You are responsible for keeping a copy of all assignments for this class. You are also responsible for checking that the grades posted online are correct; any discrepancies must be reported to the instructor within 1 week of being posted.
Late, make-up, and extra credit work	All late work will be penalized at a rate of 5 points per day late (including weekend days and holidays unless otherwise noted in the module). If only parts of a module are submitted late, that particular assignment will receive the late penalty (unless noted otherwise in the module). The following exceptions to the late policy apply (additional exceptions may be stated in the modules themselves): Late discussion postings will receive no credit - there is no late option for discussion postings. Late quizzes will be allowed only under exceptional, documented circumstances; no exceptions! No work will be accepted more than a week after the deadline. There are no substitute assignments and <u>positively</u> no extra-credit, so please don't ask!

Keeping up with the course	I send out regular e-mails with information about the course, module information, grading information, course policies etc. I send those e-mails to the the e-mail address you have submitted to e-community. It is your responsibility to make sure that this e-mail address is correct and that you check your e-mail regularly, read the e-mails I send out, and are familiar with the contents of my e-mails.
Academic Integrity	The University of Central Florida has a very clear policy with respect to academic integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the policies of the "Golden Rule." This includes information on plagiarism and cheating. All assignments will have to be completed on your own.
Disclaimer	The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus during the semester as she deems appropriate.
Students with Disabilities	If you need to make any arrangements for fulfilling assignments due to a disability, please contact the instructor.

Schedule

The readings refer to the list of readings available on the Course Home page. Additional readings are specified in the modules themselves. The modules will be opened either on or prior to the starting date. Click on "Modules" on the main webpage to view the modules.

Dates	Topic	Reading
May 17-25	Course Introduction	Information on Course Home page; Heilbroner, ch. 1
May 19-27	Capitalism and democracy: How are these two concepts related?	G. Almond, 1991. "Capitalism and Democracy," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 24(3):467-474 (available on Links button on course homepage)
May 28-June 3	Adam Smith: Why is capitalism superior?	Heilbroner, chs. 2, 3

June 4-10	John Stuart Mill: Why does individual freedom lead to the best society?	Heilbroner, pp. 126-135; Mill, *On Liberty* (all)
June 11-17	Why do citizens organize in interest associations in democracies?	excerpts from Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, available online (passages specified in the module) Olson, *Logic of Collective Actio*n
June 18	Current Events: deadline for first set of postings (see details in module description)	
June 19-28	Karl Marx: Why is socialism inevitable?	Heilbroner, ch. 6; Marx, The Communist Manifesto
June 29-July 8	John Maynard Keynes: How can capitalism be rescued?	Heilbroner, ch. 9
July 9-16	What are the benefits of cooperation?	Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*
July 16	Current Events: deadline for second set of postings	