



**TEXAS A&M**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**CENTRAL TEXAS**

**POLI 5303:**  
**Origins of Conservative**  
**Political Thought**  
**Section 115 (Summer 2018)**  
**6 PM – 8:30 PM Mon/Wed**  
**Founder's Hall 213**



**Dr. Jeffrey Dixon**

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**Catalog Description**

This course covers the philosophical origins of conservative political thought, focusing on its traditional, statist, and libertarian variants.

**Course Overview**

This course critically examines the foundations of modern conservative thought. At least three variants of conservatism can be traced back hundreds (if not thousands) of years. Traditionalist conservatism, which seeks to preserve and in some cases restore the wisdom of the past and to resist modernizing influences, can be traced back at least as far as Aristotle. Realist (or statist) conservatism focuses on the maintenance of security – law and order at home and a hard line on international affairs – and can be traced back at least as far as Kautilya. During the Enlightenment, a new variant of conservatism emerged – libertarian conservatism, which traces its roots to John Locke. We will critically evaluate these strands of conservatism and compare them to other modern conservative philosophies, often termed “neoconservatism.”

As a general rule, most of your out-of-class time devoted to this course should be spent reading the material and taking notes or writing questions about what you read. Philosophy isn't casual reading material; you actually have to be engaged and careful as you work your way through the texts. Hence, your course participation and ability to integrate the readings on exams determine most of your grade in this course. A good set of notes on the readings, annotated with page numbers, is incredibly useful for exams.

## Course Objectives

The core objective of this course is for students to think critically about conservative political thought and its critics. The key questions that it prepares students to answer include:

- A. *What are the intellectual foundations, merits, and weaknesses of...*
  1. *...traditionalist conservatism?*
  2. *...realist or statist conservatism?*
  3. *...libertarian conservatism?*
- B. *What fundamental tensions exist between the foundations between any pair of conservatisms from the list above?*
- C. *What is neoconservatism, how does it differ from previous conservatisms, and what are its philosophical foundations?*

A secondary objective common to all political science courses is the development of critical thinking skills. In this course, argument dissection, evaluation, and construction are the core skills emphasized. The basic tools used are:

- A basic model of a valid argument as consisting of a *claim*, accompanied by *evidence*, which supports the claim via a *warrant*
- The distinction between normative and empirical claims and the evidence required for each

## Learning Outcomes

Outcome Set 1: By the end of the course, students should be able to compare and synthesize prominent theorists' answers to A, B, and C (both as general statements and as concrete solutions to hypothetical or historical choices) and defend one answer for each as better than the alternatives, using evidence and arguments from and about the course readings.

- 1.1-1.3 Able to synthesize and critique the answers of assigned authors to each of the three questions under A.
- 1.4-1.6 Able to contrast the competing assumptions and implications of any two variants of conservatism listed under A.
- 1.7 Able to interpret and use the readings to answer question C above.
- 1.8-1.11 Able to apply each assigned variant of conservatism to address a concrete situation involving political choice.
- 1.12 Able to draw on evidence and arguments throughout the course to demonstrate one variant of conservatism to be better-supported than the others.

Outcome Set 2: By the end of the course, students should demonstrate significant improvement in critical thinking skills related to argument analysis in the realm of political thought. They should be able to distinguish between:

- 2.1. Unsupported assumptions/claims and arguments supported by valid warrants and valid evidence.
- 2.2. Statements dependent on empirical evidence and statements based on normative reasoning.

## Course Format

This course meets face-to-face, with supplemental materials made available online through the Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

## Required Readings

The following books are required and available for purchase at the bookstore. You are under no obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer. If you purchase books elsewhere, **be sure to get the proper edition and translation of each.** If you purchase electronic copies (**not advised**), be sure that the page numbers match up or you may find yourself struggling to find the paragraphs we are discussing in class.

Aristotle. [1998]. *Politics*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872203884

Edmund Burke. [2009]. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Reissue Ed. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0199539024

David Gauthier. 1986. *Morals by Agreement*. Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0198249924

Thomas Hobbes. [1994]. *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872201774

John Locke. [1980]. *Second Treatise of Government*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0915144860

Niccolò Machiavelli. [1995]. *The Prince*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN-13: 978-0872203167

Robert Nozick. 2013. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Basic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0465051007

Readings marked with (Canvas) in the course schedule are available on Canvas.

## Recommended Readings and Commentaries

Most recommended readings consist of book chapters or articles which are relevant to the readings, but do not necessarily describe them. Commentaries are works about the readings. The following books are on reserve at the library, available for three-day checkout. Please limit yourself to one volume at a time. While I don't expect most students to do this extra reading, those who have the time will find a great deal of insight and some really good discussion questions in these materials. Remember that each author has a different interpretation of the source material – one which often clashes with the views of other scholars. So read these as arguments rather than as "facts."

Leo Paul de Alvarez. 1999. *The Machiavellian Enterprise: A Commentary on The Prince*. Northern Illinois University Press.

Roger Boesche. 2002. *The First Great Political Realist: Kautilya and His Arthashastra*. Lexington University Press.

R.E.R. Bunce. 2009. *Thomas Hobbes*. Continuum.

*A Companion to Aristotle*. 2009. Wiley-Blackwell.

Michael Davis. 1996. *The Politics of Philosophy: A Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Susan Mendus. 2009. *Politics and Morality*. Polity Press.

Glenn Newey. 2008. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hobbes and Leviathan*. Routledge.

Mary P. Nichols. 1992. *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield.  
Victor Anthony Rudoski. 1992. *The Prince: A Historical Critique*. Twayne Publishers.  
Jonathan Wolff. 1991. *Robert Nozick: Property, Justice, and the Minimal State*. Stanford University Press.  
Perez Zagoria. 2009. *Hobbes and the Law of Nature*. Princeton University Press.

### Technology Requirements and Support

This course will use the Texas A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system for course readings (posted in Adobe pdf format, which can be opened by Adobe Reader and most modern web browsers), the Academic Integrity Exercise, and a few PowerPoint slides.

- Logon to Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].  
Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT email address)  
Password: Your MyCT password
- *For log-in problems*, students should contact Help Desk Central -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:  
Email: [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu)  
Phone: (254) 519-5466  
Web Chat: [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]  
Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.
- For issues with Canvas, select "chat with Canvas support," submit a support request to Canvas Tier 1, or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953, links to all are found inside of Canvas using the "Help" link.
- For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor

### Grading (90/80/70/60, rounded to the nearest percentile)

*Academic Integrity Exercise*: This consists of watching a brief lecture, taking a quiz, seeing where any mistakes on the quiz came from, and signing a statement. Once you successfully complete this exercise, you will no longer need to do so in future political science courses.

**\*\*\*Completing the Academic Integrity Exercise is a prerequisite to passing this course. It must be completed by the due date on the course schedule\*\*\***

- **Rubric: You will automatically fail the course if you have not completed the Academic Integrity exercise on or before the due date.**

If you have already completed this exercise for me in a previous class you do not need to do it again for this class.

*Worksheets (25%)*. There are seventeen worksheets. They will be collected each day before we begin class. While some worksheets have more questions than others, each is worth equal credit. The score on each worksheet is the percentage of questions which are correctly answered. This percentage is later applied to the number of points per worksheet to generate point totals. The primary purpose of these worksheets is to reward students for doing the reading before class. The class is so much better when everyone comes prepared. Note that these are not intended for use as study aids, because they omit many important questions which either are easily Googled or are difficult to grade on a simple correct/incorrect scale.

Exams (50%). There will be two essay exams, each worth an equal number of points.

- Each essay exam will consist of two questions, each of which is worth equal credit. Grading is primarily based upon your demonstrated knowledge of the material and ability to apply it to a new situation, rather than spelling/grammar issues.
- The exams are both open-notes and open-book. You are free to use class handouts, your notes, and all of the assigned readings. You are **not** permitted to use other resources (such as online material) during the exam.
- Content:
  - The first exam (take-home) has two questions:
    - “What are the intellectual foundations, merits, and weaknesses of traditionalist conservatism and realist conservatism?”
    - “What contradictions exist between these two conservatisms, and are these the result of fundamentally different assumptions or merely different interpretations of where those assumptions lead?”
  - The second exam (in class) has two questions, each worth equal credit:
    - “What are the intellectual foundations, merits, and weaknesses of libertarian conservatism?”
    - “What is neoconservatism, how does it differ from previous conservatisms, and what are its philosophical foundations?”
- It is generally best to write an outline for yourself first (e.g. before the exam), then write your answer with it as a guide. For each major point on your outline, you should have support (perhaps an example from the text or even a short quotation).
- Exam grading rubric. Grading is primarily based upon your demonstrated knowledge of the material and ability to apply it to a new situation, rather than spelling/grammar issues. Having said this, atrocious grammar can make it impossible for the reader to understand your argument.

**POLI 5303 Exam Grading Rubric**

Grade	Thesis and Structure	Textual Support
A	Answers the question and drives the rest of the essay	Each element of the argument is supported by textual evidence drawn from throughout the course ( <u>primarily specific references accompanying your interpretation of the referenced material, rather than direct quotes</u> ). No major source of evidence is ignored – counter-arguments are addressed and defeated.
B	Answers the question, but some of the paper ignores it	Each element of the argument is supported by textual evidence from the course, but major sources of evidence (such as counter-arguments) are ignored. OR The evidence used is insufficient to support one or more of the claims in the paper. OR Much of the support consists of direct quotes without interpretation.

Grade	Thesis and Structure	Textual Support
C	Does not match up with every element of the question, or the essay is a set of arguments that proceed without logical order	The evidence, when taken as a whole, fails to support the paper's thesis or to draw out the most important similarities and differences between the authors, with necessary steps in the argument being assumed instead of demonstrated. Much relevant evidence is omitted and irrelevant evidence may be present. Textual references lack specificity. Counter-arguments are ignored.
D	Does not match up with most elements of the question; the essay is little more than a "data dump"	At least one major element of the essay's argument has substantial evidence from the course that supports it. However, textual references are generally vague or irrelevant.
F	The essay is devoid of structure	Little if any evidence from the course is used in the answer. It fails to demonstrate a grasp of what the author said, much less to interpret or critique that argument.

*Participation and Attendance (25%).* A rather large fraction of your grade is determined by your in-class participation. While there may be structured exercises from time to time, the bulk of the participation grade is determined by whether and to what extent you discuss the assigned readings for the day. I am looking for comments and questions that clarify, question, or challenge the theories offered by the authors. Feel free to challenge my statements as well!

- Daily grades:
  - You will receive 40 points for attending a class and doing little else.
  - You will receive 70 points for attending and making a reasonable comment (or participating in an in-class exercise when these are offered).
  - You will receive 100 points for attending and making a particularly insightful observation or several reasonable comments.
  - If you are late for class without providing me with a legitimate excuse that session, participation credit will be deducted in proportion to your lateness (10% for each 14 minutes), rounding up to the next 10%. The same applies to leaving early.
- Tip: If you have trouble thinking of things to say in class (a common problem for shy students), write down discussion questions or objections while you are reading the material at home. Then you don't have to worry about "blinking" in class because you can simply read off a question from your notes.

## Overall Course Rubric

Item	Points	Percent of Grade	
Exam 1	1700 Points	25%	50%
Exam 2	1700 Points	25%	
Participation	1700 Points (100 per session in which participation is possible)	25%	
Worksheets	1700 Points (100 points per worksheet)	25%	
Academic Integrity Exercise	* No points but <b><i>required to pass the course</i></b>	0%*	
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>6800 Points</b>	<b>100%</b>	
6086+ = A    5406-6085 = B    4726-5405 = C    4046-4725 = D    4045 or lower = F			

## Other Course Policies

### Regrade Policies

Mistakes happen. Don't be shy about checking everything twice. In order to prevent a last-minute search for points long after the original grading has been done, I have two policies for regrades or disputes over grades. Please remember the deadlines in each case. After this time, I am no longer confident that I will be able to remember enough to fairly regrade the material (i.e. using exactly the same standards as those applied to other students).

- **Written Work:** If you believe I have graded written work incorrectly, then you have up to **one week** to return the work to me along with a *brief* explanation of the portion to be regraded.
- **Participation:** **At the end of any class period**, you may request to see your participation grade for that class. If you disagree with the grade, you need to explain your disagreement **then, while the discussion is still fresh in everyone's memory**. I advise you to write down a few words each time you participate so that you might be able to jog my memory after class if you believe I missed your effort.

### Absences, Late Work, and Incompletes

- Excused absences (unexcused ones earn zero credit for the session)
  - Excusing an Absence
    - **Scheduled Absences:** Students must inform the instructor *prior to an absence*. Send me an email stating the dates(s) you will be missing and the reason(s). You should also hand me a written note with this information in class. (Protect yourself! Don't rely on my memory – hand me something written that I can keep in my files). **Hand in your worksheet(s) and outline(s) (see below) before you leave.**
    - **Emergencies:** Send me an email if possible. If all else fails, you or a friend may call my office and speak to me or my voicemail. There are very few situations in life that preclude making a phone call or having a friend do so; failure to contact the instructor *prior to class* will normally rule out any sort of make-up. The

standard is “ASAP” – that is, as soon as a reasonable person would have been able to contact me. **When you return, be sure to bring worksheets and outlines (see below) for any missed classes and to request any make-up in-class work. It is not the instructor’s duty to remind you.** Make-up work often differs from the original and is offered at the instructor’s convenience.

- Participation Grade: For each **excused** absence, hand in a 2-4 page outline of the major points in the reading, as detailed below. This will make up for the three hours of missed class time. It will also help you prepare for the exam, albeit not as well as participating and taking notes in class will. Notes may be handwritten or typed.
  - If you turn in an outline for only some of the assigned reading, your maximum credit will be equal to the proportion of the reading that you have outlined, as estimated by the professor.
  - As for the notes you turn in, they should contain two elements. They are listed in order of importance: the first will get you up to 67% (depending on level of detail, given the reading); both the first and second together will get you 100%.
    - An outline or other indented format, with main points (perhaps 4-10 words including a subject and verb -- they need not be grammatically-correct sentences, but must express a complete thought) followed by the supporting points offered by the author (same requirements)
    - Textual references (typically not quotes) to index each point (page number or line number is required)
  - Abbreviations and symbols are acceptable but should be easy to decipher. Will you remember whether “comp.” means comprehensive, comprehend, or composition?

Example of poor outlining	A better alternative
Rights = side constraints	Rights cannot be violated – not even to preserve other rights
Best regime	The best regime is a form of aristocracy or polity
“Honor thy parents”	Reject “honor thy parents” as political power after majority
When neighbors fight	Neighbors fight → don’t be neutral!
Minimax relative concession	Minimax relative concession = each side gives up same proportion of its legitimate claim to the coop. surplus
Gyges’ ring turned him invisible	Gyges’ Ring story: People would be unjust if no fear of consequences

- Late Worksheets: Late worksheets will not be accepted, except in the case of emergencies described above. If you must email me a worksheet to prove you have it done on time, then you need to *bring a hard copy for me to grade* the next class session.
- Grades of incomplete are not to be used when students simply fall behind. Instead, they are used when some event such as a hospitalization or deployment effectively takes the student out of the class after the drop deadline. By university policy, incompletes must be finished in the subsequent semester.



## Academic Integrity

*University Code of Academic Honesty:* Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

- *Violations:* Some common violations of academic integrity that I have observed while teaching similar classes at TAMUCT are
  - **Most Common Violation:** Receiving assistance or answers on any coursework from anyone other than the instructor. If you hand your work to someone else and they proceed to copy part or all of it, both of you will be deemed to have violated the policy. A single copied answer on a worksheet is sufficient to trigger the policy!
  - **Second Most Common Violation:** Using prohibited resources on exams. You are permitted to use your personally-prepared notes (i.e. not downloaded or copied ones), class handouts, the exam itself, and the required readings for the course. That is all. No online resources are to be used, so please print out online readings prior to the exam (having them in class during our discussion is also a plus, since then you can mark them for the exam).
    - You may study together for the exams, but each student needs to prepare his or her own notes as study progresses.
  - **Plagiarism (uncommon in this course):**
    - Use of direct quotes without quotation marks. Even if you are just using three- or four-word phrases, you need to surround them with quotation marks if you didn't create them yourself. This is true even if you cite the source! Remember that changing a few words in a sentence does not transform a direct quote into a paraphrase; instead, it transforms one long direct quote into several shorter direct quotes with a word of your own between each. A true paraphrase is the expression of the cited source's ideas in your own words.
    - Paraphrasing another person's words without citing the source
- *Penalties:*
  - The normal penalty for a violation of academic integrity (whether or not it is specifically listed above) in any of my classes is a grade of zero for the work or a deduction of 20% (two letter grades) from your course grade, whichever is **greater**. The infraction will also be reported to the TAMUCT administration, who will take independent action with respect to the student.
  - The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of an exam, or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) display such

serious disregard for academic integrity that either one of them will result in course failure **and** the infraction will also be reported to the TAMUCT administration, who will take independent action with respect to the student.

### Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop\_Request\_Form.pdf].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

### Student Resources

- **911 Cellular:** Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas. 911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account. Connect at 911Cellular [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.
- **Academic Accommodations:** At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations, please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion webpage [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html].
  - Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines online, please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender – including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Division of Student Affairs at 254-501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator.
- **Tutoring** is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.
  - If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Dr. DeEadra Albert-Green at [deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu](mailto:deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu).
  - Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.
- **University Writing Center:** Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday-Thursday from 6:00-9:00pm. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via WOnline at [<https://tamuct.mywconline.com/>]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu) to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.
  - While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students’ ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students’ texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!
  - If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu).
- **The University Library** provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these

resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

- Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.
- Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our Library website [<https://tamuct.libguides.com/>].

### **Amendments**

Not all exigencies can be foreseen. I reserve the right to amend the syllabus at any time. Any such amendment will be provided to the students in writing.

## Course Schedule

Date	Unit and Topic	Readings ( <i>Italicized ones are optional</i> )
June 4	Introduction: Varieties of Conservatism	None
June 6	Traditionalist Conservatism I: Virtuous People and Virtuous Governments	<p><b>Required:</b> Aristotle, <u>Politics</u>: Books I (all), II (Chapters 9-11 only), and III (all)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Riesbeck, "Citizenship, Constitutions, and Political Justice" (Canvas)</i> <i>Levy, "Does Aristotle Exclude Women from Politics?" (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b> <i>Davis, Chapters 1 and 3</i> <i>Nichols, Chapters 1-2</i></p>
June 11	Traditionalist Conservatism II: Incrementalism and Reform  <b>Academic Integrity Exercise Due</b>	<p><b>Required:</b> Aristotle, <u>Politics</u>: Books IV-VIII Kirk, "Ten Conservative Principles" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Roberts, "Excellences of the Citizen and of the Individual" in <u>A Companion to Aristotle</u></i> <i>Miller, "Aristotelian Statecraft and Modern Politics" (Canvas)</i> <i>Regnery, "The Pillars of Modern American Conservatism" (Canvas)</i> <i>Safranek, "Recapitulations (Modern)" (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b> <i>Davis, Chapters 4-8</i> <i>Nichols, Chapters 3-4</i></p>
June 13	Traditionalist Conservatism III: Inherited Rights and Inequalities	<p><b>Required:</b> Burke, <u>Reflections on the Revolution in France</u>: pp. 3-65 Kekes, "What is Conservatism?" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Maciag, "Burke in Brief: A 'Philosophical' Primer" (Canvas)</i> <i>O'Brien, "Edmund Burke: Prophet Against the Tyranny of the Politics of Theory" (Canvas)</i></p>

Date	Unit and Topic	Readings ( <i>Italicized ones are optional</i> )
June 18	Traditionalist Conservatism IV: Against Secularism, Modernism, and Radicalism	<p><b>Required:</b>            Burke, <u>Reflections on the Revolution in France</u>: pp. 75-110, 125-129, 139-180, 183-197, and 221-224            Kirk, "Conservatism: A Succinct Description" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b>            Burke, "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly" in our edition of <u>Reflections on the Revolution in France</u>: pp. 251-292            Rakove, "Why American Constitutionalism Worked" (Canvas)            Wolfe, "Democracy, Social Science, and Rationality" <u>Reflections on Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France</u>, esp. Sections III and IV (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b>            O'Gorman, "The French Revolution" (Canvas)            O'Keefe, "<u>Reflections on the Revolution in France as a Guide to Burke's Oeuvre</u>"</p>
June 20	Realist Conservatism I: Traditional Virtue, Wealth, or Power?	<p><b>Required:</b> Kautilya, <u>Arthashastra</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)  <b>Recommended:</b>            Singh, "Wise Leadership in Kautilya's Philosophy" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Commentary:</b> Boesche, Chapters 2-6</p>
June 25	Realist Conservatism II: Realist Virtues and Realist Vices	<p><b>Required:</b> Machiavelli, <u>The Prince</u>, all (pp. 5-80)  <b>Recommended:</b>            Gray, "Reexamining Kautilya and Machiavelli: Flexibility and the Problem of Legitimacy in Brahmanical and Secular Realism" (Canvas)            Mendus, <u>Politics and Morality</u>: Chapter 4 (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b>            Paul de Alvarez, <i>All</i>            Rudowski, Chapters 6-10</p>
June 27	Realist Conservatism III: A Contract for Security	<p><b>Required:</b>            Arnhart, "Introduction"            Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u>: Chapter 46, then Chapters 10-16</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b>  <i>Précis of Chapters 1-9</i> (Canvas)            Morris, "Gauthier on Hobbes' Moral and Political Philosophy" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b>            Newey, Chapter 4            Zagorin, Chapters 2-3            Bunce, Chapter 2 (pp. 17-41)</p>

Date	Unit and Topic	Readings ( <i>Italicized</i> ones are optional)
July 2	Realist Conservatism IV: Maintaining Law and Order	<p><b>Required:</b> Hobbes, <u>Leviathan</u>: Chapters 17-21, 24, 26-30, “A Review and Conclusion” on pp. 489-497, and “On Certain Objections Against <u>Leviathan</u>” on pp. 538-548</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Stein, “Thomas Hobbes on the US Constitution” (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b> <i>Newey, Chapters 5-8</i> <i>Zagorin, Chapters 3-4</i> <i>Bunce, Chapter 2 (pp. 41-67)</i></p>
July 9	Libertarian Conservatism I: The Lockean Foundation  <b>Take-Home Exam Due</b>	<p><b>Required:</b> Locke, Excerpts from the <u>First Treatise on Government</u> (Canvas) Locke, <u>Second Treatise on Government</u>, Chapters 1-14 and 19</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Stein, “John Locke on the US Constitution” (Canvas)</i> <i>The Introduction in our edition of Locke</i> <i>Feser, “What Libertarianism Isn’t” (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b> <i>Thomas, Chapters 2-4</i> <i>Kelly, Chapter 3</i></p>
July 11	Libertarian Conservatism II: Why the State?	<p><b>Required:</b> Nozick, <u>Anarchy, Utopia, and the State</u>, Preface and Chapters 1-5</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Nozick, <u>Anarchy, Utopia, and the State</u>, Chapter 6</i></p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b> <i>Bader (Canvas), pp. 10-35</i> <i>Wolff, Chapters 2-3</i></p>
July 16	Libertarian Conservatism III: Principles of the Minimal State and Conservative Values	<p><b>Required:</b> Nozick, <u>Anarchy, Utopia, and the State</u>, Chapters 7-10 Nozick, “The Zigzag of Politics” (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Hayek, “Why I Am Not a Conservative” (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentaries:</b> <i>Bader (Canvas), pp. 35-72</i> <i>Wolff, Chapters 4-5</i></p>

Date	Unit and Topic	Readings ( <i>Italicized ones are optional</i> )
July 18	Libertarian Conservatism IV: Rationality, Morality, and Markets	<p><b>Required:</b> Gauthier, <u>Morals by Agreement</u>: Chapters I, II (except Sections 2 and 3), III (except Section 2), and IV (except Section 4)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Précis of Game Theory (Canvas)</i> <i>Vallentyne, "Gauthier's Three Projects" (Canvas)</i> <i>Yi, "Rationality and the Prisoner's Dilemma in David Gauthier's <u>Morals by Agreement</u>"</i></p>
July 23	Libertarian Conservatism V: Constructing Libertarian Values	<p><b>Required:</b> Gauthier, <u>Morals by Agreement</u>: Chapters V (except Subsections 2.1-2.2 and 3.4), VI (except Section 3), VII (except Subsection 2.2), VIII (except Sections 2 and 3), IX (except Section 3, Subsections 4.1 and 4.2, and Section 6), X (except Subsections 1.2 and 1.3), and XI</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Harsanyi, "Review of Gauthier's <u>Morals by Agreement</u>" (Canvas)</i> <i>Gauthier, "Twenty-five Years On" (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentary:</b> <i>Mendola, "Gauthier's <u>Morals by Agreement</u> and Two Kinds of Rationality" (Canvas)</i> <i>Harman, "Rationality in Agreement: A Commentary on Gauthier's <u>Morals by Agreement</u>" (Canvas)</i></p>
July 25	Libertarian Conservatism VI: Objectivism	<p><b>Required:</b> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics" (Canvas) Peikoff, "Government" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> <i>Rand, "Government Finance in a Free Society" (Canvas)</i> <i>Bernstein, <u>Objectivism in One Lesson</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)</i></p> <p><b>Commentary:</b> <i>Ryan, "Values and Volition: The Objectivist Ethics" (Canvas)</i></p>



Date	Unit and Topic	Readings ( <i>Italicized</i> ones are optional)
July 30	Neoconservatism I: A Straussian Turn?	<p><b>Required:</b></p> <p>Strauss, <u>The City and Man</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)  Jaffa, "Leo Strauss, the Bible, and Political Philosophy" (Canvas)  Kraynak, "Conservative Critics of Modernity: Can They Turn Back the Clock?" (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b></p> <p><i>Kraynak, "Moral Order in the Western Tradition" (Canvas)</i>  <i>Jaffa, "Too Good to be True?" (Canvas)</i></p>
Aug 1	Neoconservatism II: Is Neoconservatism a Living and Coherent Ideology?	<p><b>Required:</b></p> <p>Kristol, <u>The Neoconservative Persuasion</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)  Thompson and Brook, <u>Neoconservatism: An Obituary for an Idea</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b></p> <p><i>Gordon, "Neoconservatism Defined" (Canvas)</i>  <i>Machan, "Leo Strauss: Neoconservative?" (Canvas)</i></p>
Aug 6	Neoconservatism III: The Rise of Evangelical Conservatism and Today's "Alt-Right"  <b>Paper Due</b>	<p><b>Required:</b></p> <p>Hudson, "Christodemocratic Theory is Based on Ten Core Assumptions" (Canvas)  Hawley, <u>Making Sense of the Alt-Right</u>, Excerpts (Canvas)</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b></p> <p><i>Hickman, "The Theology of Democracy" (Canvas)</i>  <i>Gray, "'The Fire Rises: Identity, the Alt-Right and Intersectionality" (Canvas)</i></p>
Aug 8	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Review Libertarian Conservatism. Review the various forms of Neoconservatism and the difference between each and earlier conservatisms.</b>



1. What is Aristotle's definition of a slave?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Describe one argument Aristotle makes in favor of the proposition that slavery is natural.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why does Aristotle think that men are more naturally fitted to lead?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is Aristotle's definition of a citizen?

5-7. Fill in the following table with Aristotle's typology of regime types (*politiea*)

Rule by the...	If for public interest (pure form)	If perverted (self-interest of rulers)
One		
Few		
Many		

8. What is Aristotle's own view of justice in the design of political institutions?

1. Why do aristocracy and kingship give way to oligarchy and tyranny?
2. What three functions do political institutions serve?
3. Give an example of how a revolution might occur, according to Aristotle.
4. In what way is absolute freedom a form of slavery, according to Aristotle?
5. Is the life of virtue best for everyone?
6. Describe the characteristics of the ideal-city state: population, size, location, etc.

7. What are the features of the best city-state's constitution?

8-12. List five principles from Kirk that Aristotle would have clearly agreed with or disagreed with. For each one, identify the reason for the agreement or disagreement.

1. Why does Burke refuse to praise the liberty gained by the French, despite agreeing that in the abstract, liberty is good?

2-5. What are at least three objections he makes to the content of the Dr. Richard Price's sermon?

6. Why don't the people have the right to cashier their governors for misconduct?

7. What faults does Burke find with the French National Assembly?

8. What is wrong with the argument that all occupations are honorable?

9. What is the characteristic essence of property?

10-12. List three of the five features of conservatism identified by Kekes. For each, indicate whether Burke would have agreed or disagreed with Kekes.



1. Why does Burke object to treating the unlawful taking of anyone's life as equally heinous?
2. Burke says that there can be no new discoveries in what areas?
3. What is the basis for civil society, according to Burke?
4. What is wrong with the separation of church and state?
5. From whom does Burke draw his alternative to absolute monarchy and absolute democracy?
6. What is wrong with someone willing to tolerate all opinions?
7. Radical changes to long-established laws and customs are not only unwise, but unjust. Why?



According to Kautilya...

1. Which calamities are worse – those that affect the common people or those that affect leaders?
2. List three things that cause disaffection among subjects.
3. What is the exception to the order of seriousness of rebellions given in the chart of revolt types?
4. How is the loyalty of ministers and other high officials to be determined?
5. True/False: A King should never encourage fratricide among his people. Give a reason for your answer.

6. Is it more important to preserve the lives of a king's subjects or the wealth of the kingdom?
  
7. What should a king who has newly conquered a territory do with its inhabitants' religion and language?

1. Agathocles acquired power but not \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What creates good laws?
3. Is virtue best for a ruler?
4. Why refrain from being too generous?
5. What should be a Prince's policy when neighbors fight?
6. Should a Prince seek independent-minded advisors who may object to his policies?



1. What is Sowell's distinction, and which side of the debate does Arnhart think Darwin supports?
  
2. What are two of the arguments that Arnhart makes in response to traditionalist conservatives' objections to Darwinism?
  
3. According to Hobbes, everything that is real in the Universe is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What is power?
  
5. Why does everyone desire power?
  
6. In what way are men equal in a state of nature?
  
7. Why is a state of nature a state of war?

8. What is the right of nature?

9. How can one best escape the state of war?

10. Should one honor a contract entered into because of threats?

11. How and when are the laws of nature binding?

12. What's the difference between an actor and an author?



1. Does the social contract impose duties on the sovereign?
2. Why can't subjects revoke consent?
3. What are the three types of commonwealth, and which is best?
4. Which liberties – if any – do subjects retain under the social contract?
5. Under what conditions does ignorance of the law excuse a violation?
6. What are the most serious crimes, according to Hobbes?



1. What limits exist on property rights in the *First Treatise*?
2. What is political power?
3. How does the invention of money change property rights in the state of nature?
4. How is property legitimately acquired in a state of nature?
5. In what way are life and liberty actually types of property rights?

6. Which power of government is strongest – legislative, executive, or federative?

7. When is taxation legitimate?

8. When has the social contract been voided by a change in government?

1. What's the difference between the minimal and ultraminimal states?

2. What is the libertarian "side constraint" proposed by Nozick?

3. What is the point of the "experience machine" argument?





7. Nozick attacks the liberal (Rawlsian) idea that chance natural endowments should not govern our life prospects. What are his two main arguments?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What is envy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What is the point of the tale of the slave?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What is the difference between a design device and a filter device?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What is Nozick's utopian vision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What is one inadequacy of his libertarian work that Nozick acknowledges in "The Zigzag of Politics?"



Fun fact: Gauthier's last name is pronounced *GO*-tee-ay.

1. What makes a principle a moral principle?
2. What is Gauthier's argument *against* the notion that co-operation is second-best to harmony? In what way might co-operation be *better* than harmony?
3. What is value?
4. If value (like utility) is subjective and relative, what provides us with a common standard for evaluating subjective evaluations of the Good?
5. Gauthier redefines outcomes for the purposes of strategic choice (his theory's primary domain). What is this revised definition of an outcome?

6. What is the (Nash) equilibrium of the Prisoners' Dilemma game? That is, what outcome results from playing the game rationally?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Morality arises from (and is needed because of) \_\_\_\_\_.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. In the context of a market economy, what is a negative externality?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What are the extent of and limits to freedom for a "Robinson Crusoe?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What three conditions guarantee the market as a "morality-free zone?"

- 1-3. Gauthier suggests that two players bargaining over which set of jointly cooperative strategies they will select will do so according to the principle of minimax relative concession (MRC). Explain the concept of a concession in such bargaining, the measure of a relative concession, and what it means to minimax this relative concession.

Concession:

Relative concession:

What it means to minimax relative concession:

4. What is Justice?

5. What is a constrained maximizer?

6. Why is narrow compliance better than broad compliance?

7. How does Gauthier interpret the Lockean proviso?

8. What is an Archimedean point?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Is progressive taxation, in which the rich pay a larger share of their income than the poor, consistent with Gauthier's social contract?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What four criteria are used to evaluate how advanced a society is?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What is Gauthier's reply to Glaucon's "Ring of Gyges" argument that all would be unjust if they could get away with it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What is the aim, if any, of an *essentially* just society?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What does Gauthier mean by the phrase, "the liberal individual?"

According to Rand:

1. Why do we need ethics?
2. Why do we need reason?
3. What is “the basic social principle of the Objectivist ethics?”
4. What is Rand’s view of Justice?

According to Peikoff’s interpretation of Rand’s philosophy:

5. What are the fundamental human rights?
6. Why does a free mind require free markets?

7. Rights literally *cannot* be violated, except by \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Where do the legitimate powers of government come from?
9. Is compulsory taxation theft?
10. What is Rand's justification for having any government at all, as opposed to the "free" individuals under anarchy, (perhaps loosely associated in groups for self-defense only)?

From Strauss:

1. What is the “modern project” so bemoaned by Strauss?
2. According to Strauss, Hippodamus did not found political philosophy, even though he wrote about an ideal *polis* (city or city-state). Why not?
3. Why are myths needed to uphold the rule of law? Why not rely on reason to gain support for wise and just laws?
4. Strauss makes much of Aristotle’s emphasis on political science, or “Prudence” – the practical wisdom about how politics works needed to pursue virtue in politics. To whom does Aristotle wish to grant access to this “Prudence”?
5. How does Aristotle elevate the practical science of politics above Plato’s abstract theories of virtue and its relation to the soul?
6. What distinction is made between Aristotle’s treatment of happiness and the modern treatment of happiness?

7. What is natural about the *polis* (City)?
8. How does Man transcend mere politics (the City)?

From Jaffa:

9. What do Jerusalem and Athens represent?
10. According to Jaffa, what is the fundamental premise of the Bible?
11. How does “modern rationality” differ from both Biblical faith and Socratic skepticism?
12. What’s wrong with modern science?

From Kraynak:

13. What do cultural conservatives believe?
14. What three modern trends do cultural conservatives combat?



According to Kristol:

1. Where did the best regime exist, for pre-Enlightenment political theorists?
2. Looking at the five principles Kristol identifies with neoconservatism, what is it that neoconservatives are *for*, rather than merely against?
3. What were the three distinctive aspects of the neoconservative movement that emerged from the pages of *The Public Interest*, *Commentary*, and the *Wall Street Journal*?
4. What did/does neoconservatism have in common with “Christian conservatism?”
5. How do neoconservatives differ from traditional conservatives on economic issues?

6. What are the three pillars of modern conservatism?

According to Thompson and Brook:

7. What transformed Trotskyist leftists into neoconservatives?

8. Do neoconservatives think that government can be good?

9. What did neoconservatives like Irving Kristol learn from Leo Strauss?

10. How does neoconservatism define the “public interest?”

11. To which do neoconservatives assign greater priority – the collective interest or individual rights?

12. Why do neoconservatives praise moderation and prudence as virtues?

13. What does “dualism,” as repeatedly referenced in this reading, actually mean?

Worksheet on "Christodemocracy" and the "Alt-Right"

1. How does "Christodemocracy" differ from earlier forms of political conservatism? List several assumptions of Christodemocracy that we have not encountered in earlier variants of conservatism.
2. How do the assumptions of "liberal democracy" differ from those of libertarian conservatives such as Nozick and Gauthier?
3. What is an "association nexus?"
4. What was medieval "prosperity theology?"
5. Which thinker contended that the physical material world was primary, that is, "more real" than the secondary or spiritual world?

6. Why does Hawley argue that the “Alt-Right” is **not** a conservative movement?

7. What is a “cuckservative,” in the discourse of the Alt-Right?

8. How is the Alt-Right distinct from “Christodemocracy?”

9. Why does Hawley doubt that American conservatives can effectively marginalize the Alt-Right?