

Department of Political Science

The University of Oklahoma

Norman Campus

Course Title: Contemporary Political Theory

Course Number: PSC 5733

Fall 2001

Instructor: Ron Peters Room: Monnet 101

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Course Description: Taking the debate between liberals and communitarians as central to much contemporary discourse, the course will focus on that debate. We will read five theorists: Rawls, Rorty, Sandel, Taylor, and Dworkin, giving about three weeks to each. I have asked the bookstore to order copies of their major works listed below, along with a secondary source that looks useful to me. These are fat books, and thick too. So we'll undoubtedly have to edit our reading of them as we go along. Once we have settled upon the readings, students are asked to have done the reading each week and to come to class prepared to discuss it. Of course, students are encouraged to read more widely in these books than that which will be assigned for class discussion.

Requirements: Students will write a substantial paper that will come in two drafts. The first draft will be due in mid-October and will offer an initial overview of the topic. The second draft will be due on the last day of class and will offer a revised and refined version. Each student will select his/her topic in consultation with me. Toward that end, students are asked to submit a short topic proposal on the last class session in September. There will also be a final examination, essay in form and comprehensive in character.

Grading: Your grade will rest on the initial draft of the paper, the final draft of the paper, the final, and classroom participation (which would appear to presume attendance). The paper in its various drafts will comprise a third of your grade. Class participation will comprise a third. The final will comprise a third.

Required Texts:

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. Columbia University Press. 1996. ISBN 0-231-05249-9.

Dworkin, Ronald. *Sovereign Virtue*. Harvard. 2000. ISBN 0-674-00219-9.

Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge. 1989. ISBN 0-521-36781.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self*. Harvard. 1989. ISBN 0-674-82426-1.

Sandel, Michael. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, 2nd Edition*. Cambridge. ISBN 0-521-56741-6.

Mulhall, Stephen and Swift, Adam. *Liberals and Communitarians, 2nd Edition*. Blackwell. 1996.
ISBN 0-631-19819-9.

Order of proceeding: Rawls, Rorty, Taylor, Sandel, Dworkin.

Nota Bene: Due to my absence from campus, some class sessions may have to be rescheduled.