Course Description:

Behind political conflict and the game of politics—campaigns and elections, pundits and commentators, policy analysts and advocates, protesters and authorities, behind even those who fight and die—lie certain fundamental issues that persist from generation to generation and that give political life its energy and form. In this course, we will begin to explore several such issues: the question of justice at war, the question of the role of government in relation to the economy, the question of constitutional design, and the question of the cultural foundations of political freedom.

We will read several books in this course, most of them written relatively recently, but we will also sample several great works of political philosophy. Lectures, quizzes, and tests will be designed around the reading assignments, which are given in the syllabus class by class. To succeed in the course, you should come to class having read the assignment for that day—a daily quiz will give you an incentive to keep up—and having thought about its significance for our study.

Professor:  
James R. Stoner, Jr.  
poston@lsu.edu  
225-578-2538

Teaching Assistant:  
Peidong Wu  
pwu6@lsu.edu

Office Hours:  
M, 2:00-3:00 pm, W, 4:30-5:30 pm,  
F, 3:00-4:00 pm, and by appointment  
Stubbs 214  
T, 10:30-11:30 am  
W, 12:30-2:30 pm  
Stubbs 334

Class Time, and Location:  
MWF 10:30–11:20 am  
143 Coates

Attendance: Attendance in class is expected, unless you are ill or are otherwise excused under university policy (see PS-22). You are responsible for learning the material you miss. Usually it is best to get notes from a classmate or arrange to meet with the instructor or one of his teaching assistants.

Class Discussion: The instructor will pause for questions during lecture and encourages you to speak up. For students, the Chatham House Rule applies: no student question or comment made in class should be attributed to the speaker outside of class. Please show courtesy to one another, of course.
Course Materials:

The following books are required and are (or will soon be) available in the bookstore. Please obtain these specific editions so that we can all work from the same translations and/or page numbers. The books are listed in the order in which we will study them. Additional articles are available through the Moodle website, either in pdf or as an internet link; some materials are hyperlinked in the online version of the syllabus.


NOTE: You will need to bring to class every day an electronic device that can access the internet (specifically, the Moodle site for the course): a smartphone, a tablet, or a laptop.

Grading:

- Daily quizzes (open book; make-ups only if arranged beforehand) 25%
- In-class test (Mon., Sept. 25) 20%
- In-class test (Fri., Nov. 3) 20%
- Final Exam (Tues., Dec. 5) 35%

Grading scale:

- A+ (98%-100%), A (93%-97%), A- (90%-92%)
- B+ (88%-90%), B (83%-87%), B- (80%-82%)
- C+ (78%-80%), C (73%-77%), C- (70%-72%)
- D+ (68%-70%), D (63%-67%), D- (60%-62%)
- F (below 60%)

General Education Credit and the Integrative Learning Core:

General education credit for the social sciences will be earned by students in this course, since our study shares the goals of the general education program at LSU. According to an earlier LSU catalogue, “General education courses are not hurdles to be overcome; rather, they are means by which students learn to think, describe, interpret, and analyze
the world. Their primary aim is to educate rather than train, and to instill a desire for life-
long learning.” We are now mandated to add the following: “Integrated learning allows
students to make simple connections among ideas and experiences and across disciplines
and perspectives. The LSU Integrative Learning Core (ILC) curriculum is designed to
develop student abilities to transfer their learning to new situations, and demonstrate a
sense of self as a learner. A fundamental goal of the ILC is to foster students’ practical
and intellectual capacities associated with integrative learning in preparation for high
competence and functionality in their post-baccalaureate careers. This course fulfills the
BOR Area of Social/Behavioral Sciences and provides students experience with the ILC
proficiency of Inquiry and Analysis.”

SYLLABUS:

Mon., Aug. 21: Introduction

I. War and Peace

Wed., Aug. 23: Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, preface to 1st ed., chapter 1
Fri., Aug. 25: Walzer, chapters 2, 3
Mon., Aug. 28: Walzer, chapters 4, 6
Wed., Aug. 30: Walzer, chapters 8, 9
Fri., Sept. 1: Walzer, chapters 11, 12

[Labor Day Break]

Wed., Sept. 6: Walzer, chapters 14, 16
Fri., Sept. 8: Walzer, chapters 18, 19

II. Wealth and Poverty

Mon., Sept. 11: John Dewey, Liberalism and Social Action, chapter 1
Fri., Sept. 15: Dewey, chapter 3

Mon, Sept. 18: F.A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom, Introduction, chapters 1-3
Wed, Sept. 20: Hayek, chapters 4-6
Fri, Sept. 22: Hayek, chapters 7-9, 14

Mon, Sept. 25: Test

III. First Principles

Wed., Sept. 27: Aristotle, Politics, Book 1
Fri., Sept. 29: Aristotle, Book 3
Mon., Oct. 2: Aristotle, Book 7
Wed., Oct. 4: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 91, aa. 1-4; q. 94, aa. 1-6; q. 95, aa. 1-2; q. 97, aa. 1-4

[Fall Break]


Fri., Oct. 13: The Declaration of Independence

IV. Forming and Re-Forming Government

Mon., Oct. 16: Constitution of the United States;


Fri., Oct. 20: *The Federalist* #47-52 in Wootton, pp. 231-254


Keith E. Whittington, “How to Read the Constitution” (2006)

Burdett Loomis (pro) and Byron E. Shafer (con), “Resolved, The president should be elected directly by the people,” in Richard Ellis and Michael Nelson, eds., *Debating the Presidency*, 4th ed. (CQ Press, 2018)


Fri., Nov. 3: Test

V. Character and Culture

Mon., Nov. 6: Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, pp. 19-61
Wed., Nov. 8: Bloom, pp. 62-81, 313-335
Fri., Nov. 10: Bloom, pp. 336-382

Mon., Nov. 13: Shelby Steele, *White Guilt*, pp. 3-56
Wed., Nov. 15: Steele, pp. 57-110
Fri., Nov. 17: Steele, pp. 113-181

Mon., Nov. 20: Erika Bachiochi, *Rights of Women*, introduction, ch. 1
Wed., Nov. 22: Bachiochi, ch. 4

[Thanksgiving Break]

Mon., Nov. 27: Bachiochi, ch. 8
Wed., Nov. 29: Bachiochi, ch. 10

Barack Obama, “Farewell Address,” January 10, 2017
James R. Stoner, Jr., “Why We Respect the Dignity of Politics,” in

FINAL EXAMINATION: Tuesday, December 5 (3:00-5:00 pm)