

Brigham Young University  
Department of Political Science  
*PL SC 400 — Capstone Seminar in Political Theory: Human Freedom, Spring 2008*  
MWF 12:00-1:50, 793 SWKT

Dr. Owen Yeates  
Office hours: M 2:00-2:50, F 10:00-10:50, or by appointment

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### **Course Goals and Description**

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What does it mean to be free? What are its metaphysical and practical preconditions? Are there different kinds of freedom and, if so, how are they related? How does freedom relate to our other values, such as equality, security, community, and responsibility? Is freedom something that individuals can enjoy in private, or is it something that demands a vibrant public life, or even the opportunity for political participation? Is freedom America's defining ideal? Does it require an examined life? If political life is inherent to freedom, how do we reconcile our freedom with our contempt for politics? Do we really want to be free, even if we must bear the burdens that come with it? To answer these questions, this course will address the writings of a variety of thinkers. We will look at canonical writers of political philosophy, as well as pieces about the play of power and the political and moral challenges presented by the Nazi Holocaust.

As a capstone seminar, this course will minimally make use of lecture as its mode of instruction, at most a few minutes each day. Rather, as a seminar, we will learn through our discussions with one another. Consequently, you should come to each class prepared to contribute actively and thoughtfully to class discussion. You should come to each class prepared to contribute actively and thoughtfully to class discussion, which may require you to read the text more than once before preparing your reading summaries, and you will certainly need to take time to think critically about the readings and their implications before class. While the readings will demand a lot from you, you should find them thought-provoking and engaging.

Finally, through the readings and an intensive writing project, the capstone seminar is intended to draw together and enhance the skills you have developed throughout your undergraduate career. The seminar will not only require that you further develop your abilities to critically analyze others' arguments, but also that you further develop the abilities to articulate your own argument and to synthesize others' arguments to support it.

For more on the learning outcomes and modes of assessment for political science courses at BYU, see: <http://fhss.byu.edu/polsci/assessment/Default.aspx>

### **Texts**

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Plato. *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito*. LLA/Prentice, 1948. ISBN 002322410X  
Fyodor Dostoevsky. "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor." Hackett, 1993. ISBN 0-87220-193-7  
Sophocles. *Three Tragedies: Oedipus the King, . . .* Chicago, 1991. ISBN 0226307921  
Epictetus. *Enchiridion*. Prometheus, 2006. ISBN 0879757035  
Martin Luther. *On Christian Liberty*. Augsburg, 2003. ISBN 0800636074  
John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Hackett, 1983. ISBN 091514560X  
Hannah Arendt. *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Penguin. ISBN 0143039881

Please staple the summaries at the top left corner with a heavy staple. Points will be deducted for any missing summaries, as well as for failing to follow any of these instructions.

*Research Project:* This project will culminate in a 20-25 page research paper. To aid you in completing the project, it will be split into several assignments, including an annotated bibliography, a research prospectus and short presentation of your prospectus, short and completed drafts of your paper for review by the instructor and your peers, the final draft, and a research presentation of your full project. If you fail to submit either of the first drafts on their assigned days, you will receive a failing grade for the entire assignment.

**Course requirements**

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Participation and “quizzes”:	10%	
Reading summaries:	20%	
Research Project:	60%	
Annotated bibliography:		(5%)
Research prospectus and presentation:		(5%)
First draft:		(5%)
Second draft and peer review:		(5%)
Final revision:		(40%)
Oral Presentation:	10%	

**Course Policies**

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1. **Honor code:** As a student at Brigham Young University, you have agreed to abide by its Honor code. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating on exams, submitting work that is even in part not your own, and submitting work that you have prepared for another class (without the instructor’s permission), and attempting to deceive the instructor about the reason why an extension is needed or when an assignment was submitted. You should cite any material that you directly take or paraphrase from another source, and the former material should be placed in quotation marks. For more information on plagiarism, including standards the instructor will use to define plagiarism, see [http://honorcode.byu.edu/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5302&Itemid=5698](http://honorcode.byu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5302&Itemid=5698) and <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/index.html>. Guides for citation are available at: <http://english.byu.edu/writingcenter/handouts/citationstyles/citationresources.htm> and <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/cite/how.html>. Should the instructor encounter any instance of academic dishonesty, the offending student will receive a failing grade for the assignment, and may possibly receive a failing for the course and be reported to the Honor Code office for possible suspension or dismissal from the university.
2. **Laptops:** Laptop computers are to be used in classrooms for note taking and other academic purposes, as designated by the instructor. You should not use laptops for any other purpose, and the instructor reserves the right to ban individual students or the entire class from using laptops in class should he discover them being used for any non-approved purposes.
3. **Access:** Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance

de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pp. 44-47, 254-256, 433-436, 442-445, 462, 503-517, 520-528, 627-632, 667-674, 690-695 †  
 (Two reading summaries are due on all days such as this).

### Week 2

#### Basic Concepts:

May 5: Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Liberty*, 166-217 †  
 Friedrich A. Hayek, "Liberty and Liberties," 11-21, in *The Constitution of Liberty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960; †

#### Inner Freedom:

May 7: Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, pp. 11-76  
 Epictetus, *Enchiridion*  
 \*May 9: Martin Luther, *On Christian Liberty*  
 Class ending early; research and writing time for prospectus and prospectus presentation.  
 Annotated bibliography due.

### Week 3

May 12: Movie in class: "Shawshank Redemption"  
 May 14: John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*  
 John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, cont.; John Locke, *Second Treatise*  
 (selections available in coursepack) †  
 \*May 16: Prospectus presentations  
 Research prospectus due

### Week 4

#### Political Freedom and the need for society

May 19: Orlando Patterson. "The Constituent Elements of Slavery." In *Slavery and Social Death*, 1-14. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982. †  
 Hannah Arendt, "What is authority," 91-141, *Between Past and Future*  
 May 21: Hannah Arendt, "What is freedom," 142-169, *Between Past and Future*  
 Arendt, "The Revolutionary Tradition and Its Lost Treasure," *On Revolution*, 217-242, 252-257, 267-269, 272-285 †  
 May 23: Research and writing day.

### Week 5

May 26: No class for Memorial Day

#### Leading the unexamined life, or failing to think

\*May 28: Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 11-12, 14-19, 21-33, 36-55, 83-86, 90-93, 95-97, 108-109, 126-127, 131-134, 135-137, 148-150, 175, 230-233, 247-248, 251-2, 267-269, 272-279, 287-290, 291-298  
 10 pages of polished draft of your paper due

#### Power and Freedom

May 30: Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of Ancients Compared with that of Moderns;" †  
 Marx, *Communist Manifesto*, 1-32 †