

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 309R– Winter 2009**  
**THE FAMILY AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

**Instructor:**

Prof. Ralph C. Hancock

MW, 346 MARB 3:30-4:45pm

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Office hours: Monday & Thursday, 11-12am, or by appointment.

## **Course Rationale**

The family is central to Latter-day Saint belief. Beyond our commitment, shared with many Christians and other believers, to the sacredness of marriage and to the moral restraints that express and guard that sacredness, we also blessed by uniquely profound and beautiful teachings on the eternity of familial relationships. Contemporary confusion regarding the family and sexuality challenges us to deepen our understanding of these teachings. The resources of our Western philosophic and literary tradition are rich in insights and questions that can shed light on the meaning of the answers available in revealed teachings. To engage a dialogue between these questions, as articulated by the most profound investigators of human nature, from Plato to Shakespeare and to Tocqueville, and the teachings of the Restored Gospel will both equip us better to address contemporary moral and political confusion. Even more importantly, such an intellectual engagement can open up a fuller understanding and appreciation of the sweetness and power of the promise of “eternal lives” that is offered to those who enter into and honor sacred covenants.

## **Course Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course should:

1. Understand and be conversant in a cluster of questions central to the interpretation of the history of political philosophy as well as to a critical perspective on vital contemporary issues. These central questions concern the meaning and status of love, marriage, and family in relation to the political-ethical dimension of human existence.
2. Gain new understanding and appreciation of Latter-day Saint teaching on the eternal significance of the family, and improve their ability to articulate this teaching in addressing both those who share a belief in it and those who do not.
3. Learn better to articulate and defend in the public square the Church’s moral and political positions regarding the family.
4. Learn to conceive and develop a significant idea by engaging texts of important and challenging authors. By engaging these authors students take part in a rigorous and rich conversation concerning ideas fundamental to our political and ethical frameworks.
5. Improve the clarity, organization, and vigor of their writing.

6. Improve their ability to present their ideas orally before a group.
7. Develop or improve their ability to criticize constructively the work of their peers.

### **Required Texts** (available in bookstore)

Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship*

Bruce Hafen, *Covenant Hearts: Marriage and the Joy of Human Love*

Harvey Mansfield, *Manliness*

Andrew Sullivan, *Same-Sex Marriage Pro & Con: A Reader*

### **Course Requirements**

*Various stages of course paper (total 45% of grade for course):*

1. Summary/Response paper based on book, chapter(s), or article(s) that will be central to main research paper. Most of this paper should be a very tight, rigorous, careful summary of the chosen materials, followed by a response (criticism, raising of questions to be explored further). Texts to be selected in consultation with Professor. (See Bibliography) Selection process should begin immediately. 750-1000 words. 5% of grade. Due January 26.

2. Prospectus of Research Paper. This is a kind of prose outline indicating the main questions to be explored and the sources to be engaged. This should be as close as you can come to a summary of your paper before it is actually written. 500-750 words + bibliography. 7% grade. Due February 23.

3. Draft of Paper. This should already be a presentable paper, in good, clear English, well-organized, with an appropriate title and a bibliography. By this stage, the overall shape of your final paper should be coming clearly into focus, although some parts may still require further development. (You may indicate in bracketed sentences or paragraphs the sections that remain in early stages of development.) 8-15 pages + bibliography. 8% grade. Due March 23.

4. Oral presentation of main ideas of paper. 5% grade. March 23 or 25.

5. Final paper. 12-20 pages + bibliography. 20% grade. Due April 20 in 745 SWKT.

*Exams. 40% grade for course.*

1. Midterm Exam. March 6 10% course grade.
2. Final Exam (comprehensive). 30% course grade.

*Other Requirements. 15% grade for course.*

1. Peer review of two draft papers. 5% grade. Due April 6.
2. General class participation (judged for both quality and quantity). 10% grade.

## Course Schedule (with required readings and \*assignments indicated)

### January

5 “Proclamation;” Hafen chs. 1,2; Holland, “Of Souls, Symbols, & Sacraments”

<http://emp.byui.edu/marrottr/HollndSoulsSymbSacrs.pdf>

7 Hafen, chs. 3-7 ; Bloom “Introduction: the Fall of Eros;” Hancock, “When Following the Prophet is Too Easy” <http://squaretwo.org/Sq2ArticleHancockProp8.html>

12 Mansfield ch. 1; Sullivan “Introduction”

14 Bloom 431-444; Leon Kass, “Educating Father Abraham”

[www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9412/articles/kass.html](http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9412/articles/kass.html)

21 Bloom 449-501 (Recommended: Plato, Bloom 449-501 (Recommended: Plato, *Symposium*)

26 Bloom 501-551 \***Summary-Response paper**

28 Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas (selections)

### February

2 Bloom 39-93

4 Bloom 94-140

9 Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (selections); Hafen ch. 17

11 **MIDTERM EXAM**

17 Mansfield ch. 2

18 Mansfield chs. 3-4

23 Mansfield ch. 5 ; Hafen ch. 18\***Prospectus**

25 Mansfield chs. 6-7; Hafen ch. 19

### March

2 Mansfield “Conclusion”

4 Hafen chs. 20-24

9 Sullivan chs. 1-2

11 Sullivan chs. 3-4

16 Sullivan chs. 5-6

18 Sullivan chs. 7-8

23 Student Presentations \***Draft Paper**

25 Student Presentations

30 Bloom 269-271; 273-374 (plays to be individually assigned)

**April**

1 Bloom 375-398

6 “Jean de Florette” & “Manon of the Source” (films) **\*peer reviews due**

8 Sullivan chs. 9-10

15 Hafen ch 25 & Epilogue

(4/17 **\*Final Paper Due**)

**FINAL EXAM – Saturday 18 April, 7-10am (in regular classroom)**

**Note on paper topics for this seminar**

Papers proposals are welcome on a variety of topics, philosophical, literary, and social-scientific. One good approach would be to take one of the authors discussed by Bloom or Mansfield or presented by Sullivan and study that author in more depth; in this case you might then draw from and also criticize the author’s argument. (For example: “Love and Marriage in Shakespeare’s *Tempest* and *Winter’s Tale*.”) I would also welcome papers dealing more directly with immediate contemporary issues such as feminism, homosexual marriage, etc; such papers might also consist mainly in interpretations and criticisms of texts, or they might be a hybrid of a the more "interpretative," exploratory style I am describing and a more conventional, fact-gathering approach. (This alternative might be attractive to those students with less aptitude for or experience in the interpretative approach.)

Just for example, here is a random list of topics:

“Rousseau and Contemporary Feminism” --“Eros and Philosophy in Plato”--“Eros and Agape in Denis de Rougemont and C.S. Lewis”--“Conceptions of Love and Society in Debates Surrounding Homosexual Marriage”--“The Prophets on Desire, Love, and Eternal Marriage”--“The 60s and the American Family”--“Abortion Law in Comparative Perspective”--“How New is Romantic Love?”—“Family and the Education of the Prophets in Leon Kass’s *The Beginning of Wisdom*”--“The Family in John Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*”--“The Family in the American Founding”--“Emmanuel Levinas on Fatherhood”--“The Well-Being of Children of Same Sex Couples: The Evidence”--“Neuro-Science and Sexual Difference”--“Is Homosexuality ‘Hard-Wired’?”

## **Note on the nature of papers in political philosophy**

"Research" in interpretive political philosophy is quite different from research in most other areas of political science; it has more to do with reflecting on problems and conceiving possibilities than with testing theories or marshaling facts. Rather than testing or evaluating a single, definite hypothesis based upon a linear conception of cause and effect, you will be exploring a conceptual problem that by its nature must remain (to some degree, at least) open-ended. For example, rather than attempting to decide whether religious believers are statistically more likely than non-believers to be politically active, or to vote a certain way, you might find yourself asking how the ethical and political meaning of religion in modern societies differs from its meaning and status in traditional societies. Of course this is a huge question, which you could only begin to explore even in a fairly long seminar paper, and so you enter into such an exploration by finding qualified authors who deal with this theme (or others closely related to it), and you engage these authors in a kind of conversation. As I like to say: you rub texts against each other and see what intellectual sparks you can come up with. In this way you explore the question, and no doubt find how it opens up into other questions. With some luck you begin in a way to answer it, but especially you see more clearly the context and implications of the question itself. But open-endedness in no way implies lack of clear presentation or organization. Indeed the organization of writing in this qualitative, interpretive style of research requires even more care than is usual, because the structure of your paper depends so much on the structure of the question you are learning to explore. Thus your organization cannot be simply imposed from the outset, except very provisionally; it must develop as your thinking develops.

**Policy Statements:** Cheating of any kind is a serious breach of personal morality and an offense against your fellow students, your instructors, and the entire University.

Academic dishonesty will absolutely not be tolerated in this class. Any student found to have cheated on exams or to have submitted work that was not his or her own will be given a failing grade for the entire course. Furthermore, students are under obligation not to tolerate cheating by their fellows. If you have any doubt as to whether a certain activity would be considered cheating, you are under obligation to consult with your instructor before proceeding.

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See <http://www.byu.edu/honorcode> for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees

of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 378-2847.

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 (378-2767). 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 or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.

## Appendix 1: Writing Guidelines for Papers:

[Note: This was stolen from Prof. Christensen – I find that it contains much good advice.]

In political science, our goal is to convey information succinctly and clearly in our writing. The following guidelines will help you to write better and in accordance with my expectations.

### *Paper presentation.*

The paper must be typed and double spaced. There should be no spelling, typographical, or grammatical errors.

### *Avoid the passive voice.*

Do not say “The box was shown to us by the professor.” Say instead “The professor showed us the box.” You can identify the passive voice if you notice that the subject is missing (“it is argued that short people are cranky” - who is doing the arguing is missing), or if the subject follows the verb (“it is argued by some that short people are cranky.”) There are some times when the passive voice should be used, but most writers use it too much. Unless you have a good reason to say something in the passive voice, revise the sentence to eliminate the passive voice.

### *Cut out all unnecessary words.*

Do not say “It is my opinion that the United States is a democracy.” In a paper that you write the reader knows that everything that you say is your opinion. Just say “The United States is a democracy.” Similarly, do not say “The Russians were unaware and did not have knowledge with regards to the fact that . . .” Say instead “The Russians did not know that . . .”

### *Avoid colloquial language.*

Papers should not read like a telephone conversation. Do not say “It really stinks that government is so big” Say instead “Government has grown too big” Do not say “The prisoners flew the coop” Say instead “The prisoners escaped.” You should try to avoid slang words or words that are common in informal speech. Using more formal speech does not mean, however, that you have to use big or complex words. Use the best word for the situation. It may be short or it may be long, but use the best word.

*Do not use jargon or vague language.*

If I read “the transcendent modalities of bureaucratic reifications” I will have no idea what you are trying to say unless you have previously defined what these terms mean in your context. It is also better to use concrete or specific language rather than abstract or general terms.

*Use active verbs whenever possible.*

Rather than saying “A third proposal put forth by the committee is that courses should only be taught on Tuesdays” say instead “The committee also proposed that courses be taught only on Tuesdays” The first sentence’s verb is “is;” the second sentence’s verb is “proposed.” “Proposed” is an active verb in contrast to a state of being verb such as “is.” A good test of active verbs is to circle every state of being verb in your paper (is, are, was, were, be, being, been). If most of your verbs are state of being verbs, there is probably a need to revise some of them to more active verbs.

*Know grammar rules.*

For example, “it’s” means “it is.” The possessive form of “it” is “its.” Two independent clauses are usually joined by a semicolon or ,and ,nor ,for ,but ,so ,yet ,or. “i.e.” is used for exhaustive lists; e.g. is used for examples. Compound subjects and predicates require parallel structures.

*Use the best word.*

If you say “economic growth is reverberating,” I will suggest that you reword the phrase. A better choice of words might be “growth rates are fluctuating.” Good writing is not just using correct grammar. It is using the best words and phrases to convey your message unambiguously.

*Avoid chopiness in paragraphs and between paragraphs.*

It is important to use transitions to link paragraphs. It is also necessary to link the sentences in a paragraph with transitions. Though the repetition of words is usually undesirable, sentences in a paragraph can be linked together by repeating a key word. Another way to link sentences in a paragraph is to use transition words. Some examples are and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, too, first, second, for example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, specifically, also, in the same manner, similarly, likewise, but, however, on the other hand, in

contrast, nevertheless, still, even though, on the contrary, yet, although, in other words, in short, in summary, in conclusion, to sum up, that is, therefore, after, as, before, next, during, later, finally, meanwhile, then, when, while, immediately, above, below, beyond, farther on, nearby, opposite, close, if, so, therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, for this reason, since.<sup>1</sup> If your writing is choppy, consider using some of these or other transition words to link your sentences together better.

*Back up your claims or arguments with examples (real or hypothetical) or sound logic.*

Without support you are “arguing by assertion.” For example, a person could claim that affirmative action programs are bad because that person doesn’t like them. Most people are not persuaded by such arguments. Use analogies, examples, and logic to support your points.

*Writing grammatically correct sentences is not necessarily good writing.* A paper could be written without any errors but still be marked down to a C grade because phrasing is awkward or paragraphs are unstructured or wordy. Do not be offended because I tell you that you can write better. Every semester I have students who tell me that they have always received A grades on their papers and I am the first professor to give them a B. I had the same experience when I was a student at BYU, and I am grateful to the professor who forced me to improve my writing by pushing me beyond simply writing grammatically correct sentences.

*Each paragraph must have a clear, internal structure.*

Develop one idea per paragraph, and tell the reader what that idea is in the first sentence of the paragraph, the topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph should be related to that first sentence. For example, if a paragraph begins with “Public opinion in France made it difficult for the French government to send large numbers of troops in support of the Chad government in its dispute with Libya,” then everything else in the paragraph should deal with public opinion in France. Halfway through the paragraph do not switch and start talking about how aid to the Chad government was being wasted by official incompetence or corruption. If you want to put both ideas in the paragraph, change the leading sentence to “Corruption in Chad and public opinion in France both made it difficult for the French government to assist Chad in an effective manner.”

*Your audience is an educated reader.*

Do not expect them to know all the details of the events that you are writing about. On the other hand, you can just make simple reference to historical or international events that the educated reader should know

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<sup>1</sup>Diana Hacker, *A Writer’s Reference*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999), 35.

about. It would be appropriate to say “just as the Weimar Republic failed because of electoral instability, so also do some fear that electoral instability will threaten Russian democracy.” You do not need to explain what the Weimar Republic was.

*Use a consistent and acceptable style of citation.*

In most cases there will be no need to cite in your papers, but if you use a quote or paraphrase someone else’s ideas, use a proper citation style. In the political science department, Turabian is the standard. Turabian allows for using footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations with a works cited page at the end of the paper. I prefer the use of parenthetical citations but any of the three styles is acceptable.

*Do not plagiarize.*

You must cite anytime you use someone’s words or ideas. Arguments borrowed from other writers (even if they are paraphrased in your own words) and disputed statements of fact must be cited to their sources. You should also cite facts that are not common knowledge. You do not need to cite when an author makes an argument that many others make or cites a fact that could be found in many other books. For example, you would not cite someone who claimed that war causes suffering or someone who pointed out that China is the most populous country in the world.

*Avoid the excessive use of quotations.*

You should use quotations when (1) you are examining the exact text, such as an analysis of the wording of a treaty, or (2) the author’s wording is so superior that a paraphrase of the author’s point would be inferior. In all other situations you should paraphrase the author’s point with a citation. For example, your original quotation may say “The Chinese have long felt superior to their neighbors even though China has often been conquered by those same neighbors.” There is nothing spectacular about this quote, so don’t quote it. Paraphrase the information in your own words<sup>3/4</sup> *China retains its attitude of superiority to its neighbors even when those neighbors have defeated China in battle* (Hoople 1997, p. 26). Your paper will read better if it isn’t just a string of quotations put together.

*Check your writing style by following these tips.*

(1) Count the number of words in each of your sentences. You should have sentences of varied lengths. If this is not the case, revise the length of some of your sentences to give some variety to your writing.

(2) Count the number of state of being verbs in your sentences (is, are, was, were, be, being, been). If most of your verbs are state of being verbs, revise.

(3) Read your paper aloud. As you read it you will stumble across awkward or garbled sentences or sentences that are too long. Revise those sentences.

*Avoid packing your paper with fluff in order to lengthen the paper.*

The paper should be tight and organized. If I come across a paragraph, a sentence, or a page that could be deleted without detracting from your arguments, I will indicate that on your paper. You should anticipate such comments from me and revise your paper accordingly before you turn it in. Similarly, do not try to include all of your research just because you have spent the time doing the research. You will come across many interesting and important facts, but they may not be directly relevant to your thesis. Do not make the mistake of including discussion or argument that does not fit into the overall structure of your paper.

*Anticipate and address counterarguments*

Your arguments will be stronger if you anticipate counter arguments and try to deal with them in your paper. After you have written your paper, ask yourself what would someone say who disagrees with me? Consider each of those arguments and then consider including a response to at least some of those arguments in your paper. You can say “Some may claim that I am wrong because I have not considered the cost of these proposals. (The counterargument) However, what price can we put on peace and human dignity? Are we willing to condemn a whole class of people to a life of suffering in order to lower our tax rate by a few percentage points?” (your response). By including a response to possible a possible criticism of your argument, you will have made your argument more persuasive.