This course introduces students to some of the major works in classical and contemporary social theory, drawn from sociology, political theory, and economics, with a particular emphasis on culture and values as elements shaping public policy. We will also read some contemporary works to help put classical ideas in perspective. It is a course for people with a list of books that they feel they should read, and want to read.

The class focuses on the topics of power, inequality, and economic development, particularly as they help to understand the current shift to populist politics in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

Learning Objective: You will be able to discuss public policy issues with reference to the major thinkers and arguments in the intellectual history of the West.

There are two required papers. Both are analytical exercises designed to improve your critical reading and written expression. The first is a short (4-6 pages) paper analyzing some of the readings. The second is a more substantial paper (18-20 pages) in which I ask you to compare and contrast viewpoints of two or more authors on a specific theme of your choosing.

Grading will be 30% based on the first paper, 60% on the second paper, and 10% on class participation. All work will be graded on the basis of the clarity, relevance, and logic of your arguments.

MOST OF THE READINGS ARE BOOKS. Those that are articles or selections will be emailed to you. Those readings (noted with a star below) that are complete books (or major portions of them) are books that can be easily purchased on Amazon. I prefer if you purchase them as KINDLE ebooks to save the environment, but the choice of regular books or ebooks is up to you.

LIST OF READINGS:
*Linda Martin Alcoff – The Future of Whiteness
*Robert Axelrod – The Evolution of Cooperation
*Angus Deaton and Anne Case – Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism
*W.E.B. Du Bois – The Souls of Black Folk
Richard Florida – The Rise of the Creative Class
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan*
*Samuel Huntington – The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking World Order*
*Daniel Kahneman – Thinking, Fast and Slow*
John Locke – *Second Treatise on Government*
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels – *The Communist Manifesto*
Niccolo Machiavelli – *The Prince*
Douglass C. North – “Economic Performance through Time”
Plato: *The Republic*
Joseph Schumpeter – *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*
Adam Smith – *The Wealth of Nations*
*Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein – Nudge*
Alexis de Tocqueville – *Democracy in America*
Thucydides – *Peloponnesian Wars*
*Thorstein Veblen – Theory of the Leisure Class*
*Kenneth Waltz – Man, the State and War*
*Duncan Watts, Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age*

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

I. POWER AND GOVERNANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 24</td>
<td>Plato – <em>Republic I-II, IV-V, VII.</em></td>
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<td>Thucydides – <em>Peloponnesian Wars</em>, Book One Chapters II-IV,</td>
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<td>Book Two Chapter VI</td>
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<td>August 31</td>
<td>Machiavelli – <em>The Prince</em>, Chapters I-X</td>
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<td>Hobbes – <em>Leviathan</em>, Chapters XIII-XV</td>
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<td>September 7</td>
<td>Labor Day -- Holiday</td>
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<td>September 14</td>
<td>Locke – <em>2nd Treatise on Government</em>, Chapters I-XIII, XVIII-XIX</td>
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<td>Marx – <em>The Communist Manifesto</em>, Chapters I, II</td>
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<td>September 21</td>
<td>Tocqueville – <em>Democracy in America</em>, Volume 1, Part II, Chapters</td>
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II. STATUS AND INEQUALITY

| September 28 | Veblen – *Theory of the Leisure Class*, Chapters 2, 4                  |
|              | Florida – *Rise of the Creative Class*, Chapter 15                    |
|              | Alcoff – *The Future of Whiteness*                                     |
| October 5    | Du Bois – *The Souls of Black Folk*                                     |
| October 13   | Deaton and Case – *Deaths of Despair*                                  |
NOTE: FIRST PAPER WILL BE DUE OCTOBER 20th

III. BEHAVIOR

October 19  
Kahneman, Thinking, Fast and Slow

October 26  
Thaler and Sunstein, Nudge

IV. THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

November 2  
Huntington, Clash of Civilizations

November 9  
Waltz, Man, the State and War

IV. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CRISSES

November 16  
Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, Book 4, Chaps 1 and 2
Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, Chapters 5-8
Douglass North – “Economic Performance Through Time”

November 23  
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

November 30  
Robert Axelrod: The Evolution of Cooperation, Chaps. 1,2 and 6,7
Duncan Watts – Six Degrees

FINAL PAPER IS DUE DECEMBER 14th

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce Mason’s honor code. Papers will be checked for plagiarism. Minor cases of plagiarism may require you to redo and revise your work with reduced credit; major cases of plagiarism may result in failing the course and in extreme cases in dismissal from the program.