

Politics 9503: Central Problems in Political Theory

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September-December 2024

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Office Hours: Tues 2:00-3:00, and by appointment

The theme of the course in 2024 is the meaning and value of liberalism. The discussion covers three central recent texts -- by Francis Fukuyama, Daniel Chandler, and Alexandre Lefebvre -- along with a wide range of critical perspectives on liberal political theory. Themes covered include the following: What is liberalism? How has it been conceived over the past several centuries? What can be said for and against the free market? Does liberalism undervalue community, gender equality, and multiculturalism? What is the value of democracy, political liberties, and workers' self-determination? Does liberalism have a conception of the good life? Is liberalism ultimately a failure?