Comparative Economics and Political Ideas 2008

Steven Alan Samson
*Liberty University, ssamson@liberty.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs)

Part of the Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons, Political Science Commons, and the Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons

**Recommended Citation**
[https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/367](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/367)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Helms School of Government at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.
Syllabus for
Comparative Economic and Political Ideas
GOVT 430 – Spring 2008
Dr. Steven Alan Samson
Liberty University
Helms School of Government

I. Course Description
A comparison of capitalism, socialism and communism, emphasizing the ideas and ideologies that are struggling today across the world. Special attention will be given to selected European and American political, economic, and cultural theorists.

In many ways, this course builds on GOVT 490, which focuses on the close reading of texts (Dialectic). This course continues in the same vein but also adds the last dimension of the Trivium, Rhetoric, in which the focus shifts to independent research, presentation, and writing as well as collaborative efforts that involve critical evaluation and the discussion of readings and papers. A more appropriate title for the course would be Ideas Have Consequences, the title of one of the founding works of American conservatism by Richard M. Weaver.

II. Rationale
This course directly supports Aims 1-11 of the Liberty University Statement of Purpose.

III. Prerequisite
GOVT 200 or GOVT 220; GOVT 490 is strongly recommended.

IV. Materials List

Purchase:
Piereson, James. Camelot and the Cultural Revolution [P]
Samson, Steven Alan. Comparative Economic and Political Ideas [C]
Schall, James V. Another Sort of Learning [A]

Reserve Desk (for research):
East, John P. The American Conservative Movement: The Philosophical Founders
Nash. George H. The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945
Panichas, George A., ed. Modern Age: The First Twenty-Five Years
Schumaker, Paul, et al. Ideological Voices
Scruton, Roger. Thinkers of the Left

Subscribe:
Intercollegiate Studies Institute:
- A free subscription to the INTERCOLLEGIATE REVIEW
- One year free of NATIONAL REVIEW DIGITAL
- Plus your choice of one year free of either MODERN AGE or UNIVERSITY BOOKMAN (which are two of ISI's other journals).

Websites:
Murphey, Dwight D. http://www.dwightmurphey-collectedwritings.info/

Periodicals
www.amconmag.com (Pat Buchanan: Old Right)
http://www.commentarymagazine.com/ (John Podhoretz: Jewish, neo-conservative)
http://www.firstthings.com/ (Richard John Neuhaus: Catholic conservative)
V. Course Objectives

1. The student will be exposed to a variety of concepts and social science approaches to the study of economic and political ideas.
2. The student will learn how to identify, analyze and evaluate the presuppositional bases of modern economic and political ideas and ideologies.
3. The student will thereby become better equipped to understand, participate in, and evaluate domestic and international political processes.

VI. Graded Requirements and Options

1. **Readings** Each student is responsible for completing reading assignments prior to class and should keep a loose leaf notebook of class materials.

2. **Class Participation** is an essential part of class. Textbook chapters, collateral readings, and current events will be the subject of class commentary and discussions. **All electronic devices are to be left off during class unless otherwise specifically permitted.**

3. **Tests** Students will be tested on the lecture and reading material through a series of four tests (each of which represents 15% of the grade) that are to be taken at the scheduled time. The final exam (15%) will be a comprehensive take-home essay and short answer test due on the scheduled final exam date. Except for excused absences due to university-sponsored events, they must be taken in class at the scheduled time. Other arrangements must be made in advance for these exceptions. Students who will be absent due to illness, family emergency, or some university sponsored activity must notify the professor by e-mail before the test. Students are eligible only for one make-up test and one substitute test at the end of the term.

4. **Term Paper** Each student will be responsible for, first, writing a 10-15 page term paper that reviews a key work of a modern economic or political thinker (with an annotated bibliography of at least fifteen primary and secondary sources by or about the thinker); and, second, presenting to the class a biographical sketch and an overview of the key work. The paper and presentation represent 25% of the grade.

5. **Procedure for Preparing and Presenting the Term Paper:** If any students wish to pool their interests and resources, I would encourage them to develop group projects. Two suggestions come immediately to mind. First, using J. Budziszewski’s *Evangelicals in the Public Square*, you may select and read a key work by one of the four thinkers featured in the book: Carl F. H. Henry (*The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*), Abraham Kuyper (*The Stone Lectures: Calvinism in Politics*), Francis Schaeffer (*A Christian Manifesto*), and John Howard Yoder (*The Politics of Jesus*). Alternatively, you may focus on a thinkers, such as Roger Scruton (*A Political Philosophy, The Meaning of Conservatism, Gentle Regrets*), René Girard (*I See Satan Fall Like Lightning, The Scapegoat*), Russell Kirk (*The Conservative Constitution, The Sword of Imagination*), Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn (*Leftism, Liberty or Equality, The
Each student will be expected to read biographical material and make presentations on separate works by or about the author. As a third option, individual projects are also welcomed. Two collections of reviews of conservative thinkers worth perusing are *Reading the Right Books* (2007), edited by Lee Edwards (Heritage Foundation), and *The Conservative Bookshelf* (2005) by Chilton Williamson, Jr. In addition, there is also a collaborative dimension to this assignment that will involve at least two other class members. First, each must read and critique at least two papers written by fellow class members, checking them for grammar, spelling, and content. Second, each must serve as a reader/discussant on two papers and be prepared to make substantive comments on at least one paper that is being presented. Where a group of students collaborate on one thinker, it would be appropriate to have a panel discussion. Panels will follow after individual presentations because, in such cases, more than one day is likely to be required. By Friday, February 12, when choices should be made, the class should already be familiar with short works by several of these thinkers. For the body of the paper, only one person may be assigned to one key work on a first come, first served basis. Furthermore, no key work should be less than 100 pages in length and no key work should be used as a textbook at Liberty University. Three copies of a typed, 4-6 page abstract or summary (the first draft) should be completed and turned in to the professor by Friday, March 7, along with primary and secondary source references (your initial bibliography). Please use the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available on-line as well as on Microsoft Outlook 2007.

6. The **Final Paper** should include an annotated bibliography with a minimum of fifteen entries (at least six of them books). It should also include both primary and secondary sources. Please identify by call number which of these works are available in the library. Please also identify those sources which are available on internet. Three hard or soft copies of the final draft of the paper should be given to the professor and reader/discussants by Monday, April 7. These should be critiqued and returned by the reader/discussants by Friday, April 11 (hard-copy or e-mail). Three hard copies of the final paper are to be turned in to the professor and the reader/discussants by Monday, April 14. Presentations and panel discussions take up the last three weeks of class. During the research and writing phase of the course, we will not always assemble for class, but progress reports and other communication via Blackboard or in class are strongly encouraged. Each presenter will have 15-18 minutes of class time. The discussant will have 5 minutes.

7. **Notebooks** will be available on several notable figures, including Roger Scruton, Pierre Manent, Fjordman, Francis Fukuyama, René Girard, Samuel P. Huntington, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, James Kurth, Peter Augustine Lawler, Bernard Lewis, Kenneth R. Minogue, James V. Schall, Spengler, and an assortment of others.

**Suggested Thinkers and Books (More in the Bibliography)**
Buckley, William F., Jr. *God and Man at Yale* (1951)
Bukovsky, Vladimir. *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter* (1978)
Burgess, John W. *Recent Changes in American Constitutional Theory* (1923)
Burnham, James. *Suicide of the West* (1964)
Codevilla, Angelo. *No Victory, No Peace* (2005)
Finkielkraut, Alain. *In the Name of Humanity* (2000)
   http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/features/girard/
Hayek, F. A. *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) or *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960)
   http://www.contra-mundum.org/books/NewLegality.pdf
   http://www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk/hebdentaylor.htm
Hoffer, Eric. *The True Believer* (1951)
   http://www.geocities.com/wuestenpauli/opapa_neu/opapa_start.htm
Lewis, C. S. *The Abolition of Man* (1947) and *That Hideous Strength* (1946)
Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923)
   http://www.biblebelievers.com/machen/machen_introduction.html
Mahoney, Daniel J. *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn* (2001)
Nisbet, Robert. *The Quest for Community* (1952)
Ortega y Gasset, José. *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930)
   http://www.valley.net/~transnat/erh.html
Schall, James V. *The Order of Things* (2007)
   http://www.morec.com/schall/recent.htm
   http://www.roger-scruton.com/
   http://www.artsci.lsu.edu/voegelin/EV/EV_2_dtf.htm
Weaver, Richard. *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948).

8. The grading scale is 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F.

VII. **Attendance**  Students are expected to arrive **on time** for every class meeting. Students who are absent due to illness or emergency should notify the professor prior to class or soon afterward. Excused absences include participation in university-sponsored events, serious illness (if accompanied by a physician's note), or a family emergency. **Three unexcused absences will result in lowering the grade. Six unexcused absences will result in an F or FN. Prolonged absences for any reason will generally result in a withdrawal or a failing grade.** Anyone who expects to remain enrolled in the class must grace us with his or her physical presence or else maintain regular e-mail contact with the professor during any period of absence. Persistent tardiness will also have a detrimental effect on grades.

VIII. **Dress Code**  Observe the Liberty Way. Students who are not in appropriate campus attire will **not** be admitted to class. Caps will **not** be worn in class. Other than drinks, there will be **no** eating or chewing gum in the classroom.
IX. **School Policies**

**Plagiarism and Multiple Submissions of Papers:**
Plagiarism is a serious offense and utilizing the work of others without proper citation is a clear violation of University policy. However, no clear directive has been established within the Helms School of Government as to the permissibility of a student submitting substantially the same paper to satisfy writing requirements in different courses. Effective spring 2007, any writing assignment required for a Helms School of Government course must be an original composition drafted specifically for the individual course. When a course requirement in an upper division course builds upon a previously researched topic, and the student desires to utilize his/her prior submission as a foundational document for the new course assignment, he/she may bring a copy of the previous paper to the current professor. The professor will review with the student the additional research and writing elements needed to complete the current assignment without violating this policy.

**Christian Service:**
For those students not already involved in Christian Service, see the professor for details and other information if interested.

**Disabilities:**
Students with a documented disability may contact the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) in TE 127 for arrangements for academic accommodations.

X. **Office Location, Phone, E-Mail, Hours**

Helms School of Government, SLAB 133  
Phone: 434-592-3689  
E-Mail: ssamson@liberty.edu  
Hours: MWF 8:50-10:00, 14:55-15:45; R 1-5; and by appointment

**CLASS SCHEDULE**  
(Subject to Revision)

**Preliminary Readings**

Before the first day, please read Dorothy Sayers’s “The Lost Tools of Learning.” Several websites carry it and several books have anthologized it. You may use the following if you wish:


I recommend two other readings to establish the major themes of the course: the first chapter of Hilaire Belloc’s *The Great Heresies* and, from a different angle but to much the same purpose, a short piece by Lee Harris on the Islamist challenge to western civilization.

Please also start reading *Another Sort of Learning* by James V. Schall, especially the preface, chapters 1-3, and then chapters 8-9, which will be discussed the first day of class. Father Schall has told me that chapter 18 is a favorite with students. His website, which is worth perusing, is at http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/schallj/

I may from time to time add or delete a short reading. I hope that we will have an opportunity to discuss a reading from *Intercollegiate Review* later in the term. Be sure to immediately request your free subscription at *Intercollegiate Studies Institute*:
- A free subscription to the INTERCOLLEGIATE REVIEW
- One year free of NATIONAL REVIEW DIGITAL
In chapter 3, Father Schall writes about “What a Student Owes His Teacher.” In Humanitas, I wrote about what I owe one of my teachers:  
http://www.nhinet.org/samson15-2.pdf. Other pieces on education that I recommend are “Students,” the chapter that opens Allan Bloom’s The Closing of the American Mind (1987), and “To a Young Man Who —” in Jacques Barzun’s Teacher in America (1945). Barzun’s career has now spanned more the eight decades. Centennial tributes to him may be seen at http://barzuncentennial.murphywong.net/. The one by John Lukacs gets right to the point. I also recommend the tributes by Herbert London, Ralph de Toledano (who is represented in the book list above), Carl Schorske, Edward Oakes, and Irving Louis Horowitz. Barzun’s From Dawn to Decadence is an intellectual feast. If any one or two or more of you wish to take it on, I will be happy to work with you.

If there is sufficient demand, I will have a workbook printed up before we start with the main textbook. It will include outlines and shorter readings that will otherwise have to be placed on Blackboard, such as “The Alma Mater and the Necktie” from Philippe Bénétou’s Equality by Default.

Collateral: Dorothy Sayers, Steven Samson, and Roger Scruton:  
http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html  
www.contra-mundum.org/cm/features/12_models.pdf  
http://www.azure.org.il/include/print.php?id=485

January

James Stoner, “The Timeliness and Timelessness of Magna Carta”  
http://www.firstprinciplesjournal.com/articles.aspx?article=1307&theme=home&loc=b

Mon. 14 Introduction; James V. Schall; A. 8-9  
http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2008/schall_sainteducation_jan08.asp
Wed. 16 A.10-11
Fri. 18 A.14, 20
Mon. 21 Benedict XVI: The Regensburg Lecture  
http://www.zenit.org/article-16955?l=english  
James V. Schall: http://www.zenit.org/article-17818?l=english
Wed. 23 G. 1; Handout: Erik von Kuehnelt-Ledl, “Leftism Revisited,” chapters 1-4  
Collateral: James Lewis  
Fri. 25 G. 1; René Girard: The Scapegoat, ch. 1 (workbook)  
La Fontaine: http://www.pbase.com/dlcmh/the_animals_sick_of_the_plague  
Daniel Pipes: http://www.danielpipes.org/article/5412
Mon. 28 G. 2; John Hallowell (Handout); C. 51-58 Modern Roots and Classical Liberalism; Murphey on “Classical Liberalism.”  
Wed. 30 G. 2; Hayek: www.jim.com/hayek.htm (Reader’s Digest version), 
www.mises.org/TRTS.htm

February

Fri. 1 RESEARCH DAY; Megan McArdle and Roundtable  
Mon. 4 G. 3; Murphey on “The Varieties of Conservatism;” Spengler:  
http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6040
Wed. 6 G. 3; Roger Scruton:
Suggested: Read two items from the latest University Bookman

http://www.kirkcenter.org/index.php/bookman/

Fri. 8  
G. 4; Murphey on “Romanticism”; C. 58-64 Anarchism/Libertarianism

Mon. 11  
G. 4; Roger Scruton, “Rousseau and the Origins of Liberalism” (Handout); Rod Dreher

http://blog.beliefnet.com/crunchycon/2008/02/family-and-civilization.html

Wed. 13  
G. 5; Murphey on “Socialism”; Ben Stein (trailer for “Expelled”):

http://www.expelledthemovie.com/playgroundvideo3.swf

FIRST TEST: G. 1-3; Murphey

Fri. 15  
G. 5; C. 64-68 Marxism/Communism; Whittaker Chambers; PAPER TOPIC DUE

Mon. 18  
G. 6; Ralph de Toledano (Handout)


Wed. 20  
G. 6-7; Murphey on “National Socialism;” Wilhelm Roepke, “Robbing Peter to Pay Paul” (Handout)

Fri. 22  
G. 7; C. 66-73 Fascism and Eugenics; Gene Veith on Fascism (Handout)

Mon. 25  
G. 8 (pp. 237-45, 257-66, 275-82); Murphey on “Modern Liberalism;” C. 73-74 Contemporary Liberalism; James Hitchcock:

http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1094110/posts

Wed. 27  
G. 8; Fyodor Dostoevsky: http://www.tameri.com/csw/exist/dostqi.html

Fri. 29  
G. 9 (pp. 284-98, 302-312, 317-19); C. 74-78 Democratic Socialism; Optional: Dostoevsky, “Rebellion”


SECOND TEST: G. 4-6; Murphey

March

Mon. 3  
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn


Wed. 5  
G. 10; Robert P. George; Contemporary Conservative/Christian 78-81

http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6101

Fri. 7  
G. 10; Encore: Scruton’s “Rousseau and the Origins of Liberalism;” Illustration:


FIRST DRAFT DUE

Mon. 10  
G. 11; Spengler: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Front_Page/JB12Aa02.html

Lee Harris: http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3459646.html

SECOND ESSAY AND SHORT ANSWER EXAM: McCardle and Roundtable, Spengler, Scruton, Chambers, Toledano, Roepke, Veith, Hitchcock, Dostoevsky, Solzhenitsyn; George; C. Anarchism/Libertarianism, Marxism/Communism, Fascism and Eugenics, Contemporary Liberalism, Democratic Socialism

Wed. 12  
G. 11; Walter Laqueur, James V. Schall (Handout), and Spengler

http://blog.oup.com/2006/10/the_origins_of_2/

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/JC11Ak04.html

Fri. 14  
Lee Harris, Suicide of Reason, pp. 228-37.

FIRST DRAFTS RETURNED

Mon. 17  
SPRING BREAK

Wed. 19  
SPRING BREAK

Fri. 21  
SPRING BREAK

Mon. 24  
EASTER BREAK

Wed. 26  
G. 12; Roger Scruton, “A Righter Shade of Green” (Handout); John R. Christy, “What We Don’t Know About Climate Change” (Handout); READERS AND DISCUSSANTS CHOSEN

Fri. 28  
G. 13; Jean Bethke Elshtain:

http://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/interviews/elshtain.asp

Mon. 31  
THIRD TEST: G. 7-10; Murphey

April
Wed. 2  G. 14
Fri. 4  John Fonte; http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/idealogical_war.pdf
Mon. 7  James Kurth; PAPER DUE http://www.phillysoc.org/Kurth%20Speech.htm
Wed. 9  Herbert Butterfield’s Christianity in European History, pp. 34-63 (Handout); FINAL COPY DUE
Fri. 11  READING DAY
Mon. 14  P. 1; PRESENTATIONS
Wed. 16  P. 2; PRESENTATIONS
Fri. 18  P. 3; PRESENTATIONS
Mon. 21  P. 4; PRESENTATIONS
Wed. 23  P. 5; PRESENTATIONS
Fri. 25  P. 6; PRESENTATIONS
Mon. 28  P. 7-8; PRESENTATIONS
Wed. 30  PRESENTATIONS; THIRD ESSAY AND SHORT ANSWER EXAM: G. 10-14; Murphey, George, Dostoevsky, Laqueur, Elshtain, Niebuhr, Harris, Scruton, Christy, Fonte, Kurth, Butterfield; C. Contemporary Conservative/Christian

May
Monday, May 5, 1-2:40 FOURTH TEST: P. 1-8