U.S. Statesmanship: Liberty, Equality, and the Common Good

Villanova Integrated Academics (VIA) 3030 – 001
CRN: 33576
MW 1:30-2:45pm
Bartley 035

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“The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist.”


**Course Description:**

This course will integrate the disciplines of economics and political philosophy in order to educate students in the history, theories, and techniques of statesmanship with a specific focus on the link between economics and politics in American presidential leadership. Framed by Aristotle’s account of statesmanship as the task of prudentially balancing the various interests in any given society in order to serve the common good, this course will study and evaluate the efforts of exceptional statesmen in American history to manage the economic and political interests of the American people. Lectures will integrate Aristotle's political philosophy, the development of macroeconomic theory from the 1930s, and studies of the political-economic policies and rhetoric of specific presidential administrations beginning with FDR. Students will present case studies of presidential administrations to illustrate the role of statesmanship in crafting and pursuing successful macroeconomic policy. Readings will include selections from Aristotle, Keynes, presidential speeches, and secondary literature on statesmanship and the history of American macroeconomic policy. No previous study of political philosophy or economics is required.

**Required Texts:**

These texts are available for purchase from the bookstore:

The following text will be provided in PDF format by the instructors:


All other readings will be provided via Blackboard.

**Graded Assignments:**

1. Take-Home Midterm (30%). This exam will consist of a series of short answer questions and will be due on Feb. 27th.
2. Group Presentation (40% total). Students will work in groups of five or six to present on and evaluate the political-economic leadership of a specific American president. An initial proposal (5%) will be due Feb. 18th. A more elaborate outline (5%) will be due March 18th. The presentation (30%) will occupy one class period between April 8th-29th. Further instructions will be provided on a separate assignment sheet.
3. Term Paper (30%). Each student will write a 10-page paper recommending a political-economic course of action to President Trump or Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Further instructions will be provided on a separate assignment sheet. This assignment will be due on May 1st.

**Grading Scale:**

- A: 94-100
- A-: 90-93
- B+: 87-89
- B: 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C: 73-76
- C-: 70-72
- D: 60-69
- F: 59 or below

For a verbal description of what each letter grade means, please see: [https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/grades.html](https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/grades.html)

**Policies and Expectations:**

1. Attendance: Required. If you miss a class, you may get lost. If you must miss a class, please get notes from a classmate and notify the instructors.
2. Classroom conduct: Collegiality, if not maturity, requires that you:
   a. Refrain from non-authorized use of your laptops.
   b. Keep cell phones silent and do not use them during class.
   c. Finish meals before class gets underway and clean up your mess.
3. Preparation: Please do the assigned readings before each class and bring the text(s) with you to class, so that we can refer to them and discuss them as a group.
4. Email: You are responsible for checking your Villanova e-mail regularly and for being aware of any communications the instructors send via e-mail. Please allow us at least one business day to respond to your emails.
5. Late Assignments: Late exams or term papers will lose 5% per day late. Missed deadlines for the group project receive a ZERO (0). Failure to attend the group presentation receives a grade of ZERO (0) unless written documentation of a valid reason is given to the instructors, in which case the instructors will determine an appropriate alternative assignment.

6. Class Cancellation: If a class meeting is cancelled by the University, one of the instructors will email the class to explain how the schedule will be modified.

Office of Disabilities (ODS) and Learning Support Services (LSS):
It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Go to the Learning Support Services website (http://learningsupportservices.villanova.edu) for registration guidelines and instructions. For physical access or temporarily disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or email Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu. Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

Academic Integrity:
All students are expected to uphold Villanova’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate dean for disciplinary action. You may view the university’s Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers, at the Academic Integrity Gateway web site: http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity

Absences for Religious Holidays:
Villanova University makes every reasonable effort to allow members of the community to observe their religious holidays, consistent with the University’s obligations, responsibilities, and policies. Students who expect to miss a class or assignment due to the observance of a religious holiday should discuss the matter with their professors as soon as possible, normally at least two weeks in advance. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the absence. https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/religiousholidays.html

Course Schedule:

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<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing Politics and Statesmanship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Aristotle, I.1-2, III.6-7, IV.1; Lord, ch. 1-3</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No Class</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Democracies, Oligarchies, and Polities</td>
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<td>Reading: Aristotle, III.8-13, IV.3-9, 11-12, VI.2-3; Lord, ch. 4-5</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>Political Change and Regime Preservation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Reading: Aristotle, V.1-9; Lord, ch. 6, 8</td>
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| 30 | The Challenges of Modern Statesmanship  
Reading: Lord, ch. 11, 16, 20, 23-25 |
|---|---|
| February 4 | A look at the data. Keynes’ critique of Classical Economics  
Reading: Keynes, ch. 2 |
| 6 | Aggregate Supply-Aggregate Demand Framework |
| 11 | Keynes’ GT on income determination  
Reading: Keynes, ch. 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 |
| 13 | Keynes’ multiplier and economic policy  
Reading: Keynes, ch. 10 |
| 18 | Shortcomings of Keynesian economics  
Assignment: Submit group presentation proposal |
| 20 | FDR’s Political Thought  
Reading: Forgotten Man Speech, Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination, Speech at Madison Square Garden, The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism |
| 25 | FDR’s Economic Policies  
| 27 | Evaluating FDR’s Statesmanship  
Assignment: Submit take-home midterm |
| March 4 & 6 | Spring Break – No Classes |
| 11 | Kennedy’s Political Thought  
Reading: “Courage and Politics;” Acceptance of the Democratic Party Nomination; City Upon a Hill speech; First State of the Union Address; Address to the Economic Club of New York |
| 13 | Kennedy/Johnson Economic Policies  
Reading: Stein, ch. 4, esp. pp. 89-93, 101-105, 107, 109, 113, 114, 117 |
| 18 | Evaluation Kennedy/Johnson  
Assignment: Submit group presentation outline |
| 20 | Reagan’s Political Thought  
Reading: A Time for Choosing; First Inaugural Address; Address on the Program for Economic Recovery |
Reading: Stein, ch. 7, 8, esp. pp. 235, 237, 239, 241, 245-249, 250-253, 261-262 |
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Evaluating Reagan’s Statesmanship</td>
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| April | 1 | Obama’s Political Thought  
Reading: 2010 State of the Union Address; Remarks by the President on Middle Class Economics |
| 3 | Obama’s Economic Policies  
Reading:  
| 8 | Presentations |
| 10 | Presentations |
| 15 | Presentations |
| 17 | Presentations |
| 22 | Easter Monday – No Class |
| 24 | Presentations |
| 29 | Presentations |
| May | 1 | Conclusion  
Assignment: Submit term paper |