

## The Political Philosopher's Toolkit

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### Course Description:

Batman has a utility belt. So too does the political philosopher. This course presents a set of tools and methodologies used by political philosophers to study social and political phenomena. The aim of this course is neither to convey a set of facts or arguments, nor to convince students which tools are best for doing political philosophy. Rather the aim is survey what tools are available and to have students exit the course with a set of generally-applicable analytical skills and methodological frames for analyzing the social world.

Unit 1 introduces the subject matter and considers various modes of analysis. Unit 2 presents different types of “raw materials” – ranging from intuitions to empirical data – from which arguments can be built. Unit 3 considers different methodological orientations and how they relate to institutional considerations. Unit 4 presents a set of formal tools as well as some of the important results others have made by utilizing them. Unit 5 is students' choice.

### Assignments:

- Participation: 20%
- Midterm:   x  %                      Date:                      **TBA**
- Paper:   y  %                      Due Date:              **TBA**
- Final:   z  %                      Date:                      **TBA**
- \*\*Students decide how (voting, deliberating, bargaining, etc.) to allocate the remaining 80% of the grade. It is stipulated that: (1) x, y, and z must *each* be equal to or greater than 5, and, (2) x, y, and z must sum to 80.

### Schedule:

#### *Unit 1: Laying the Groundwork*

Day 1: Introduction

- Robert E. Goodin, “How to Write Analytical Political Theory” in *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*, ed. Adrian Blau, Chapter 2
- G.A. Cohen, “How to Do Political Philosophy” in *The Currency of Egalitarian Justice and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Otsuka

Day 2: On the Distinction Between Moral Philosophy and Political Philosophy, Part 1

- Jeremy Waldron, “Political Political Theory: An Inaugural Lecture”, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 21 (1), 1-23.

Day 3: On the Distinction Between Moral Philosophy and Political Philosophy, Part 2

- Alex Worsnip and Jonathan Leader Maynard, “Is there a distinctively political normativity?”, *Ethics*, 128(4), 756-787

Day 4: Conceptual Analysis

- Ian Carter, “Value-freeness and Value-neutrality in the Analysis of Political Concepts” in *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. David Sobel, Peter Vallentyne and Steve Wall

Day 5: Conceptual Analysis: A Case Study

- Nadia Urbinati, “Political Theory of Populism”, *Annual Review of Political Science* 22, pp. 111–127.

Day 6: Ideological Analysis

- Jonathan Leader Maynard, “Ideological Analysis” in *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*, ed. Adrian Blau, Chapter 3

Day 7: Interpreting Texts

- Adrian Blau, “Interpreting Texts” in *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*, ed. Adrian Blau, Chapter 12

Day 8: Philosophy and History

- Jeffrey E. Green, “Political Theory as Both Philosophy and History: A Defense Against Methodological Militancy,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 18, pp. 425-41.

### *Unit 2: The Raw Materials*

Day 9: Data: Empirical and Historical, Part 1

- Selections from Deirdre McCloskey, *Why Liberalism Works: How True Liberal Values Produce a Freer, More Equal, Prosperous World for All*

Day 10: Data: Empirical and Historical, Part 2

- Selections from Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*

Day 11: Behavioral Economics

- Selections from Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational*

Day 12: Experimental Economics

- Selections from Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics*

Day 13: Thought Experiments

- Kimberley Brownlee and Zofia Stemplowska, “Thought Experiments”, in *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*, ed. Adrian Blau, Chapter 7

Day 14: Reflective Equilibrium

- Norman Daniels, “Reflective Equilibrium”, in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Day 15: **Midterm**

### *Unit 3: Methodological Lenses*

Day 16: Ideal Theory

- Laura Valentini, “Ideal vs. Non-ideal Theory: A Conceptual Map”, *Philosophy Compass* 7/9, 654–664.

Day 17: Nonideal Theory

- David Schmidtz, “Nonideal Theory: What It Is and What It Needs to Be”, *Ethics*, 121 (4), 772-96.

Day 18: Feasibility

- Anca Gheaus, “The Feasibility Constraint on the Concept of Justice”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 63 (252), pp. 445-464.

Day 19: Utopianism

- David Estlund, “Human Nature and the Limits (If Any) of Political Philosophy”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 39 (3), 207-237

Day 20: Realism

- William Galston, “Realism in Political Theory”, *European Journal of Political Theory* 9(4) 385–411.

### *Unit 4: Formal Tools*

Day 21: Game Theory

- Gerald Gaus, *On Philosophy, Politics and Economics*, Ch. 4

Day 22: Rational Choice Theory

- Brian Kogelmann and Gerald Gaus, “Rational Choice Theory” in *Methods in Analytical Political Theory*, ed. Adrian Blau, Ch. 11

Day 23: Social Choice Theory

- Daniel Hausman and Michael McPherson, *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy and Public Policy*, Ch. 13

Day 24: Public Choice Theory

- James Buchanan, “Public Choice: Politics without Romance”

*Unit 5: Students’ Choice*

Day 25: Students’ Choice

Day 26: Students’ Choice

Day 27: Students’ Choice

Day 28: Students’ Choice

Day 29: Review for Final

Day 30: **Final Exam**