

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY
GVPT459Y
FALL 2023

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BASICS

Course Meeting: MW 2-3:15pm in TYD 2102

ELMS Site: <https://myelms.umd.edu> (login required)

Office Hours: Online by email (or Zoom appointment)

COURSE OVERVIEW

Is “ideology” a bad word in politics? Does it imply bias and motivated reasoning on the part of a political actor? Should we seek to rid ourselves of ideological commitments? Or can ideology be a good thing? Can it help us make valuable progress of some sort? If so, how do we judge differing ideologies? Moreover, does a failure to stand by our ideological principles make us wise and open to compromise, or hopelessly hypocritical? Whether good or bad, is ideology unavoidable? Can we ever extract ourselves from it completely?

These are fundamental questions with heightened relevance in the current political environment. After decades of doubt concerning ideology’s relevance, ideology is once again a hot topic in political science. This course will provide an overview of the comparative study of ideology—that is, well beyond the US-based liberal/conservative divide—from both an ideational and content-oriented as well as a more systematically empirical perspective. As such, although we delve into political theory, the course is not, strictly speaking, a political theory course, in that it introduces causal dimensions of ideology, including causes, effects, and issues of measurement. Nor is it solely an empirically oriented course, at least in a narrow sense of causal identification, given that it devotes considerable time to the content, internal workings, and core tenets of particular ideologies.

The course is divided into three parts: Ideological Foundations, Analysis of Ideology, and Global Ideology. Specific attention is given to ideology’s origins and relationship to material practice, both western and non-western interpretations, and ramifications for contemporary politics. We will study nationalism, liberalism, religious fundamentalism, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and secularism, among other politically influential ideologies.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, I expect you will have gained: (1) a broader knowledge of ideology and its relevance to politics; (2) an ability to compare and contrast differing ideologies, identifying strengths and weaknesses; (3) a deeper understanding of your own ideological commitments and those of others; and (4) a heightened capacity for adapting and improving ideologies to better balance competing values and interests.

REQUIRED READINGS

There are no required textbooks for this course; all readings will be available online or in PDF form via ELMS. I have worked hard to select engaging and informative readings and to allow students to be able to learn as cost-effectively as possible. In return, I expect students to read the required materials noted for each class session *before* the class session in question. Please keep in mind that this course, as a 400-level course in GVPT, contains a significant amount of reading, so you need to plan ahead. To assist you with that, I've typically included the number of pages for each reading, so you can manage your time wisely. Of course, since all readings are readily available to you on ELMS, there is no need for you to spend time hunting them down every week. You can focus on actually reading and enjoying them.

Note that any readings labeled as "recommended" will not be formally tested on quizzes and exams, but may increase your learning and assist your thinking when participating in discussions, working on papers, and constructing essay responses. Many of the recommended readings serve as the basis for lecture content.

COURSE MECHANICS

The course is conducted as a mixture of lecture and discussion. Although it will vary, I will typically lecture for about 40-45 minutes, and then we will use the last portion of class for discussion. To preserve time for discussion, I will not typically take questions during lectures.

Please note that PowerPoint lecture slides will not generally be posted on ELMS. I understand and have considered arguments in favor of posting slides. However, in my experience (and based on some of the research) the reality is that this practice creates "moral hazard" for students, in that the temptation to *not* come to class or to pay very little attention when *in* class is extremely strong when slides are regularly available. That then encourages cramming and limited learning.

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Assessment	Assessment Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Quiz 1	Oct 2, online	15%
Quiz 2	Nov 1, online	20%
Participation	Ongoing (includes response papers)	20%
Research Paper (5-7 pages, double spaced)	Due Dec 8 at 11:59pm (Online submission via ELMS)	25%
Quiz 3	Dec 6, online	20%

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually. The course offers a variety of forms of assessment. Quizzes focus on learning retention, while the research paper will allow you to choose an ideology of interest to you, study it independently, and analyze an important question about its nature. Further information about these forms of assessment will be provided as the course progresses.

Note that regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. In-class participation is included in your grade as described above. You are expected to come to class having read the material for the assigned day, and prepared to participate meaningfully in structured classroom discussions demonstrating that you:

- (1) Have read and comprehended the course material assigned for the class session.
- (2) Have absorbed the material in the lectures.
- (3) Have thought critically about questions posed by readings and lectures.

Examples of high-quality participation include: summarizing the reading for other students; pointing out additional reasons why arguments might be correct; pointing out reasons why arguments may be incorrect; identifying flaws in question formation, logic, or research design; posing questions about how arguments might apply in a different context, or not; proposing alternative hypotheses to research questions at hand; and responding productively to other students doing any of the above. Further information on how to engage meaningfully and productively can be found in the hand-out “Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking” (Browne and Keeley, 2010), attached to this syllabus and available on ELMS under “Assistance and Tips.” See also the student participation rubric posted on the course website, and the rubric I will use for the assessment of your paper.

Note that our aim in discussion is less to “find the right answer” and/or “illustrate our smarts” and more to (1) confirm understanding of readings and lecture material and (2) explore alternative perspectives on the questions asked, playing them out in a friendly, collaborative process that, ideally, will be intellectually exciting and help you develop and refine your own thinking.

Here is the percentage to letter grade conversion chart that we use:

97 or above	A+
93 to 96	A
90 to 92	A-
87 to 89	B+
83 to 86	B
80 to 82	B-
77 to 79	C+
73 to 76	C
70 to 72	C-
67 to 69	D+
63 to 66	D
60 to 62	D-
59 or below	F

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

In order to succeed, and I want you to succeed in this course, here are some guidelines.

- First, come to class and take good notes. Practice the art of self-control by challenging yourself to stay focused and open-minded. Mindfulness and the ability to focus without distraction are fundamental skills in this age of information, and they will serve you well beyond this particular course.
- Second, keep up with the reading. Learning how to read actively and efficiently is an important skill for you to learn and cultivate, and it will get easier. When reading, take notes, highlight, write comments in the margins, summarize key points in your own words, and ask yourself the “Ten Critical Thinking Questions” provided with this syllabus and under “Assistance and Tips” on ELMS.
- Third, engage with the material: stay up to date on ELMS; keep in mind the exam and due dates, and plan accordingly; talk to friends and family about what you’re learning to help yourself remember and process it; and play devil’s advocate with yourself to stimulate deeper thinking. Be in touch with me. I am delighted to talk with you during my office hours, and you can email me any time with questions or comments. You will typically be rewarded with a quick response.
- Be polite, civil, and honorable. During discussion, you are here to learn, try on different analytic hats, experiment with various perspectives, and advance your own knowledge and thinking on these important issues. When you are in this class, you are a social scientist and an intellectual, and not a lobbyist, pundit, or activist.
- Please do not use cell phones during lectures, don’t walk in and out frequently, don’t eat breakfast or lunch, and don’t whisper to your neighbor. Of course, you may bring water, soda, coffee, etc. Caffeine is very welcome.

COPYRIGHT

Course materials that exist in a tangible medium, such as written or recorded lectures, PowerPoint presentations, handouts and tests, are copyright protected. This means that class lectures are copyrighted. You may not copy and distribute such materials except for personal use, and with my express permission. This means you may not audio-record or video-record class sessions without my permission, and you may not sell course materials or post them on a website. Be aware that copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

ABSENCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Students claiming *excused absence* must notify the course instructor in a timely manner, preferably prior to the excused absence, and provide appropriate documentation. For an excused absence, students are responsible for information and material missed on the day of excused absence, and within reason are entitled to receive materials provided to the class during the excused absence. University Policy defines an excused absence as follows:

“Events that justify an excused absence include religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not

typically qualify for excused absence.”

In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student should inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. See below for more information on excused absences based on religious observance and medically necessary absences. For all other absences, students must provide verifiable documentation upon request (e.g., court summons).

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

You should notify your instructor within the first 10 days of classes (the schedule adjustment period) if you will miss a class or an examination date due to religious observance. You will be allowed to make up academic assignments or exams for such absences in keeping with university policy. Note that it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance.

MEDICALLY NECESSARY ABSENCES

For every medically necessary absence from class (lecture, recitation, or lab), a reasonable effort should be made to notify your instructor in advance of the class. When returning to class after the first such absence, students may bring a “self-certified note”—a note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.

Typically, after the second such absence, or if the absence occurs on the date of a Major Scheduled Grading Event (identified on the syllabus), documentation by a health care professional is required. Students must provide documentation from a physician or the University Health Center for the absence to be recorded as an excused one and to receive accommodation. In cases where students are asked to provide verification, the course instructor may request the dates of treatment or the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities, but may not request diagnostic information.

POLICY FOR LATE PAPERS

Due dates for assigned papers are listed on the syllabus. Papers that are submitted late, without arranging with the instructor for an extension based on a university-approved excuse, will be penalized a third of a grade per day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University has an active Student Honor Council. The Honor Council sets high standards for academic integrity, and I support its efforts. It has a nationally recognized Honor Code, involving the Honor Pledge. The Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper, or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students should write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a community of trust on the College Park campus. Allegations of academic dishonesty should be reported directly to the Honor Council by any member of the campus community. For additional information, consult the Office of Student Conduct.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who will need accommodations must contact the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) to discuss accommodations and obtain documentation applicable to the current semester. (For updated policies, see <https://counseling.umd.edu/ads/>.) Students are responsible for presenting this documentation to the instructor in a timely fashion to discuss and obtain signed approval for accommodations, so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. Please note that students with testing accommodations are required to reserve their seat with the ADS Testing Office at least three business days in advance of their testing session. (Business days do not include Saturdays and Sundays.) If students miss this deadline, they will be unable to book a test. See <https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/start/testtaking/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**** Denotes a “Major Scheduled Grading Event”**

PART 1: IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week 1

Aug 28 **Course Introduction**

Sep 30 **What is Ideology? Everyday Intuitions**

- Read Klein, “For Elites, Politics is Driven by Ideology. For Voters, It’s Not,” *Vox* (pp. 1-6).
- Also, please take the following online quiz (20 questions) and be prepared to discuss in class.

https://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=what-is-your-political-ideology_1

Week 2

Sep 4 **Labor Day – No Class**

Sep 6 **Defining Ideology**

- Read Carmines and D’Amico, “The New Look in Political Ideology Research,” *Annual Review of Political Science* (pp. 205-216).
- *Recommended:* Freedman, “Ideology and Political Theory,” *Journal of Political Ideologies*, and Jost, Federico, and Napier, “Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities,” *Annual Review of Psychology*.

Week 3

Sep 11 Foundations: Liberalism and Conservatism (Part One)

- “Reinventing Liberalism for the 21st Century,” *The Economist* (pp. 45-54).
- Mishra, “Liberalism according to The Economist,” *The New Yorker* (pp. 1-6).
- *Recommended*: Freedman, *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction*; and Scruton, *Conservatism: An Invitation to the Great Tradition*.

Sep 13 Foundations: Liberalism and Conservatism (Part Two)

- Read Tierney, “Why are Americans So Ideologically United?” *The Atlantic* (pp. 1-4).
- Read Sullivan, “America Desperately Needs a Healthy Conservatism,” *New York Magazine* (pp. 1-9).
- *Recommended*: Scruton, *Conservatism: An Invitation to the Great Tradition*.

Week 4

**** Two response papers due on Friday 9/22 by 11:59pm**

Sep 18 At-Home Media Assignment (Part One)

- Watch “The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology” (on Zizek, 136 minutes, streaming)
- **Complete 1-2 page Zizek response paper (see ELMS for assignment details), and submit on ELMS by Sunday 9/27 at 10pm.**

Sep 20 At-Home Media Assignment (Part Two)

- Watch “I, Borg,” an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (46 minutes, streaming) to try your hand at Zizek’s style of ideological discursive analysis.
- **Complete 1-2 page Star Trek response paper (see ELMS for assignment details), and submit on ELMS by Sunday 9/27 at 10pm.**

Week 5

Sep 25 Discussion: Ideology and Pop Culture

- Prepare to discuss both response papers in class, and read Blakley, “Liberals and Conservatives Have Wildly Different TV-Viewing Habits—But These 5 Shows Bring Everyone Together,” *The Conversation* (pp. 1-3).

Sep 27 Foundations: Religion and Secularism

- Read Mahmood, “Religious Freedom, Minority Rights, and Geopolitics,” *The Immanent Frame* (pp. 1-6).
- *Recommended*: Keddie, Nikki R. 2003. “Secularism and its Discontents.” *Daedalus*; Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*; Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Chapter, “The Secularization Debate”); Pollack, “Varieties of Secularization Theories and Their Indispensable Core,” *The Germanic Review*; Swatos and Christiano, “Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept,” *Sociology of Religion*.

PART 2: ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGY

Week 6

Oct 2 **** Quiz 1 (online)**

Oct 4 **NO CLASS (Professor giving invited talk at Yale University)**

Week 7

Oct 9 **Nationalism: The First Modern Ideology?**

- Read Smith, "Citizenship and the Politics of People-Building," *Citizenship Studies* (pp. 73-96).
- *Recommended:* Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review*; Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army and Military Power," *International Security*; Wimmer, "Elementary Strategies of Ethnic Boundary Making," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*; Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* and Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.

Oct 11 **From Nationalism to Patriotism**

- Read Sapolsky, "This is Your Brain on Nationalism: The Biology of Us and Them," *Foreign Affairs* (pp. 42-47).
- Read Lepore, "A New Americanism: Why a Nation Needs a National Story," *Foreign Affairs* (pp. 10-19).

Week 8

Oct 16 **Communism and Fascism: How Similar, How Different?**

- Read Cain, "The Failure to Define Fascism Today," *The New Republic* (pp. 1-5).
- *Recommended:* Tismaneanu, *The Devil in History: Communism, Fascism, and Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century*.

Oct 18 **Extremism and Radicalism in Comparative Perspective**

- To gain insight into radical ideological thinking,¹ please read the following texts and complete the worksheet that will be posted:
 - Sayyid Qutb, "The America I Have Seen" (religious extremism)
 - Excerpts from "The Great Replacement" allegedly by Brenton Tarrant (far-right extremism); read only the Introduction and the following 16 pages, skipping the poetry in the beginning
 - The manifesto allegedly written by Willem van Spronsen (far-left extremism)

¹ *Trigger warning:* The readings for this day include primary sources (e.g., manifestos) by those connected with political violence, such as radical Islamist (Qutb), Islamophobic/white supremacist (Tarrant), and far-left (Van Spronsen). These readings may be disturbing to some students. If you feel the need to step outside the classroom, you are welcome to do so without academic penalty, and you may also request a different reading/assignment.

Week 9

Oct 23 **Humanism, Ideology, and Education (Guest Speaker)**

- TBA

Oct 25 **Ideology and Personality**

- Read Gerber et al. “The Big Five Personality Traits in the Political Arena,” *Annual Review of Political Science* (pp. 265-287).

Week 10

Oct 30 **Ideology and Ethics**

- Read Jost, “Left and Right, Right and Wrong: The Politics of Morality” in the *Washington Post* (review of Haidt’s *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*), pp. 1-6.
- Go to <https://www.yourmorals.org/explore.php> and take the “Moral Foundations Questionnaire” (original), after registering, which is closely tied to *The Righteous Mind*.
- *Recommended:* Arceneaux, “The Roots of Intolerance and Opposition to Compromise: The Effects of Absolutism on Political Attitudes,” *Personality and Individual Differences*.

Nov 1 **** Quiz 2 (online)**

Week 11

Nov 6 **Ideology and Emotion**

- Read McAuliffe, “Liberals and Conservatives React in Wildly Different Ways to Repulsive Pictures,” *The Atlantic* (pp. 1-13).
- Read Young, “No, Conservatives Don’t Experience Feelings of Disgust Any More Than Liberals,” *Research Digest of the British Psychological Society* (pp. 1-2).
- *Recommended:* Hibbing, Smith, and Alford, “Differences in Negativity Bias Underlie Variations in Political Ideology,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, and Elad-Stranger, Proch, and Kessler, “Is Disgust a ‘Conservative’ Emotion?” *Empirical Research Paper*.

Nov 8 **Ideology and Gender**

- Read Glick and Fiske, “Ambivalent Sexism Revisited,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (pp. 530-535).
- *Recommended:* Al-Rasheed, “Caught Between Religion and State: Women in Saudi Arabia” in *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic, and Religious Change*, pp. 292-313.

Week 13

Nov 13 Ideology and Social Media

- Read Garrett, “Facebook’s Problem is More Complicated Than Fake News,” *The Conversation* (pp. 1-4).
- *Recommended*: Bail et al. “Exposure to Opposing Views On Social Media Can Increase Political Polarization,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (pp. 9216-9221).

Nov 15 End of Cold War, End of Ideology?

- Read Weiss, “A World Safe for Autocracy? China’s Rise and the Future of Global Politics,” *Foreign Affairs* (pp. 92-102).

PART 3: GLOBAL IDEOLOGY

Week 13

Nov 20 NO CLASS

Nov 22 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

Week 14

Nov 27 Populism and Ideological Justifications for Authoritarianism

- Read Mayer, “Strategies of Justification in Authoritarian Ideology,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* (pp. 147-168).
- *Recommended*: For an example of authoritarian populism, read al-Qaddafi, “The Green Book” (ONLY pp. 1-16).

Nov 29 From Imperialism to Developmentalism and Ideological Branding

- Read Easterly, “The Ideology of Developmentalism,” *Foreign Policy* (pp. 30-35).
- Read Leipziger, Rubin, Khan, and Easterly, “In Defense of Development,” *Foreign Policy* (pp. 14-18).
- *Recommended*: Boisen, “The Changing Moral Justification of Empire: From the Right to Colonise to the Obligation to Civilise,” *History of European Ideas*; Pitts, “Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism,” *Annual Review of Political Science*.

Week 15

**** Paper Due on Friday, December 8, at 11:59pm EST – Submit Online via ELMS**

Dec 4 Cosmopolitanism, Multiculturalism, and Nationalism Revisited

- Read Appiah, “The Importance of Elsewhere: In Defense of Cosmopolitanism,” *Foreign Affairs* (pp. 20-26).

- Read Kymlicka, “The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism? New Debates on Inclusion and Accommodation in Diverse Societies,” *International Social Science Journal*.

Dec 6 ** Quiz 3

Week 16

Dec 11 Discussion of final papers