

## HERTOG 2020 Political Studies Program

### AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM

Yuval Levin, editor, *National Affairs* |  
director, Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies, AEI

This intensive seminar is run in conjunction with *National Affairs* magazine. It aims to educate advanced undergraduate students about the intersection of theory and practice in our national politics, and particularly in our key economic debates. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the major domestic challenges confronting our country, of just what policymakers do, of how economics and politics interact, and of how to approach some of our most contentious national debates.

#### Books:

- Course Reader

**Discussants:** Discussants are assigned to specific questions below and should be ready to offer a reflective response to their assigned question during the seminar. Discussants do not need to prepare a formal written response, but they are encouraged to work from personal notes.

#### Resources

To learn more about the ideas and figures discussed in this course, we encourage you to explore a project supported by the Hertog Foundation: **The Great Thinkers** (<http://thegreatthinkers.org/>) and **Contemporary Thinkers** (<http://contemporarythinkers.org/>) websites. These sites are aimed at introducing important thinkers in Western thought, with a particular emphasis on politics and philosophy.

---

### Monday, July 27, 2020

---

10 a.m. to Noon ET

How to Think About Economic Policy Debates

#### Readings:

- Publius, *Federalist* No. 1
- Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Chs. 8–10
- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, Ch. 5

#### Questions:

1. Do political leaders have a responsibility to prioritize economic prosperity?
2. Does private property serve a social purpose?
3. Does the economic order of a society shape the character of its citizens?

---

## Wednesday, July 29, 2020

---

10 a.m. to Noon. ET

### Capitalism & the Welfare State

#### Readings:

- Thomas Paine, "Agrarian Justice," 1797
- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Ch. 1, "Bourgeois and Proletariat"
- Theodore Roosevelt, "The New Nationalism," August 31, 1910
- Friedrich Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, Ch. 17

#### Questions:

1. What are our obligations toward the poor? What are the government's obligations?
2. Are there moral obligations that being wealthy imposes on the people who are wealthy? What are they? What are their limits?
3. Does commercial society place any special burdens on, or give any special opportunities to, the poor? Are poor people better off in commercial societies, or in other kinds of society?
4. What is the problem to which Marx and Engels want to offer a solution?
5. What are the benefits and drawbacks of centralized management of the economy?
6. Are markets democratic?

---

## Friday, July 31, 2020

---

10 a.m. to Noon ET

### Health Care & Entitlements

#### Readings:

- Donald Marron, "America in the Red," *National Affairs* (Spring 2010)
- Kaiser Family Foundation, "Summary of the Affordable Care Act," April 2013
- Antos, Capretta, et al., "Improving Health and Health Care," pp. 1–26

#### Questions:

1. Why is our country facing a fiscal crisis? Are the primary causes political, economic, or moral? How are these connected?
2. What economic obligations does one generation have to the next?
3. What is the connection between the moral case for providing benefits and the problem of paying for them?

---

## Tuesday, August 4, 2020

---

10 a.m. to Noon ET

### Higher Education & Liberal Education

#### Readings:

- Andrew Kelly, "Higher-Education Reform to Make College and Career Training More Effective and Affordable," *Room to Grow*
- Leo Strauss, "What Is Liberal Education?" in *Introduction to Political Philosophy*

**Questions:**

1. From the perspective of economic policy, should we want students to pursue liberal arts or vocational majors?
2. If we want our society to encourage both liberty and virtue, what kind of education is best?

---

**Thursday, August 6, 2020**

---

**10 a.m. to Noon ET**

**Mobility & Opportunity in a Populist Era**

**Readings:**

- Jared Bernstein and Scott Winship, “Policy Options for Improving Economic Opportunity and Mobility,” June 2015
- Ron Haskins, “Getting Ahead in America,” *National Affairs* (Fall 2009)
- James Manzi, “Keeping America’s Edge,” *National Affairs* (Winter 2010)
- Peter Lawler, “Our Country Split Apart,” *National Affairs* (Winter 2017)

**Questions:**

1. What is the relationship between economic growth and social cohesion? Are they necessarily in tension? Which should we prefer?
2. Is social mobility essential to American life? Should we never be satisfied with our position in society?
3. Does growing income inequality signal a failure of our economic system? If so, is inequality a symptom or a cause?