

Advanced Institute, Winter 2019
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: A LIFE IN THE ARENA
Instructor: Matthew Continetti
Washington, DC

When Charles Krauthammer left medicine for politics in the late 1970s, he was a Jimmy Carter-supporting liberal. When he wrote his last column for *The Washington Post* in 2018, he had become America's most prominent conservative voice. But Krauthammer's conservatism was as unique as his biography—and revealing of the intellectual and political currents of the latter half of the American century. Krauthammer was not only an influential columnist and essayist. He was emblematic of his times.

In this weekend seminar, students will reflect on Charles Krauthammer's seminal writing, distinguished career, and his life dedicated to the things that matter.

Friday, March 22, 2019

6 pm to 8 pm

Dinner and Screening
Conversations with Bill Kristol: Charles Krauthammer

Saturday, March 23, 2019

8:30 am to 9 am

Group Breakfast

9 am to Noon

Session 1: The Man

Readings:

- Introduction to *Cutting Edges*
- Introduction to *Things That Matter*, pp. 1–15
- John Stuart Mill, selections from *The Libertarian Reader*, ed. David Boaz
- Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," *Four Essays on Liberty*, Excerpts
- "Thank You, Isaiah Berlin," *The Point of It All*, pp. 15–17
- "Three Pages of Sage Advice," *The Point of It All*, pp. 125–31
- "Reveries of a Newborn Father," *The Point of It All*, pp. 3–5
- "Marcel, My Brother," *Things That Matter*, pp. 19–21
- "Krauthammer's First Law," *Things That Matter*, pp. 67–69
- "Judging Israel," *Things That Matter*, pp. 251–57

Recommended Readings:

- Isaiah Berlin, "John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life," *J.S. Mill: On Liberty in Focus*, eds. John Gray and G.W. Smith

- Jorge Luis Borges, “The Library of Babel,” *Labyrinths*, trans. James E. Kirby

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe the influences on Krauthammer’s thinking. What events and experiences were important in shaping his sensibility and point of view?
2. What ideas from Mill and Berlin were most important to Krauthammer?
3. What is the “central paradox” of Berlin’s pluralism, according to Krauthammer? Does Krauthammer resolve the paradox in his own thinking?

12:00 pm to 1:30 pm

Lunch and Guest Speaker

Guest Speaker: George F. Will, columnist, *The Washington Post*

1:30 pm to 3 pm

Session 2: His Politics

Readings:

- “Chapter 7: Citizen and State,” *Things That Matter*, pp. 133–49
- “Chapter 15: On Liberty,” *The Point of It All*, pp. 259–76
- “The Mirror-Image Fallacy,” *Things That Matter*, pp. 93–97
- “On Moral Equivalence,” *Cutting Edges*
- “Apocalypse: The End of the World,” *Cutting Edges*
- “When Liberty Really Means Neglect,” *Time*, December 2, 1985
- “Jones Beach and the Decline of Liberalism,” *Time*, September 3, 1994
- “A Social Conservative Credo,” *The Public Interest*, Fall 1995
- “A Critique of Pure Newt,” *The Weekly Standard*, September 17, 1995

Discussion Questions:

1. How do Americans see the world, according to Krauthammer? What follies are they susceptible to? What, if anything, mitigates those errors?
2. Describe Krauthammer’s politics. How did his views change over his career? What continuities do you find?
3. Is Krauthammer a conservative? If so, what kind of conservative is he?

6 pm to 8 pm

Dinner and Discussion

Sunday, March 24, 2019

8:30 am to 9 am

Group Breakfast

9 am to Noon

Session 3: His World

Readings:

- “Chapter 16: Three Essays on America and the World,” *Things That Matter*, pp. 321–65
- “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” *The National Interest*, Winter 2002/2003
- “Chapter 16: Reluctant Colossus,” *The Point of It All*, pp. 279–92
- “Chapter 17: The End of ‘The End of History,’” *The Point of It All*, pp. 293–313

Recommended Readings:

- Francis Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment,” *The National Interest*, Summer 2004
- “In Defense of Democratic Realism” *The National Interest*, Fall 2004

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the situation of the United States, post-Cold War, according to Krauthammer? What does it mean to say we live in a “unipolar world”? In the age of a rising China and resurgent Russia, is this still true?
2. What is “democratic realism”? How does it improve upon the other three schools of American foreign policy? According to democratic realism, what justifies American intervention?

Noon to 2 pm

Lunch and Guest Speaker

Guest Speaker: Daniel Krauthammer, editor, *The Point of It All*