

## HUMANITIES 4903: The Conservative Intellectual Tradition

Dr. Geoffrey C. Kellow

Mondays 8:35-11:25

### Contact Information

Paterson Hall 2A 59 Phone 529-2600 ext. 2473

[Geoffrey.Kellow@carleton.ca](mailto:Geoffrey.Kellow@carleton.ca)

Office hours will be via MSTeams: Tues 2:30-3:00 or by appt.

Appointments can be made through my Calendly portal, accessible from the Undergraduate advising page or by email.

### Course Description

This course will examine key texts in the Conservative Intellectual Tradition beginning with Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and concluding with important conservative thinkers from the present day. The course aims to consider this tradition from the interconnected grounds of philosophy, culture and politics. This course is not intended to convince or dissuade students from adopting conservative views, rather the course seeks to critically examine and understand one of the main strands of modern intellectual life in the West.

### Course Objectives

Students completing this course should possess a grasp of the key issues to which conservatism responds and the circumstances under which it emerges. Students will also possess an understanding of some of the main strands of modern conservative thought and an appreciation for the deep heterogeneity of that thought.

### The Course Format

The course is a seminar. Each week we will discuss one or more texts. Each week at least one student will present on that week's texts and topics.

Students should expect to spend an average of 8 hours per week on this course. Students are expected to complete all required readings before arriving at the seminar. In addition, for many but not all of the seminars, I have attached texts, video or audio clips that are related to the material for that week. Students are strongly encouraged to read, view or listen to that material before seminar.

### Course Requirements

3 Short papers 30%

1 Term Paper 30%  
Seminar Participation 20%  
Seminar Presentation 20%

### **The Short Papers**

Students will be asked to present and submit three short papers over the course of the term. Those papers should be **no longer than four pages double spaced**. Students will sign up for topics during the first week of classes. That paper is meant to serve as a starting point for a discussion of what the papers identify as important aspects of the text in question. The paper must be submitted to me online before the beginning of that week's seminar.

### **Seminar Participation**

Seminar participation is an important part of your grade and critical to the success of the seminar. Each week students should arrive at seminar having read the assigned readings and prepared for discussion. That preparation, as manifested in the quality of seminar discourse and NOT the simple total of interventions over the term, will form the basis of the participation grade.

### **Term Paper**

There is one term paper assignment in this seminar. The term paper should be between 2500 and 3000 words in length. The term paper should be a work of original research, including substantial engagement with secondary scholarly literature, on an author or theme treated in the seminar. The term paper may be based on your seminar presentation. The term paper is due **Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**. **Papers should be submitted directly to me at the beginning of the seminar.**

Students must also submit a paper proposal, a one-page outline of their research plan. The paper proposal is due in class on **Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup>** and is a **required** component of the paper assignment.

**Late Policy:** Papers are due at the beginning of seminar and should be emailed directly to me. Papers submitted after that will be docked **10% per day** to a maximum of five days. After that papers will receive a grade of zero.

### **A Note on the Seminar Format**

This seminar's format is informed by and adheres to the principles identified in *The University of Chicago Statement on Free Expression* (<https://carleton.ca/bhum/academic-institutions/university-chicago-statement-freedom-expression/>) as endorsed by the Bachelor of Humanities Program at the College of the Humanities. Participants should expect a seminar environment that welcomes and celebrates a heterodoxy characterized by lively and respectful civil discourse.

### **The Golden Rules**

1. When evaluating either a text we are reading **or** comments made by the instructor or your peers **intent matters**.
2. **Adjacency is irrelevant**. When reading these texts and discussing the ideas of individual thinkers, who they knew or where they were situated is relevant only to the extent that it illuminates their ideas.

3. In responding to **ALL** statements made in seminar students should address the substance of the statement and not the character of the speaker.
4. The substance and specifics of our discussions, whether direct quotation or broad description thereof are NOT to be shared in public venues or published either professionally or on social media.

### **Required Texts**

Students should acquire the following texts from the vendor and by the means most convenient for them during the pandemic.

Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Hackett)  
Tocqueville, *Ancien Regime and the French Revolution* (Anchor)  
Gustave Flaubert, *Sentimental Education* (Penguin)  
Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, (Oxford Classics)  
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Vintage)  
T.S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture*, (Mariner)  
Jean Bethke Elstain, *Democracy on Trial* (Anansi)  
Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics & Other Essays* (Liberty Fund)  
Friedrich Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit* (Chicago)  
Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy* (Atlantic Books)

### **Seminar Schedule**

#### Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup>

Introduction, *What is Conservatism?*

#### **Required Readings** (Brightspace)

Samuel Huntington “Conservatism as an Ideology” (American Political Science Review, 1957)

Russell Kirk, *Ten Conservative Principles*, (Kirk Center)

Friedrich Hayek, *Why I am not a Conservative*, (Chicago)

#### **Recommended**

George Nash “The Conservative Intellectual Tradition in America” (Brightspace)

Roger Scruton “What Conservatism Really Means” (Brightspace)

#### Monday, September 20<sup>st</sup>

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

#### **Recommended**

Gertrude Himmelfarb “Reflections on Edmund Burke’s “Reflections on the Revolution in France.”

C-SPAN lecture (Brightspace)

Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

**Recommended**

Edmund Burke, *Speech to the Electors of Bristol* (Brightspace)

Jesse Norman, *On Edmund Burke*, BBC Lecture. (Brightspace)

Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Regime & The French Revolution*

**Recommended**

James Poulos, *Why Alexis De Tocqueville Matters Today*. (Video/ Brightspace)

Monday October 18<sup>th</sup>

Gustave Flaubert, *Sentimental Education*

**Recommended**

“The Revolutions of 1848” *BBC:In Our Time* (Audio/ Brightspace)

Monday November 1<sup>st</sup>

Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*

Matthew Arnold, *Dover Beach* (Brightspace)

**Recommended Reading**

Himmelfarb, “Dissent and Dogma” in *The New Republic*, June 13, 1994 (Brightspace)

Giuseppe di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*

Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>

T.S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture*

T.S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*, (Brightspace)

**Recommended** (But C’mon Seriously, Why Wouldn’t You?)

T.S. Eliot reads “Little Gidding” (Brightspace)

Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup>

Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*

**Recommended**

Albert Jay Nock, *Isaiah’s Job* (Brightspace)

David Foster Wallace, *This is Water* (Brightspace)

Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Harry Potter, St. Augustine and the Confrontation with Evil* (Brightspace)

Monday November 22<sup>nd</sup>

Friedrich Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*

Friedrich Hayek, *Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech* (Brightspace)

**Recommended**

Nicholas Wapshott, *Keynes and Hayek*, (Norton)

Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup> **Paper Proposal Due**

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

**Recommended**

Jane Jacobs, *Dark Age Ahead* (Vintage)

Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup>

Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics & Other Essays* (Selections)

**Recommended**

Himmerlfarb, "The Conservative Imagination" (Brightspace)

Friday December 10<sup>th</sup> **Term Papers due at beginning of seminar**

Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy: How to think Seriously About the Planet* (Selections, Brightspace)

Wendell Berry, "It All Turns On Affection" (Brightspace)

John Crowe Ransom, "Sunset" (Brightspace)

**Recommended**

Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (Penguin)