

## Syl03FDennehy012230501

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R 1-2 PM & by appt.

Spring 2003  
Office Hours:  
T 11: AM-Noon

Required Texts (USF bookstore)  
*Man and the State*, Maritain  
*What's So Great About America*, D'Souza  
*On Liberty*, Mill

### Course Objectives

To introduce the student to meaning of liberal democracy and the challenges it faces, particularly its most fundamental challenge of reconciling the commitment to maximum personal freedom and the essential conditions for the existence of liberal democracy; to develop in the student the mindset of viewing topics of current public debate in the context of the question whether the pro or con position is compatible with the conditions for the existence of liberal democracy.

### Learning Outcomes

- 1) The student will offer and explain a definition of "liberal democracy";
- 2) will present representative arguments for and against liberal democracy;
- 3) will offer definitions of "freedom," "rights," "justice," and "equality" and show to what extent each should operate.
- 4) show a familiarity with contemporary topics of debate and their pro and con arguments, such as the death penalty, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, medical marijuana, gay marriage, etc and demonstrate their pertinence to the democratic ethos.

### Grading

Evaluation of student performance in the course will be based on attendance, 3 written tests and a final examination.

**Attendance:** Four unexcused absences will lower the final grade by one full letter grade, five unexcused absences will lower it by two full letter grades, etc. Thus a series of unexcused absences can result in an "F" for the course. Only a physician's note or a note stating that the absence was due to an official university activity or documented evidence of extenuating circumstances will be accepted as grounds for an excused absence.

**Tests:** The tests will be administered every several weeks and will comprise 60% of the final grade; the **final examination** will constitute 40% of the final grade. The tests will be given on Wed., Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, Wed., Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, and Mon., Nov. 17. **The final examination date is Friday, December 12 at noon.** An unexcused failure to take any of the tests at the appointed time and place will result in an "F" for the test; an unexcused failure to take the final examination at the appointed time and place will result in an "F" for the course. As with class attendance, only a physician's note or a note stating that the absence was

due to an official university activity or documented evidence of extenuating circumstances will be accepted as an excuse.

### **Schedule**

M 9/1 Holiday (Labor Day) – no class

W 9/ 24 test

W 10/15 test

M 11/ 17 test

W 10/20 no class

W 11/ 5 possibly no class

### **Friday, December 12 at noon: Final Examination**

Part I: The Founding Principles of Liberal Democracy

Text: Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State*

- Topics:
1. The People and the State
  2. The Concept of Sovereignty
  3. The Problem of Means
  4. Human Rights
  5. The Democratic Charter
  6. Church and State
  7. The Problem of World Government

Part II: Is America Really So Great?

Text: Dinesh D'Souza, *What's So Great About America*

1. Hostility Towards America
2. The Rise and Dominance of the West
3. The Uniqueness of the American Idea of Political Society
4. Does America Owe Reparations to African Americans?
5. The Value of Freedom and Its Abuses
6. What is Worth Defending in America

Part III: Whether Liberal Democracy Is Self-Destructive

Text: John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

- Topics:
1. Personal Freedom in Mass Society
  2. Freedom of Thought and Discussion
  3. The Cost of Individualism
  4. How Much Control Should Society Have Over an Individual?

Current Challenges to Liberal Democracy

- a. the death penalty
- b. abortion

- c. physician-assisted suicide
- d. *Pax Americana*
- e. free market capitalism