

**The 2014 Freedom Project Wintersession  
Institute on Liberty and Social Policy  
Wellesley College**

**Monday, January 20**

**9:30-11:30 Nigel Ashford, Institute for Humane Studies**

***The Role of Government***

What is the role of government? This session examines the classical liberal answers to three questions. How do we decide what the role of government should be (philosophy or methodology)? Why should government be limited (consequences or rights)? What is the legitimate role of government? The different answers to those questions are presented in five different schools of classical liberalism: Chicago, Public Choice, Austrian, Natural Rights, and Anarcho-Capitalism. Students will share their answers to these questions in relation to these schools of thought.

**1:30-3:30 Jason Brennan, Georgetown University**

***Libertarianism, Democracy, and Government***

What we want government to be empowered to do depends in part on how well government will use that power. The very power we create to help secure our children's future will often be used against our children instead. In the real world, we cannot just assume government agents will always act competently or in good faith. This session explores questions such as: What is government failure? Why do libertarians tend to oppose interventionist government? Why are libertarians not much excited by, and sometimes even hostile to, democracy?

**Tuesday, January 21**

**9:30-11:30 Jason Brennan, Georgetown University**

***Economic Freedom and the Poor***

Libertarians are often said not to be concerned with social justice. Yet Adam Smith revolutionized economics by saying the wealth of nations is measured not by the size of the king's castles, but by the opportunity available to the common person. What do libertarians really think about issues of poverty and social justice? Would libertarianism leave the poor behind? Must we choose between economic liberty or prosperity for the poor? This session explores how

libertarians seek to promote positive liberty, opportunity, and prosperity for all, not just the rich.

**1:30-3:30 Nigel Ashford, Institute for Humane Studies**

***Changing Public Policy: Ideas or Interests?***

How does public policy get changed? What is the role of ideas and interests? We will look at three different views on how to change public policy. First, Hayek and Friedman emphasize the role of ideas and intellectuals. Second, Public Choice theorists emphasize the role of interests. Third, Neoconservatives emphasize the role of the interests of intellectuals. What is the best strategy for changing public policy?

**January 22**

**9:30-11:30 Sharon Presley**

***Individualist and Libertarian Feminism***

Individualist and libertarian feminism are ideas rarely discussed in feminist circles, yet they have a rich tradition going back to the individualist feminist activists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though misunderstood by their critics, both are solidly rooted in the honorable traditions of ethical individualism and classical liberalism. These philosophies provide a strong base for a rediscovered feminism that dares to question the overt paternalism of the State and the covert paternalism of leftist feminism and provide fresh alternatives.

**1:30-3:30 Naomi Schafer Riley**

***Contentious Journalism***

I have been writing about higher education, among other topics, for the better part of 15 years now. My writing had been published in every major newspaper in the country. When the Chronicle of Higher Education offered me a side job blogging for them around the time my book arguing against tenure was going to be published, I happily accepted. Sure, the Chronicle has a reputation for being liberal but they had published articles by me before and I always appreciated an opportunity to speak to the other side. Preaching to the choir can be fun but it doesn't do much for advancing a debate. It turned out, however, that advancing debate was not what the Chronicle really wanted. I'll offer a little bit of background to the story and also talk about my writing career more generally, how I see the debate shifting both in journalism and in the academy and some ideas for students thinking about either field.

## **January 23**

**9:30-11:30 James Otteson, Wake Forest University**

### ***Adam Smith's Marketplace of Morality***

Where do our moral sensibilities come from? Do they change over time? How? In this seminar we will look at Adam Smith's account of the generation, development, and change over time of our moral sentiments, and how they comport with a 'marketplace' model. If Smith is right, what political-economic implications, if any, does his theory have?"

**1:30-3:30 Thomas Cushman, Wellesley College**

### ***The Fragility of Liberty***

For most of the history of Western civilization, liberty (*libertas*) has been the highest ideal. It is also the most fragile. Why is the most important value also the most fragile? This session looks at different senses of liberty put forth in social thought and defends *negative liberty* as the highest and most valuable form of freedom. We will look at threats to such liberty that come the ideology and practice of modern statism and explore ways in which social policy might benefit from anarchic modalities of thought that begin with the premise that the state is almost always the problem rather than the solution to enduring social problems and the human struggle for freedom.