

## Politics and Culture from All Sides

**Fall 2025**

Dates: Wednesday, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3, 12/10

Time: 12:00–1:15 PM

Facilitators: Professor [Eitan Hersh](#), [Arik Burakovsky](#)

Location: Eaton 201

### Course Description

Hosted by the newly established [Center for Expanding Viewpoints in Higher Education](#) (CEVIHE), this weekly series explores politics and culture by reading controversial books and articles, engaging with faculty discussants and guest speakers, and discussing sensitive political, economic, and social issues with depth, humility, and courage. Each week, participants will encounter sophisticated arguments associated with a diversity of ideological, religious, and cultural worldviews. Lunch will be provided.

*This series is offered as a 1-credit reading group (PS 0008-03: Workshop in Political Science), but all students, faculty, and staff across Tufts University are welcome to attend regardless of their official enrollment in the course. Non-enrolled attendees are encouraged to participate routinely.*

### Expectations

All participants are expected to treat others with respect. By design, this series will present attendees with a wide range of perspectives, some of which you may find objectionable. Those who do not want to discuss controversial public affairs and policy topics in a civil, rigorous manner should not attend.

Students enrolled in the reading group for credit must review all the assigned pre-class readings and other materials, and they are required to participate actively in the conversation. All other participants are strongly encouraged to do the same.

Participants should buy or borrow the following three books. All other readings will be made available online via Canvas. Please [contact us](#) if you want to be added to the Canvas site or if you have any questions about the workshop.

Patrick Deneen. [\*Why Liberalism Failed\*](#). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.

Marty Makary. [\*Blind Spots: When Medicine Gets It Wrong, and What It Means for Our Health\*](#). New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2024.

Amia Srinivasan. [\*The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century\*](#). New York, NY: Picador Paper, 2022.

## Schedule

### October 22: Expanding Viewpoints on Campus

Does the recent push for “viewpoint diversity” in academia protect the free marketplace of ideas, or does it risk legitimizing fringe beliefs and eroding shared standards of truth?

Reading: Lisa Siraganian. “[Seven Theses Against Viewpoint Diversity](#).” *Academe Magazine*, Fall 2025.

*Discussant: Professor [Michael Glennon](#), The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy*

### October 29: The Fate of Liberalism

Has liberal democracy reached the end of its promise, or are its critics overstating their case?

Reading: Patrick Deneen. [\*Why Liberalism Failed\*](#). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.

*Discussant: Professor [Vickie Sullivan](#), Department of Political Science*

### November 5: Rethinking Race

Is “race” a helpful way to understand identity and inequality, or does it obscure more than it explains?

Reading: Lionel McPherson. [\*The Afterlife of Race: An Informed Philosophical Search\*](#). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2024. Pages 2-13.

*Discussant: Professor [Lionel McPherson](#), Department of Philosophy*

### **November 12: Trust in Medicine**

When medicine makes mistakes, should we lose trust in science or demand that it earns our trust in new ways?

Reading: Marty Makary. [Blind Spots: When Medicine Gets It Wrong, and What It Means for Our Health](#). New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2024.

*Discussant: Professor [Keren Ladin](#), Department of Community Health*

### **November 19: Religion Remixed**

Are today's "new religions" signs of spiritual decline, or do they reveal new ways people search for meaning?

Reading: Tara Isabella Burton. [Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World](#). New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2020. (Required: Chapter 1; Optional: Chapter 8)

*Discussant: Professor [Ken Garden](#), Department of Religion*

### **December 3: The Politics of Sex**

Is sex ever truly private, or do politics, power, and inequality always shape it?

Reading: Amia Srinivasan. [The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century](#). New York, NY: Picador Paper, 2022.

*Discussant: Professor [Nancy Bauer](#), Department of Philosophy*

### **December 10: Current Affairs Discussion**

Which recent events most challenge how we think about politics, culture, and liberal democracy in the United States and globally?

*Discussant: Professor [Eitan Hersh](#), Department of Political Science*