

Political Science 302  
Free Will, Nature, and Nurture in Politics and Society  
Spring 2023  
Professor Mark Alan Smith

The midterm exam will be in person on Tuesday, April 25. Bring a full-size “blue book,” which is the usual name for examination books with a blue cover and blank, lined pages. They can be purchased at the U Bookstore on the Ave., or in the HUB location. Your blue book must be new and unused, with no pages missing and no writing on the interior pages.

The exam will consist of six medium-length questions requiring about two paragraphs for a good answer. They won’t be full-blown essays, but they will require some extended writing for you to develop your answer.

The questions could ask you to explain a particular idea or concept. They could also be synthetic in asking you to integrate or compare one area of the course to another. For the most part, they won’t be the sort where you can simply write down whatever you studied. Instead, you’ll need to think on the spot and show that you can engage the course material, as opposed to merely reciting it.

While you’re studying, it will be helpful to always be thinking, “how does this relate to free will, nature, and/or nurture?” For purposes of the exam, any details are important only to the extent that they speak to larger questions about free will, nature, and/or nurture.

As I explained on the first day of class, all material from the lectures is eligible for the exam.

The readings/videos/podcasts will also be useful in that they have built your general knowledge. I also promised that there would be no questions drawing specifically from one of the readings/videos/podcasts unless I gave you advance notice. This memo serves that purpose. Thus, there could be questions that directly relate to the authors listed below. If one or more of these authors appears on the exam, I’ll give you their name and the title of their piece, which will make it easier for you to keep track of who said what. Any questions based on these authors will connect up with their main points. In other words, I won’t pull something obscure from the middle of their article or presentation.

Finally, a reminder that all material from the lectures is also eligible for the exam.

**March 30** Robert Sapolsky, *The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (2018)

**April 6** Adrian Raine, *Making a Murderer* (2021); and Stephen Cave, *There’s No Such Thing as Free Will* (2016)

**April 11** Raj Chetty, *Improving Equality of Opportunity* (2019)

**April 13** Laith Al-Shawaf, Seven Key Misconceptions about Evolutionary Psychology (2019); and Laith Al-Shawaf, Evolutionary Psychology: Predictively Powerful or Just-So Stories? (2020)

**April 18** Michele Gelfand, Understanding the Cultural Codes that Drive Behavior (2019)

**April 20** Alison Gopnik, The Gardener and the Carpenter, talk at Google (2016)