

# PLSC 1360: Introduction to Political Theory

## Section 001

Southern Methodist University  
Fall 2024  
M/W/F 2:00 pm – 2:50 pm  
Clements Hall 126

### Professor Avshalom Schwartz

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesdays, 3:00-4:00 PM  
Carr-Collins 210

### Course Description & Learning Outcomes:

This course offers a general introduction to political theory. It is designed for students with little or no prior background in philosophy and aims to provide a broad overview of key themes, concepts, questions, and ideas from some of the major thinkers in the history of political thought across several of its subfields (including the history of political thought, normative political theory, democratic theory, critical political theory, comparative political theory).

The primary goal of the course is to expand students' political vocabulary and provide an opportunity to reflect on some of the core concepts and ideas that we all use in our daily political life. We will study concepts such as justice, equality, and freedom, explore major ideologies like liberalism, conservatism, and socialism, learn about the origins of democracy in ancient Greece and contemporary debates about the value of democracy and its future, and engage with various critical thinkers and ideas, including feminist scholars and black political thinkers.

The course is organized not chronologically (i.e., no “Plato to NATO”) but thematically. Within each theme, we will read short excerpts from much longer—and often complex—texts from various thinkers, some of whom would be closely connected to each other (either historically or theoretically) while others would be much further apart. The course thus neither attempts to offer a linear or teleological story of the development of ideas from antiquity to the present nor does it aim to provide a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the various thinkers and ideas that we will encounter throughout the semester.

Instead, this introductory course will give students a “taste” of the rich and complex field of political theory. Students for whom this will be the first and only encounter with political theory will leave this class with a richer political vocabulary to add to their “toolbox” as present and future democratic citizens. This course is also an invitation for students to continue engaging with these thinkers, texts, concepts, questions, debates, and ideas, both on their own and in future advanced classes.

*The following is the learning outcome (CC) for this course:*

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of key political, philosophical, and normative concepts in their original historical and theoretical context and will be able to apply it to contemporary debates and questions.

## Required Text:

*Princeton Readings in Political Thought: Essential Texts from Plato to Populism* (Second Edition), ISBN 9780691159973 (available in the Bookstore, library, and on [Princeton](#), [Amazon](#), and various other online sellers)

- Other readings are posted on the relevant modules on Canvas and/or linked below

## Course Expectations and Grading:

### *1. Attendance, Participation, & Professionalism – 10%*

In order to do well in this class, you need to be present and engaged. We will study difficult readings and ask difficult questions. These readings and the questions they raise encourage us to examine our own opinions by remaining open to challenge and disagreement. Your active participation throughout the semester is vital to making this work.

*Attendance & “Flex Day” Policy:* Of course, in order to participate, you need to attend class. You may have up to three (3) absences for any reason. This includes personal matters, vacation travel, job interviews, LSAT prep classes, etc. **You don’t need to tell me why or when you’re taking your absences.** Think of them as “Flex Days” to use during the semester. **For absences beyond the allotted three, you will lose 5 points from your participation and attendance grade.** If you do miss class, please get the notes for that day from a classmate. Excused absences for University-sponsored events and religious holidays do not count toward your absences, nor do absences for serious illness.

*Participation & Professionalism:* In order to participate in a meaningful way, you should arrive to class having already done the reading, **with your book (or PDF) in front of you for every class.**

- **Professionalism** includes **showing up on time**, respecting me and your classmates, and staying engaged for the entire class period. Repeated instances of unprofessional behavior (tardiness, side conversations, etc.) will negatively impact your grade.
- **Participation** includes asking questions (including clarifying questions), making comments relevant to the course material, or responding to the questions that I or your classmates raise.
- Please review the policy below regarding electronic devices in the classroom. Repeated violations of this policy will negatively impact your grade. Put simply, there is nothing professional about sitting there on your phone during class.

### *2. \*\*Weekly\*\* Open Note Canvas Quizzes – 10%*

**Each week, by Sunday at 11:59 PM**, you will take a brief quiz on Canvas. (There are some weeks when you won’t have a quiz. See the schedule below and the Canvas calendar to confirm this.)

The quiz questions will be about the assigned reading for the upcoming Monday’s class and are designed to test your basic comprehension. They should be very easy for someone who has done the reading, so **it is necessary that you do the reading in order to do well on the quizzes.** Questions will include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answers. All quizzes are capped at 7 minutes, at which time Canvas will not allow you to continue.

- **You may use your notes but not online sources for this assignment.** The quiz will be available on Canvas starting on Friday morning, and you must complete it by Sunday at 11:59 PM.
- An incomplete quiz will count as a 0. A forgotten quiz will count as a 0. **There are no makeup opportunities for quizzes.** At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

### ***3. First paper (1000-1300 words) - 15%, due Friday, September 20***

I will distribute the paper prompt two weeks prior to the due date, at which time we will devote part of a class session to writing college-level papers. **There will be no extensions on the paper due dates.** For each day late, you will lose 5 points from your paper grade. **I will not accept papers more than 5 days after the original due date.** At that point, your grade will automatically become a zero for the assignment.

### ***4. In-class Midterm Exam – 20%, Wednesday, October 9***

### ***5. Second paper (1300-1600 words) – 25%, due November 11***

As with the first paper, I will distribute topics two weeks ahead of the due date. The same rules for late work apply.

### ***6. In-class Final Exam – 20%, Tuesday, December 17***

The final exam will NOT be cumulative. It will cover material since after the midterm. **Note the date of the Final Exam.** This date is set by the Registrar well ahead of the start of the term, so you should not schedule travel that will interfere with the exam date. I will not give alternate exams for travel conflicts.

## **Electronic Device Policy:**

I've made a number of the class readings available online, either by link or uploaded PDF on Canvas. You are, therefore, permitted to use a laptop or tablet in class. That said, **when you are in the classroom, I would strongly prefer that you use pen and paper for notetaking.** A lot of peer-reviewed research has concluded that students retain information much better when they write with a pen and paper. In my experience as an instructor, this is absolutely true. If you must use a laptop, keep it to a minimum. **It's very easy for me to tell when you're doing something other than class work on your laptop, and this will negatively impact your participation grade. Please use your devices only to consult the readings.**

**Smartphone use is prohibited at all times.** There is simply no reason to have your phone out during class. Keep phones on silent and in your bag. If I see that you are using a cell phone in class, I will publicly ask you to put it away. Cell phone use will also negatively affect your participation grade.

## **Generative AI Policy:**

**The use of generative AI (including ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, etc.) is not allowed in this class.** Although these tools are becoming increasingly sophisticated and often hard to detect, I want to encourage you to treat this class as an opportunity to develop and practice your critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and writing ability. The writing assignments in this class will be designed to

evaluate and encourage your creativity and originality rather than your ability to summarize arguments found in your readings. While AI might be particularly well-suited to assist you with the latter, it is still a poor replacement for humans when it comes to the former. You will also not be able to utilize AI tools during your midterm and final in-class exams. Therefore, practicing and applying your own work from early in the class will pay off throughout.

AI is, of course, here to stay. But you should all ask yourself—especially early in your college education—how it will reshape our social and political world as well as the economy and labor market. If AI could allow a firm to have 10 employees doing the work previously done by 100 (or 1,000), I think you should ask yourselves who these employees might be and, if this is your goal, how to increase your chances of getting one of these jobs. Anyone can ask ChatGPT to perform a task. Not everyone, however, can evaluate whether that task has been done well or poorly. If taken seriously, this class will contribute to your ability to ask the right questions and evaluate different answers to these questions, and hopefully, it will make you a more careful, conscious, and efficient user (and not just consumer) of generative AI.

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## Schedule & Readings:

The readings next to each date are what we will be discussing on that particular day. You should come to class having already done the assigned reading, and you should bring your book/reading to class for every session.

### Week 1 – Introduction [No Canvas Quiz]

Monday, August 26: Syllabus review & course introduction

Wednesday, August 28: What is political theory? Part I: What is ‘political’?

- **Read:** Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 28-37 (“The *Polis* and the Household”) \*CANVAS\*; Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, pp. 25-27 (section 2) \*CANVAS\*; Carol Hanisch, “The Personal is Political,” \*CANVAS\* (also available [online](#)).

Friday, August 30: What is political theory? Part II: What is ‘theory’?

- **Read:** Plato, excerpts from *The Republic* (TB 85-90); Michel Foucault, “Power: An Interview” (TB 672-676)

*Optional materials:*

- “Thinking Politically: An Introduction” (TB 1-4)
- [“What is Political theory”](#) (*The Political Theory Review* podcast)
- Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy” (TB 592-601)
- Mark Bevir, [“Introduction,”](#) in *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*
- Existential Comics, [“Escape from Plato’s Cave”](#)

# PART I: KEY CONCEPTS IN POLITICAL THEORY

**Week 2 – Justice** [NOTE – due to Labor Day, the first quiz is due on Tuesday, September 3, at 11:59 PM]

Monday, September 2: LABOR DAY – NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 4: Justice and the birth of political theory

- **Read:** Plato, excerpts from *The Republic* I (TB 38-51)

Friday, September 6: Justice as fairness [ONLINE CLASS POSTED ON CANVAS]

- **Read:** John Rawls, excerpts from *A Theory of Justice* (TB 685-693)

*Optional materials:*

- David Miller, “Justice,” in [The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)
- “[Michael Sandel on Justice](#),” *Philosophy Bites* podcast
- Existential Comics, “[John Rawls and the Original Position](#)”
- Iris Marion Young, “Justice and the Politics of Difference” (TB 729-737)
- Amartya Sen, “The Idea of Justice” (TB 738-757)

**Week 3 – Freedom** [Don’t forget to take your second quiz before Sunday, September 8, at 11:59 PM]

Monday, September 9: Negative freedom/liberty

- **Read:** Thomas Hobbes, excerpts from *Leviathan* (TB 180-1); John Stuart Mill, excerpts from *On Liberty* (“Introduction,” pp. 73-85 \*\*CANVAS \*\*)
- **\*Paper 1 Prompts Posted on Canvas\***

Wednesday, September 11: Freedom and autonomy

- **Read:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, excerpts from *Origins of Inequality* (TB 280-283) and the *Social Contract* (TB 270-272); Serene J. Khader, “What Should Feminists Want from a Conception of Autonomy?” *The Philosopher* (available [online](#) and on Canvas)

Friday, September 13: Freedom and domination

- **Read:** Fredric Douglass, excerpts from *My Bondage and My Freedom* (Ch. V, *Gradual Initiation to the Mysteries of Slavery*) \*\*CANVAS\*\*

*Optional materials:*

- Ian Carter, “[Positive and Negative Liberty](#)” and Frank Lovett, “[Republicanism](#),” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- “[Alan Ryan on Freedom and its History](#),” *Philosophy Bites* podcast
- “[Neo-Republicanism: A Conversation with Philip Pettit](#),” *Political Philosophy Podcast*
- “[Orangutan Freedom](#),” *Existential Comics*

## Week 4 – Equality

Monday, September 16: Equality of what?

- **Read:** Aristotle, excerpts from *Nicomachean Ethics* (V.5-8) and *Politics* (Book V.1-2) \*\*CANVAS\*\*;; Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality” (pp. 287-289, 312-315) \*\*CANVAS\*\*

Wednesday, September 18: Equality for whom?

- **Read:** “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” (TB 334-335); Marie-Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens* (TB 342-346); Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream” speech (listen/read [online](#))

Friday, September 20: Democratic equality

- **Read:** Alexis de Tocqueville, excerpts from *Democracy in America* (TB 388-405)
- **\*Paper 1 Due on Canvas\***

*Optional material:*

- Stefan Gosepath, “[Equality](#),” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Elizabeth Anderson on “[A Deep History of Equality](#),” *On Humans* podcast
- “[T.M. Scanlon on What's Wrong with Inequality?](#)” *Philosophy Bites* podcast

## PART II: IDEOLOGIES

### Week 5 - Liberalism & Libertarianism

Monday, September 23:

- **Read:** Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” \*\*CANVAS\*\*
- **\*Midterm Study Guide Posted on Canvas\***

Wednesday, September 25:

- **Read:** John Rawls, excerpts from *Political Liberalism* (1.1) \*\*CANVAS\*\*

Friday, September 27: Libertarianism I

- **Read:** Robert Nozick, excerpts from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (TB 709-717)

*Optional material:*

- Shane D. Courtland, Gerald Gaus, and David Schmidtz, “[Liberalism](#)” and Bas van der Vossen and Billy Christmas “[Libertarianism](#),” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Helena Rosenblatt, “[What We Talk About When We Talk About Liberalism](#),” *Boston Review*
- “[This Philosopher Wants Liberals to Take Political Power Seriously: Danielle Allen Makes the Case for ‘Power-Sharing Liberalism’](#),” *The Ezra Klein Show* podcast
- “[What is Liberalism? John Rawls and Political Liberalism](#),” *What’s Left of Philosophy* podcast

### Week 6 – Libertarianism (cont.) & Conservatism

Monday, September 30: Libertarianism II

- **Read:** F.A. Hayek, excerpts from *The Road to Serfdom* (TB 558-562)

Wednesday, October 2: Conservatism I

- **Read:** Edmund Burke, excerpts from *Reflections of the Revolution in France* (TB 336-341)

Friday, October 4: Conservatism II

- **Read:** Michael Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative” \*\*CANVAS\*\*

*Optional material:*

- Andy Hamilton, “[Conservatism](#),” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- “[What is Liberalism? Robert Nozick on Libertarian Reveries](#),” *What’s Left of Philosophy* podcast
- “[Edmund Burke’s Conservatism](#),” *The Partially Examined Life* podcast
- “[Mister Nozick’s Neighborhood](#),” *Existential Comics*
- “[French Radical Eye for the Conservative Guy](#),” *Existential Comics*

## Week 7 – Socialism

Monday, October 7: NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

Wednesday, October 9:

- **\*In-class Midterm Exam\* / No reading quiz**

Friday, October 11: Socialism

- **Read:** Karl Marx, “Revolution Against Capitalism” (TB 428-454)

*Optional material:*

- Pablo Gilabert and Martin O’Neill, “[Socialism](#),” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- “[Marx](#),” *In Our Time* Podcast (BBC)
- “[Karl Marx Job Interview](#),” *Existential Comics*
- “[Self-Ownership, History, and Socialism: An Interview with G.A. Cohen](#),” *Imprints*

## PART III: THE SOCIAL CONTRACT TRADITION

### Week 8 – The Early-Modern Tradition

Monday, October 14: Hobbes

- **Read:** Thomas Hobbes, excerpts from *Leviathan* (TB 176-195)

Wednesday, October 16: Locke

- **Read:** John Locke, excerpts from *Second Treatise of Government* (TB 213-230)

Friday, October 18: NO CLASS; professor on research travel

*Optional material:*

- *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entries on [Hobbes’s](#), [Locke’s](#), and [Rousseau’s](#) social contract theory
- “[The Social Contract](#),” *In Our Time* podcast (BBC)

- *Philosophize This!* Podcast, episodes on [Hobbes](#), [Locke](#), and [Rousseau](#)
- “[Social Contract Theory: The Game](#),” *Existential comics*

## Week 9 – The Social Contract

Monday, October 21: Rousseau

- **Read:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, excerpts from *The Social Contract* and *Second Discourse* (TB 270-277; 280-297)

Wednesday, October 23: The feminist critique

- **Read:** Carole Pateman, excerpts from *The Sexual Contract* \*\*CANVAS\*\*

Friday, October 25: NO CLASS; professor on research travel

*Optional material:*

- “[The Critique of Racial Liberalism: An Interview with Charles W. Mills](#),” *African American Intellectual History Society*
- “[Provost Lecture: Charles Mills - Liberalism and Racial Justice](#),” Stoney Brook University (watch on YouTube)
- Sharon Thompson, Lydia Hayes, and Daniel Newman, “[The Sexual Contract 30 Years On: A Conversation with Carole Pateman](#),” *Feminist Legal Studies*
- Danielle Allen, “[We Seek Reforms to Policing. But Something Even Deeper Needs Repair](#),” *The Washington Post*

## PART IV: DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS

### Week 10 – Ancient Origins

Monday, October 28: How ancient democracy worked (part I)

- **Read:** Thucydides, excerpts from *The Peloponnesian War* (TB 11-20)

Wednesday, October 30: How ancient democracy worked (part II)

- **Read:** Plato, excerpts from *Protagoras* \*\*CANVAS\*\*

Friday, November 1: Ancient critics of democracy

- **Read:** Plato, excerpts from *Republic* (TB 90-95); Pseudo-Xenophon (“The Old-Oligarch”), *Constitution of the Athenians* \*\*CANVAS\*\*

*Optional material:*

- Josiah Ober, “[Learning from Athens](#),” *Boston Review*
- Melissa Lane, “[Democracy: Ancient Models, Modern Challenges](#)” Gresham College Lectures
- “[Athens and the Birth of Democracy](#),” *The Rest is History* podcast

### Week 11 – Contemporary Democratic Theory, Part I

Monday, November 4: Democracy and Representation

- Bernard Manin, excerpts from *The Principles of Representative Government* \*\*CANVAS\*\*



Wednesday, November 6: Pluralist Democracy

- Robert Dahl, excerpts from *Democracy and its Critics* \*\*CANVAS\*\*

Friday, November 8: Participatory Democracy

- Jane Mansbridge, “Does Participation Make Better Citizens?” *The Good Society* (4-7) \*\*CANVAS\*\*

## Week 12 – Contemporary Democratic Theory, Part II

Monday, November 11: Deliberative Democracy [\*\* NO QUIZ \*\*]

- **Read:** Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, excerpts from *Why Deliberative Democracy?* \*\*CANVAS\*\*
- **\*Paper #2 Due\***

Wednesday, November 13: Inclusive Democracy

- **Read:** Iris Marion Young, excerpts from *Inclusion and Democracy* \*\*CANVAS\*\*

Friday, November 15: Agonistic Democracy

- **Read:** Sheldon Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy” \*\*CANVAS\*\*

*Optional material:*

- Bernard Crick, *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- John Dewey, “Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us” (TB 563-566)
- Hélène Landemore, “[A Radical Proposal for True Democracy](#),” *The Ezra Klein Show*

## PART V: NON-WESTERN POLITICAL THEORY

### Week 13

Monday, November 18:

- **Read:** Leigh K. Jenco, Murad Idris, Megan C. Thomas, “Comparison, Connectivity, and Disconnection,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory* (pp. 3-9, “What Is Comparative Political Theory and What Can It Do?”)

Wednesday, November 20

- Timothy Reagan “‘A Wise Child is Talked to in Proverbs’: Indigenous Educational Thought and Practice in Africa” 60-77, in *Non-Western Educational Traditions: Local Approaches to Thought and Practice*

Friday, November 22: NO CLASS, professor on research travel

### Week 14

Monday, November 25:

- **Read:** Robert Nichols, “Indigenous Struggles for Epistemic Justice,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory* (pp. 638-643, “Oral Tradition and Evidentiary Authority in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*”)
- **\*Final Exam Study Guide Posted on Canvas\***

Wednesday, November 27 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving):

Friday, November 29: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

**Week 15 – No Canvas Quiz**

Monday, December 2:

Wednesday, December 4:

Friday, December 6

**Week 16**

- Monday, December 9: last day of classes

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 17, 3:00 PM**

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**University Required Statements:**

**Disability Accommodations:** Students who need academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit [smu.edu/DASS](http://smu.edu/DASS) to begin the process. Once they are registered and approved, students then submit a DASS Accommodation Letter through the electronic portal, *DASS Link*, and then communicate directly with each of their instructors to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, but rather require advance notice in order to implement.

**Sexual Harassment:** All forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking, are violations of SMU's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or to receive more information about the grievance process may contact Samantha Thomas, SMU's Title IX Coordinator, at [accessequity@smu.edu](mailto:accessequity@smu.edu) or 214-768-3601. Please note that faculty and staff are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty or staff of sexual harassment, they must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about sexual harassment, including resources available to assist students, please visit [smu.edu/sexualharassment](http://smu.edu/sexualharassment).

**Pregnant and Parenting Students:** Under Title IX, students who are pregnant or parenting may request academic adjustments by contacting the Office of Student Advocacy and Support by calling 214-768-4564. Students seeking assistance must schedule an appointment with their professors as early as possible, present a letter from the Office of the Dean of Students, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that academic adjustments are not retroactive and, when feasible, require advance notice to implement.

**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. [Click here for a list of holidays.](#)

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled university extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments that were missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements for make-up work with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examinations or other missed assignments. (See 2020-2021 SMU Undergraduate Catalog under “Enrollment and Academic Records/Excused Absences.”)

**Medical Absences:** To ensure academic continuity and avoid any course penalties, students should follow procedures described by their instructors in order to be provided with appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and exams.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students are expected to embrace and uphold the SMU Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code will be acted upon in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the Mustang Student Handbook.

I take academic dishonesty and plagiarism very seriously, and you should too. Please read and study the University Honor Code: <https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode>. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or dishonesty, please see me in Office Hours. Violations of the Honor Code will result in an automatic “F” for the assignment and possible failure of the course, and the student will be taken before the Honor Council. Again, if you are unclear about any of this, see me well before the first assignment is due.

**Student Academic Success Programs:** Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through Canvas. Students who would like support for subject-specific tutoring or success strategies should contact SASP, Loyd All Sports Center, Suite 202; 214-768-3648; [smu.edu/sasp](http://smu.edu/sasp). Tutor schedules are available at [smu.edu/tutorschedule](http://smu.edu/tutorschedule).

**CCC Program:** CCC is a resource for anyone in the SMU community to refer students of concern to the Office of the Dean of Students. The online referral form can be found at [smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc](http://smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc). After a referral form is submitted, students will be contacted to discuss the concern, strategize options, and be connected to appropriate resources. Anyone who is unclear about what steps to take if they have concerns about students should either consult the CCC Reference Guide or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 214-768-4564.

### **Mental Health Resources:**

Throughout the academic year, students may encounter different stressors or go through life experiences which impact their mental health and academic performance. Students who are in distress or have concerns about their mental health can schedule a same-day or next-day appointment to speak with a counselor by calling Counseling Services. Counselors are available at any time, day or night for students in crisis at this number: 214-768-2277 (then select option 2) They will be connected with a counselor immediately. Students seeking ongoing counseling should call the same number (214-768-2277, then select option 1) during normal business hours to schedule an initial appointment. SMU Teletherapy provides another free option for on-demand counseling and video appointments with a medical professional.