



# Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide for Students and Politicians

By Adam Swift

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**Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide for Students and Politicians** By Adam Swift

Politicians invoke grand ideas: social justice, liberty, equality, community. But what do these ideas really mean? How can politicians across the political spectrum appeal to the same values?

*Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide for Students and Politicians* answers these important questions. Accessible and lively, the book is an ideal student text, but it also brings the insights of the world's leading political philosophers to a wide general audience. Using plenty of examples, it equips readers to think for themselves about the ideas that shape political life.

Democracy works best when both politicians and voters move beyond rhetoric to think clearly and carefully about the political principles that should govern their society. But clear thinking is difficult in an age when established orthodoxies have fallen by the wayside. Bringing political philosophy out of the ivory tower and within the reach of all, this book provides us with tools to cut through the complexities of modern politics. In so doing, it makes a valuable contribution to the democratic process.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Adam Swift's book accomplishes a rare feat: it is at once an engaging and accessible introduction to a complex body of philosophical ideas that will be immensely useful to novices, and it is a sophisticated and original synthesis that will be of great value to seasoned academics familiar with the problems under discussion." *Erik Olin Wright, Vilas Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin*

"A stunning achievement. Beginning students will learn painlessly how to avoid the commonest blunders in the interpretation of Rawls's theory of justice (all of which have appeared in print, incidentally), and will be spared the effort to make sense of Berlin's "two concepts of liberty", thanks to Swift's crisp exploration of its multiple confusions. Politicians will, if they take it to heart, feel ashamed of pretending that the invocation of "community" solves any problems, intellectual or practical, and will understand why it is morally disreputable to pander to popular notions of desert. In addition academic political philosophers will find their criticisms of egalitarian liberalism stated clearly and succinctly, and then deftly refuted." *Brian Barry, Arnold A Saltzman Professor in Philosophy and Political Science, Columbia University, New York*

"Adam Swift's introduction to political philosophy is clear-headed, fair-minded and fluently written. It will be of great value to students and all those interested in contemporary debates about liberty, equality, justice and community." *Michael Sandel, Professor of Government, Harvard University*

"Worthwhile read!" *Politico's Bookshop*

"he has produced a triumph of a book that illuminates the last two decades of politics and points the way to the next...How does philosophy affect politics? Through books like this." *James Purnell, MP*

"It most certainly fills a market niche in the international introductory political theory / philosophy textbooks market." *Contemporary Political Theory*

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About the Author

**Adam Swift** is a Fellow in Politics and Sociology at Balliol College, Oxford.

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**Candace Mathieu:**

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