

**THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE**

# The Study of Politics

The logo for the Department of Political Science features a blue rectangular background. On the left side, there is a triangular graphic composed of two overlapping triangles: a smaller orange triangle on top and a larger teal triangle below it. To the right of this graphic, the text "DEPARTMENT OF" is written in a small, dark blue, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "POLITICAL SCIENCE" are written in a large, bold, dark blue, sans-serif font.

DEPARTMENT OF  
**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## EVER WONDER WHY?



It's no wonder the state of politics and religion in this country are so SCREWED UP. We've been taught not to think twice about either. Start Talking. Start Learning.

## I. Definitions

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## Two Definitions:

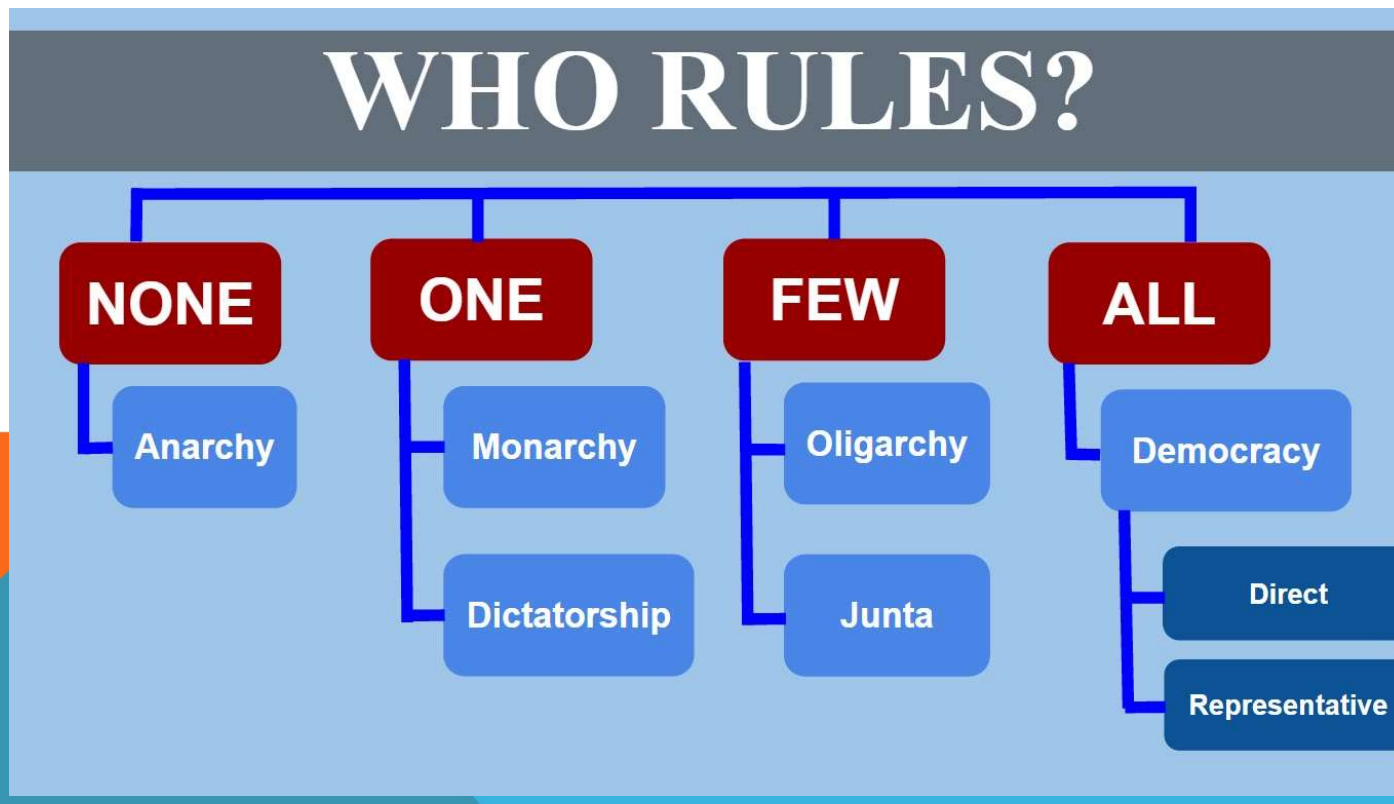
1. Some identify politics with government, legal government, or the state. Example: politics “includes the events that happen around a decision making centers of government” (Alfred de Grazia).



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

Advantages and Disadvantages of using this definition:

Equating politics with government is commonsensical but has limited applicability...



## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

2. For others, the definition revolves around the notions of power, authority, and/or conflict. Example: politics “is a social process characterized by activity involving rivalry and cooperation in the exercise of power, and culminating in the making of decisions for a group.”

(William  
Bluhm)



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

Advantages and Disadvantages of using this definition:

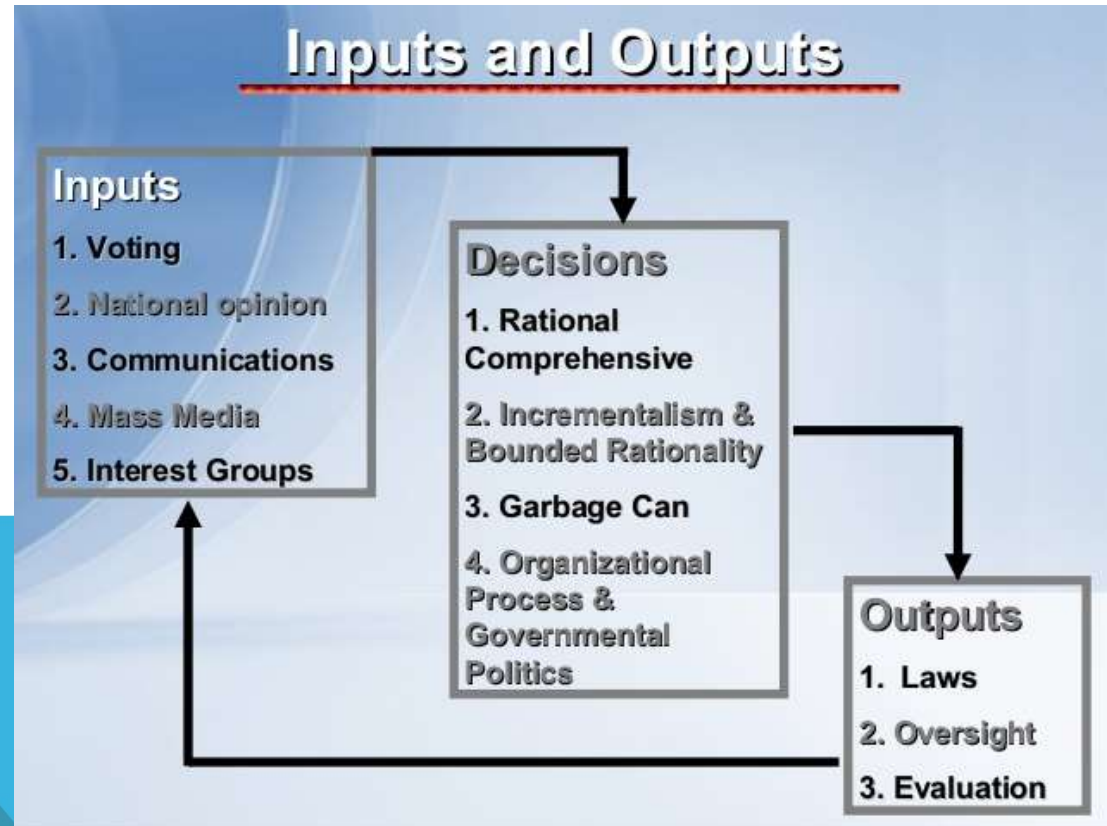
Equating politics with power allows us to study activity or behavior, but gives us no specified “boundaries.”



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

Another definition:

“The authoritative allocation of values for a society” (Easton). This one is good because it is not overly restrictive or overly broad.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

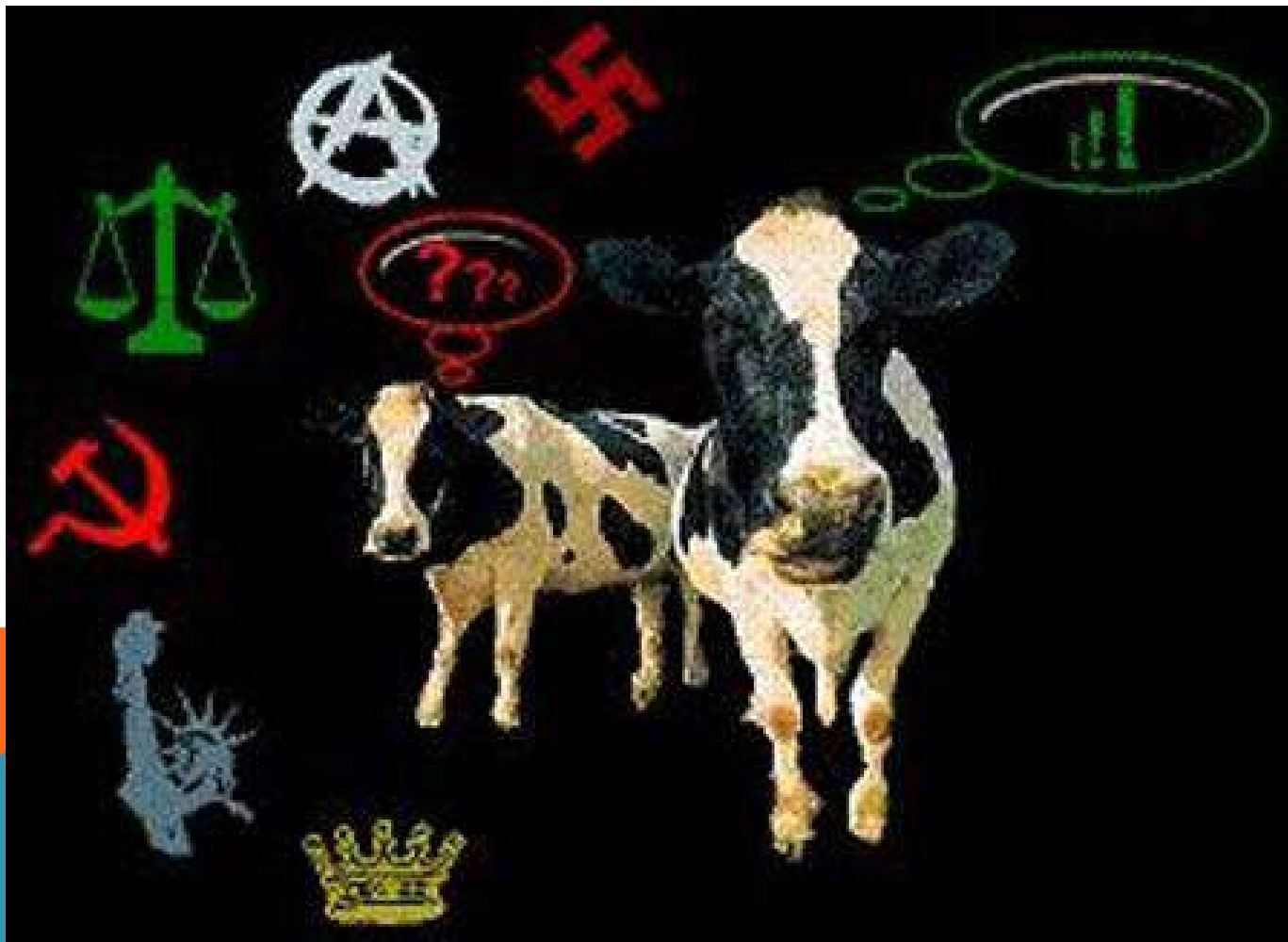
## Why Define Politics?

It might lead to a deeper understanding of the subject but we still acknowledge that we do not have “the” or even “a” definition of politics.



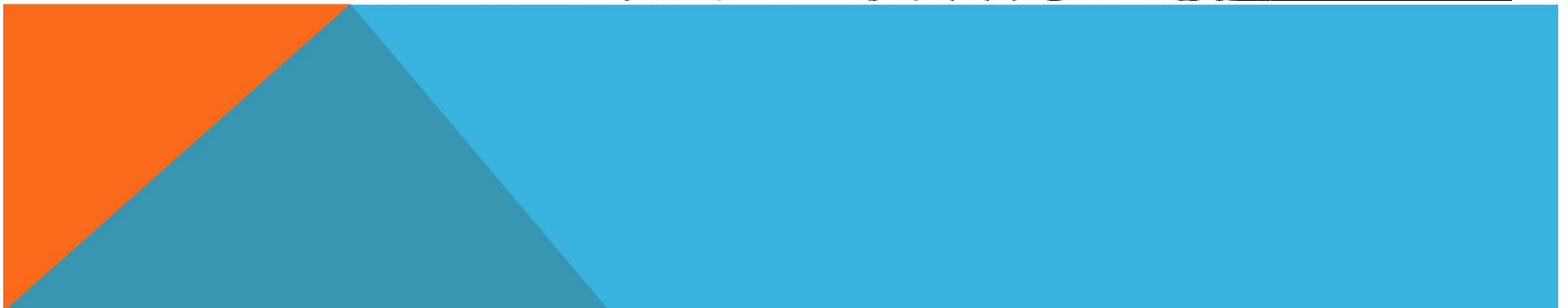
# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## II. Kinds of Political Systems



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

1. *Democratic Systems* – decentralized and flexible; interest groups, elections, political parties.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

2. *Authoritarian Systems* – military power; religious institutions; ruling families or monarchies.



History proves that all dictatorships, all authoritarian forms of government are transient. Only democratic systems are not transient. Whatever the shortcomings, mankind has not devised anything superior.

(Vladimir Putin)

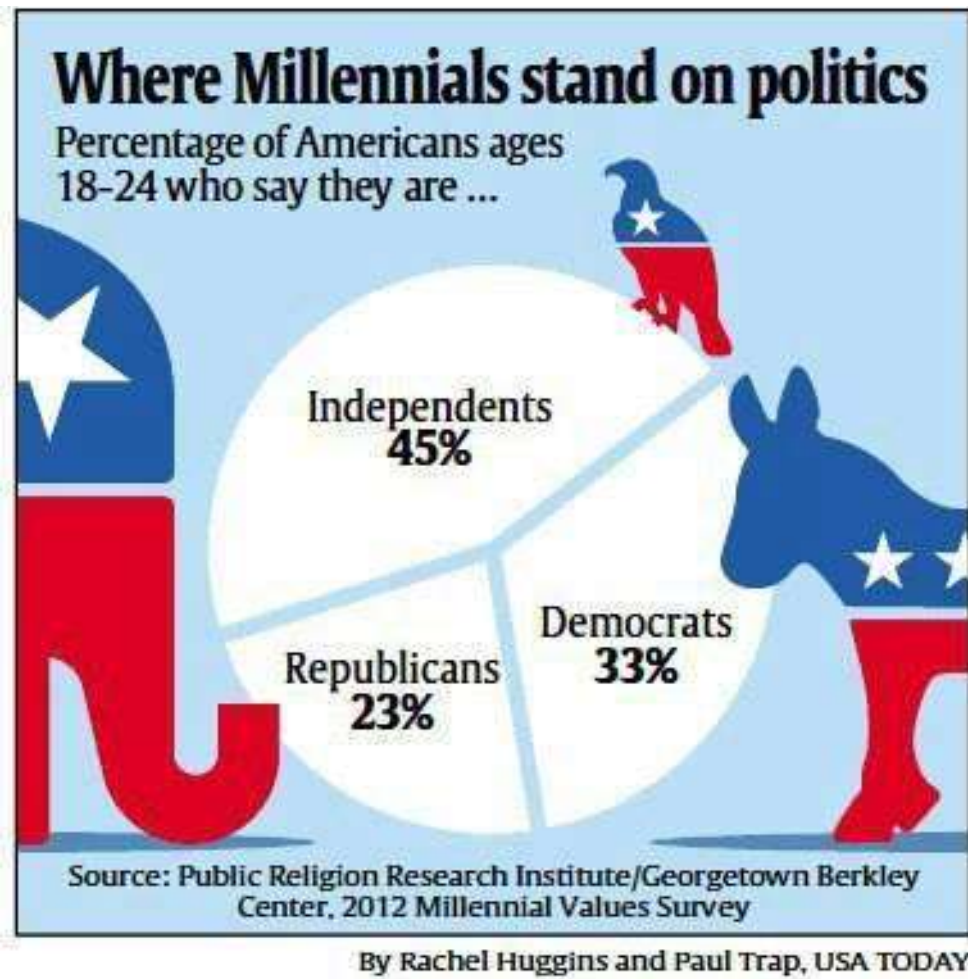
# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE



3. *Totalitarian Systems* – subordination of all forms of belief and behavior to the state.

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## III. Spectrums of Political Analysis



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

1. *Empirical* – focused on observable data (voting figures, age of officeholders, population size). *Quantitative* analysis.

What *is*.

## Empirical Evidence

is that which is  
obtained through  
study,  
research, and  
observation.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

2. *Normative* –  
focused on  
values (ethical,  
moral rights and  
wrongs).  
Qualitative  
analysis. What  
*ought to be*.



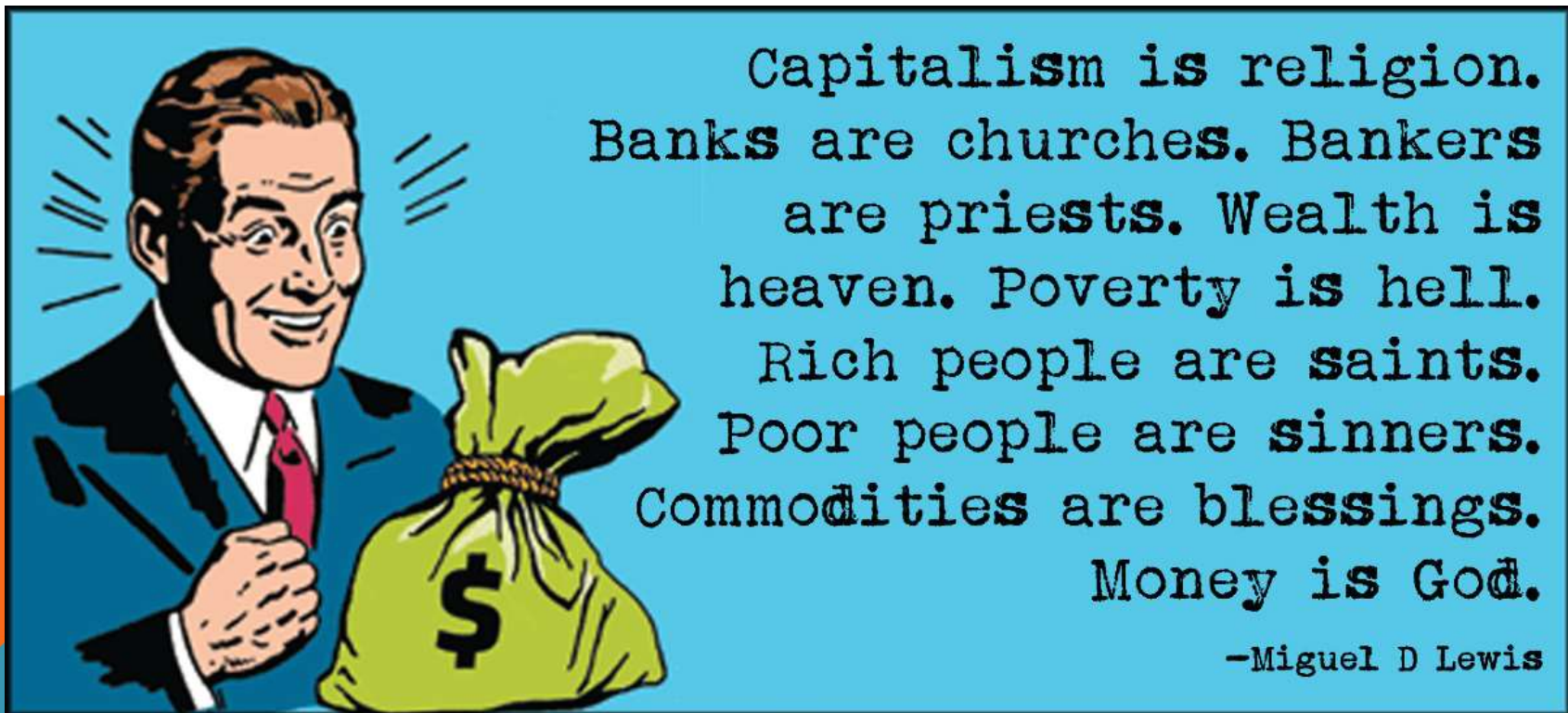
# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

3. *Institutional / Behavioral* – focused on the agents and structures of politics.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

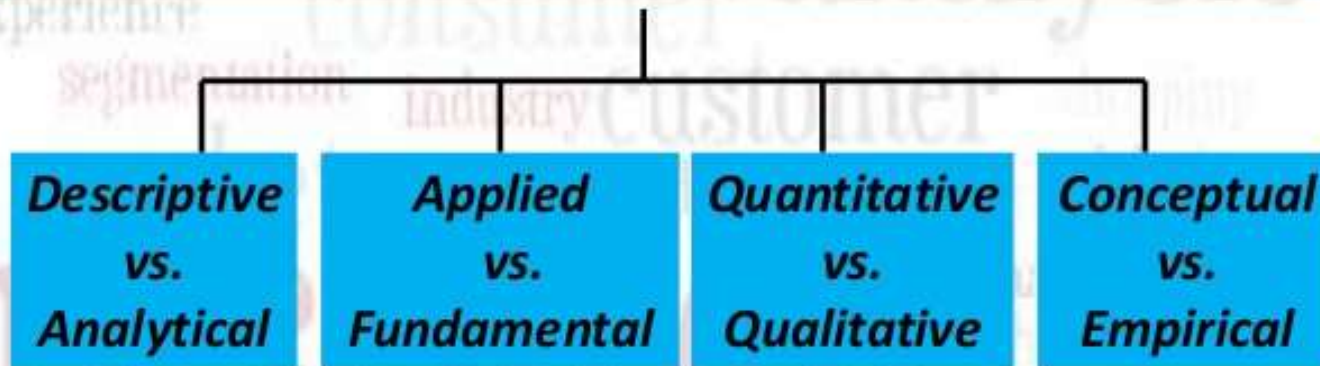
4. *Internal / External* – focused on individual psychology (rational choice theorists) and structural conditions (Marxists).



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## IV. Methodological Categories

### TYPES OF RESEARCH



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

1. *Case Studies* – A narrative or story about an event or series of events.



## Case Study Research

Theory • Methods • Practice



ARCH G. WOODSIDE

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE



2. *Ethnographic Research* – Anthropological fieldwork (similar to case studies but more detailed in its attention to the complexities of social life.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## 3. *Survey Research*

– gathering information from human populations or from other data.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

**The best indicator of future behavior is past behavior.**

I'm sorry that I'm having a hard time believing you due to your track record of being a lying liar that constantly lies out of your lying liar hole.



**ROTTENCARDS** 1998

4. *Modeling* – The construct of models of political behavior.

a. *Descriptive* – depicting past behavior

b. *Prescriptive* – guessing responses if behaviors or facts change

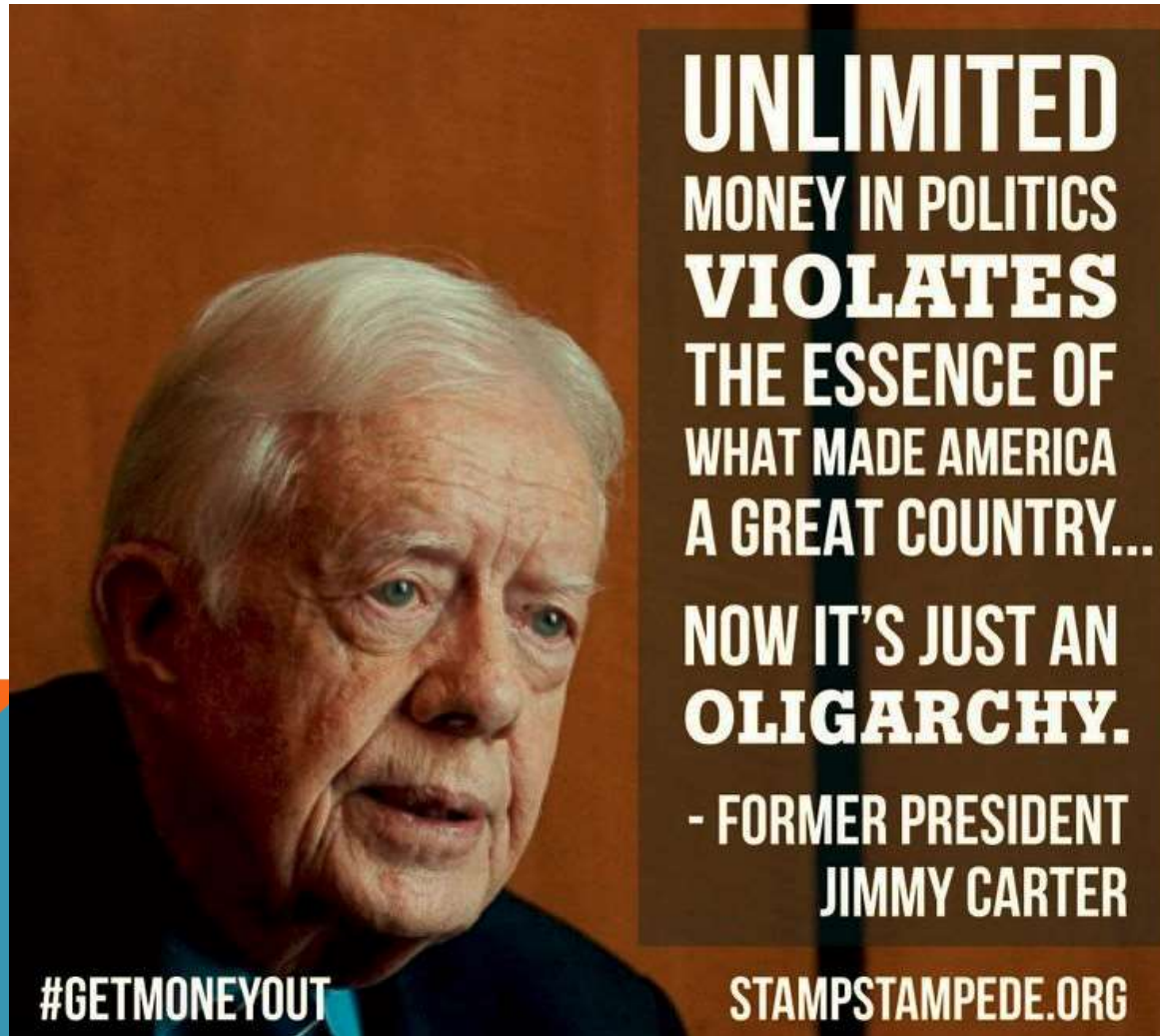
# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

5. *Historical Descriptive Approach* – Based on the presumption that imaginative, thorough research and careful reconstruction of political events and conditions can provide valuable information and useful analytic concepts.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## V. Perspectives on Politics



**UNLIMITED  
MONEY IN POLITICS  
VIOLATES  
THE ESSENCE OF  
WHAT MADE AMERICA  
A GREAT COUNTRY...  
NOW IT'S JUST AN  
OLIGARCHY.**

- FORMER PRESIDENT  
JIMMY CARTER

**#GETMONEYOUT** **STAMPSTAMPEDE.ORG**

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## Quantitative methods

1. *The Quantitative Perspective* –  
Statistical  
measuring;  
purely descriptive  
and non-value  
based?

*Quantitative methods* are research methods dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable.

They are therefore to be distinguished from **qualitative methods**.

Counting and measuring are common forms of quantitative methods.

The result of the research is a number, or a series of numbers.

These are often presented in tables, graphs or other forms of **statistics**.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## Big Ideas of the Rational Choice Perspective

- People are rational and goal-directed.
- Social exchange based on self-interest as actors try maximize rewards / minimize costs.
- Values, standards, expectations, and alternatives influence the assessment of rewards and costs.
- Reciprocity of exchange is essential to social life.
- Power comes from unequal resources in an exchange.

*2. The Rational Choice Perspective* – individuals pursuing their self-interests rationally.

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## 3. *Pluralism and Elitist Perspectives*



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## 4. *Ideological Perspectives* –

Marxism, feminism, environmentalism

**INTERNATIONAL**

July 23rd - 29th 2017

**CAMP FOR YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS**

**FEMINISTS AND SOCIALISTS**

- Do you want to find out more about socialism, feminism and environmentalism?

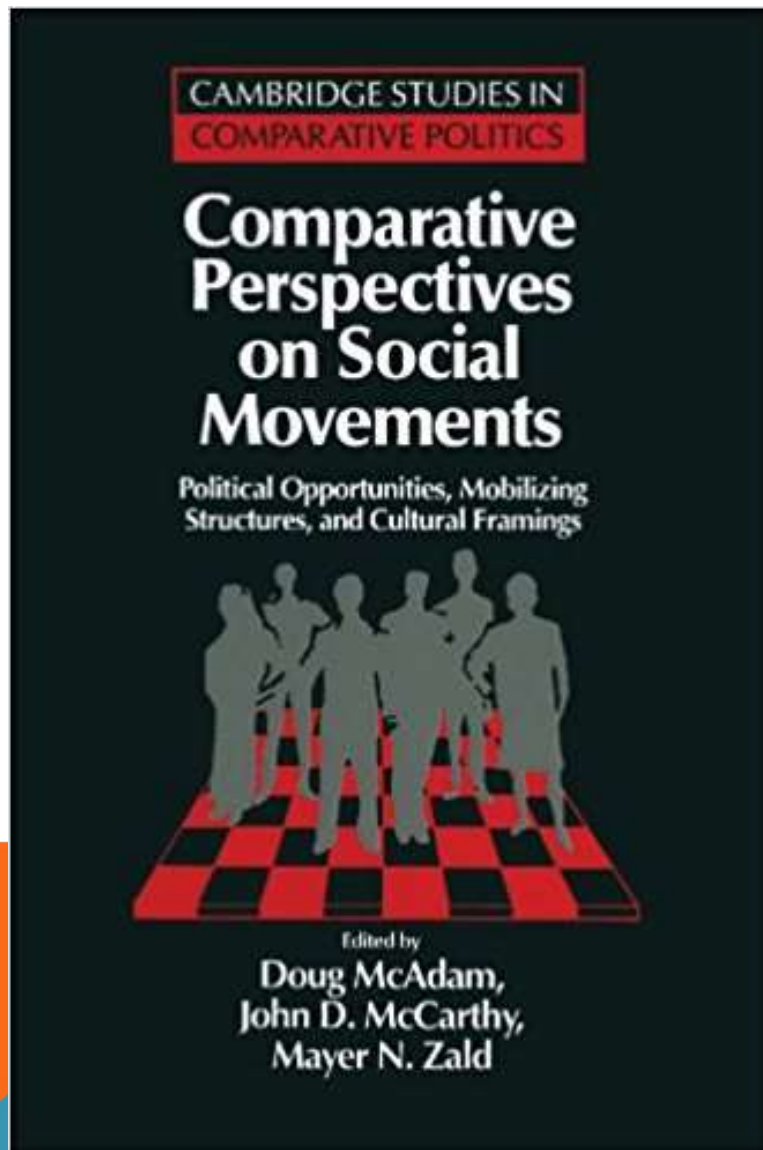
THAT'S WHAT THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL'S ANNUAL YOUTH CAMP NEAR OTRANTO IN THE SOUTH OF ITALY IS ALL ABOUT

In a week in the sun with hundreds of young workers, students and campaigners from across Europe you'll have the chance to:

- join meetings • workshops • self-organised spaces discuss socialism • feminism • anti-racism • LGBTI struggles • climate change • internationalism • the fight against austerity • make friends • have fun • meet leaders of campaigns that rarely make it into the mass media • talk culture and communication • socialise • share experiences • debate ideas and plan joint actions

THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG ACTIVISTS FROM BRITAIN TO MEET WITH OTHER ENVIRONMENTALISTS, FEMINISTS AND SOCIALISTS

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE



## 5. *Comparative Perspectives* –

avoiding  
ethnocentric  
assumptions.

**THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE**

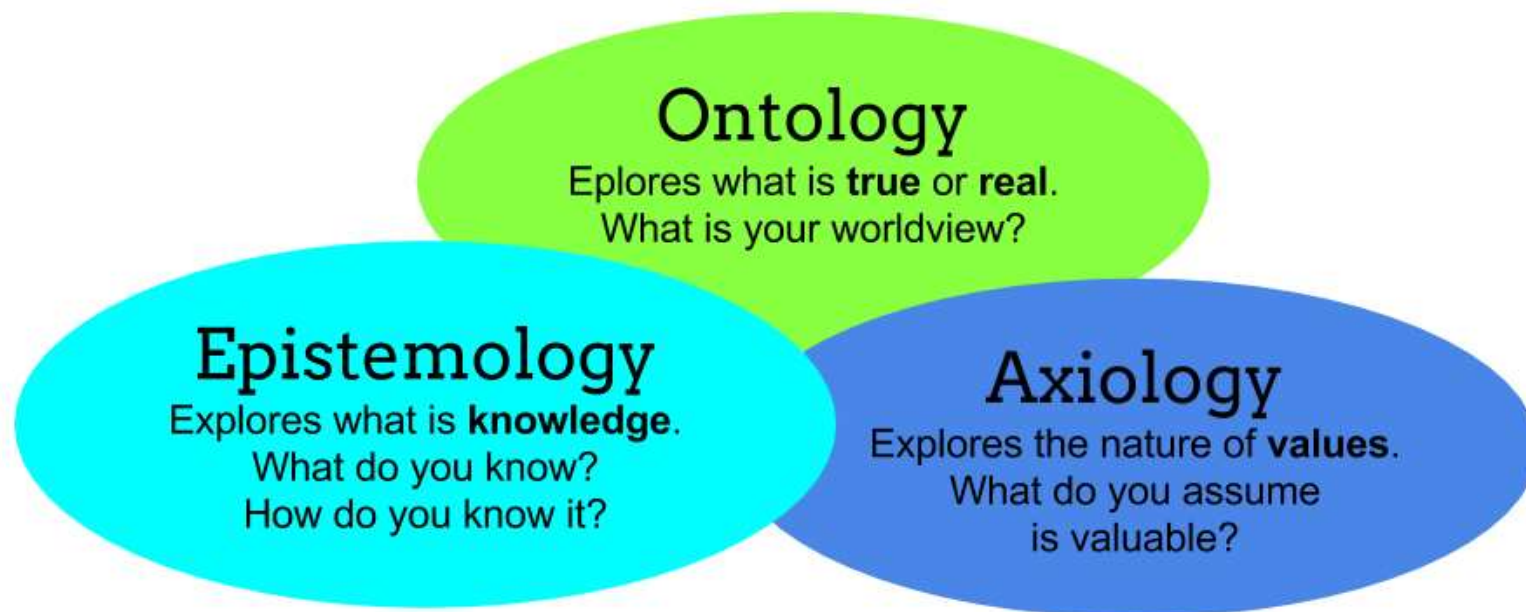
**Stevenson &  
Habermas's  
“Rival Theories”  
of  
Human Nature**



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

These rival theories essentially revolve around three separate epistemological entities.

## Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

Or, one can look at the quest for understanding human nature this way...

1. Religious

2. Philosophical

3. Scientific

**Philosophy** is like being in a dark room and looking for a black cat.

**Metaphysics** is like being in a dark room and looking for a black cat that isn't there.

**Theology** is like being in a dark room and looking for a black cat that isn't there, and shouting "I found it!"

**Science** is like being in a dark room and looking for a black cat using a fucking flashlight.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE



Art, science, philosophy, religion --  
each offers at best only a crude  
simplification of actual living  
experience.

— *Edward Abbey* —

AZ QUOTES

In the end, maybe Edward Abbey is right (he was a significant inspiration for the radical environmental group, Earth First!)

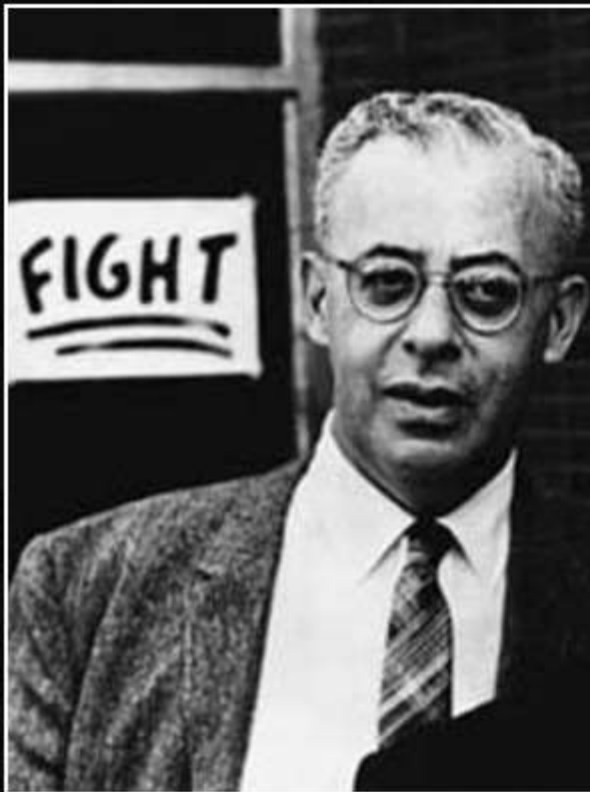
# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## Comparing Christianity and Marxism



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## 1. Each make claims about the nature of the universe.



I prize my own independence too much. And philosophically, I could never accept any rigid dogma or ideology, whether it's Christianity or Marxism...The greatest crimes in history have been perpetrated by such religious and political and racial fanatics, from the persecutions of the Inquisition on down to Communist purges and Nazi genocide.

— *Saul Alinsky* —

AZ QUOTES

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## a. **Christianity** – God created universe



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## b. Marx – Religion is “illusory”



Religion is only the illusory sun  
which revolves round man as  
long as he does not revolve  
round himself.

~ Karl Marx

AZ QUOTES

# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## 2. Each make claims about the essential nature of human beings.



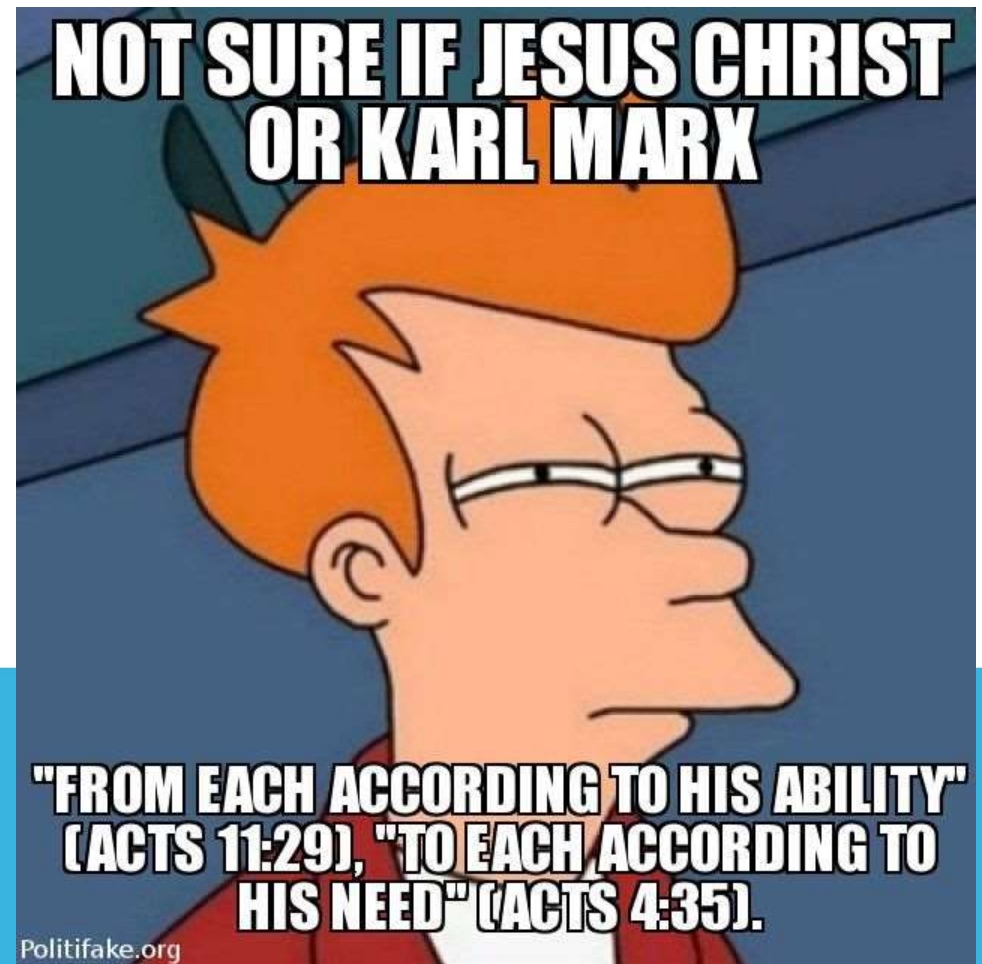
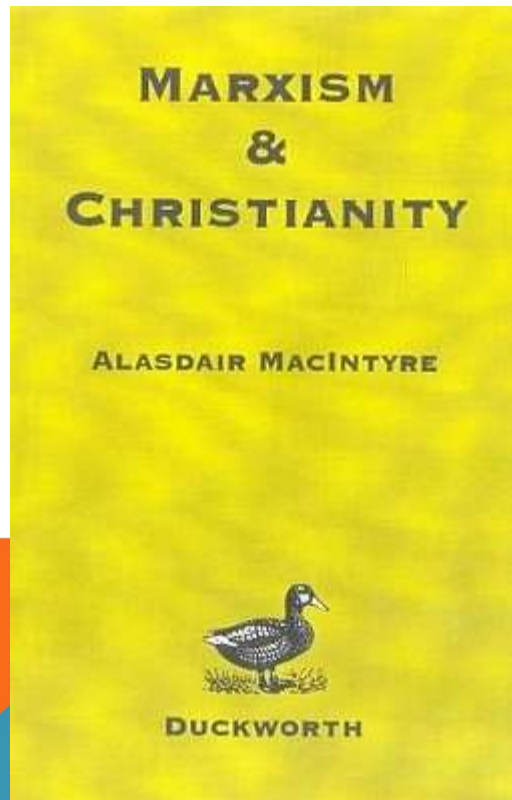
The nature of men and women -  
their essential nature - is so vile and  
despicable that if you were to  
portray a person as he really is, no  
one would believe you.

— *W. Somerset Maugham* —

AZ QUOTES

## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

- a. **Christianity** – Fate related to relation to God



## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

b. Marx – No life after death or eternal judgment

**Men's ideas are  
the most direct  
emanations of their  
material state.**

Karl Marx

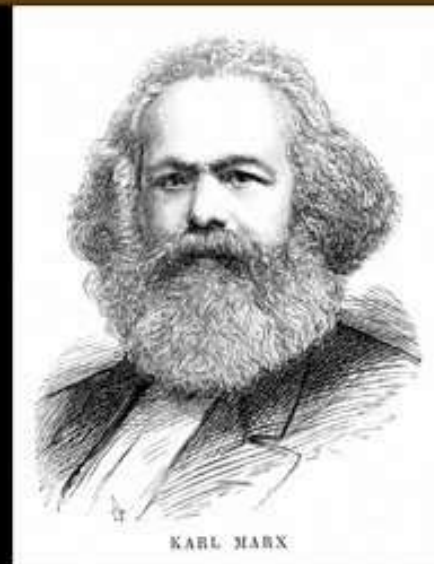


# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

3. Each have a different diagnosis of what's wrong with humankind

**Not the consciousness of  
men determines their  
being, but their  
social being determines  
their consciousness**

~ Karl Marx ~



## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

- a. **Christianity** – We reject God's will, misuse our freedom, and are infected with sin.



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

## b. Marx – The concept of “alienation.”

### Karl Marx on Work



Work should use our creative powers and develop all sides of our potential.

Each one of us has the potential to develop a wide variety of skills and capacities.

We are most human:

- when we work because we want to, and because we like our work
- when work is self-rewarding -- our life finds meaning in our work

## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

4. Each have a different prescription for putting things right.



## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

a. **Christianity** – Accept God’s salvation, complete process beyond death.

### PLAN OF SALVATION

HEAR Romans 10:17

BELIEVE John 8:24

REPENT Luke 13:3

CONFESS Matthew 10:32

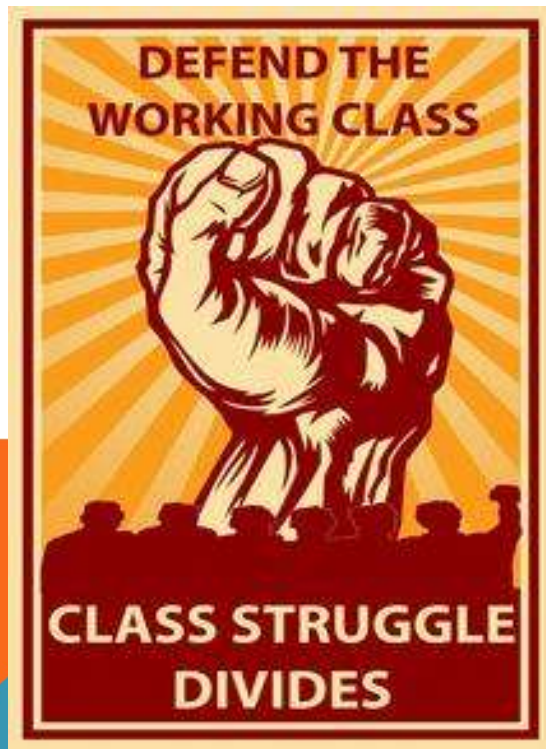
BE BAPTIZED Mark 16:16

REMAIN FAITHFUL Rev. 2:10

...*“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”* Mark 16:15

## THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

- b. **Marx** – The future is in *this* world, no longer alienated by economic conditions.



**THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE**

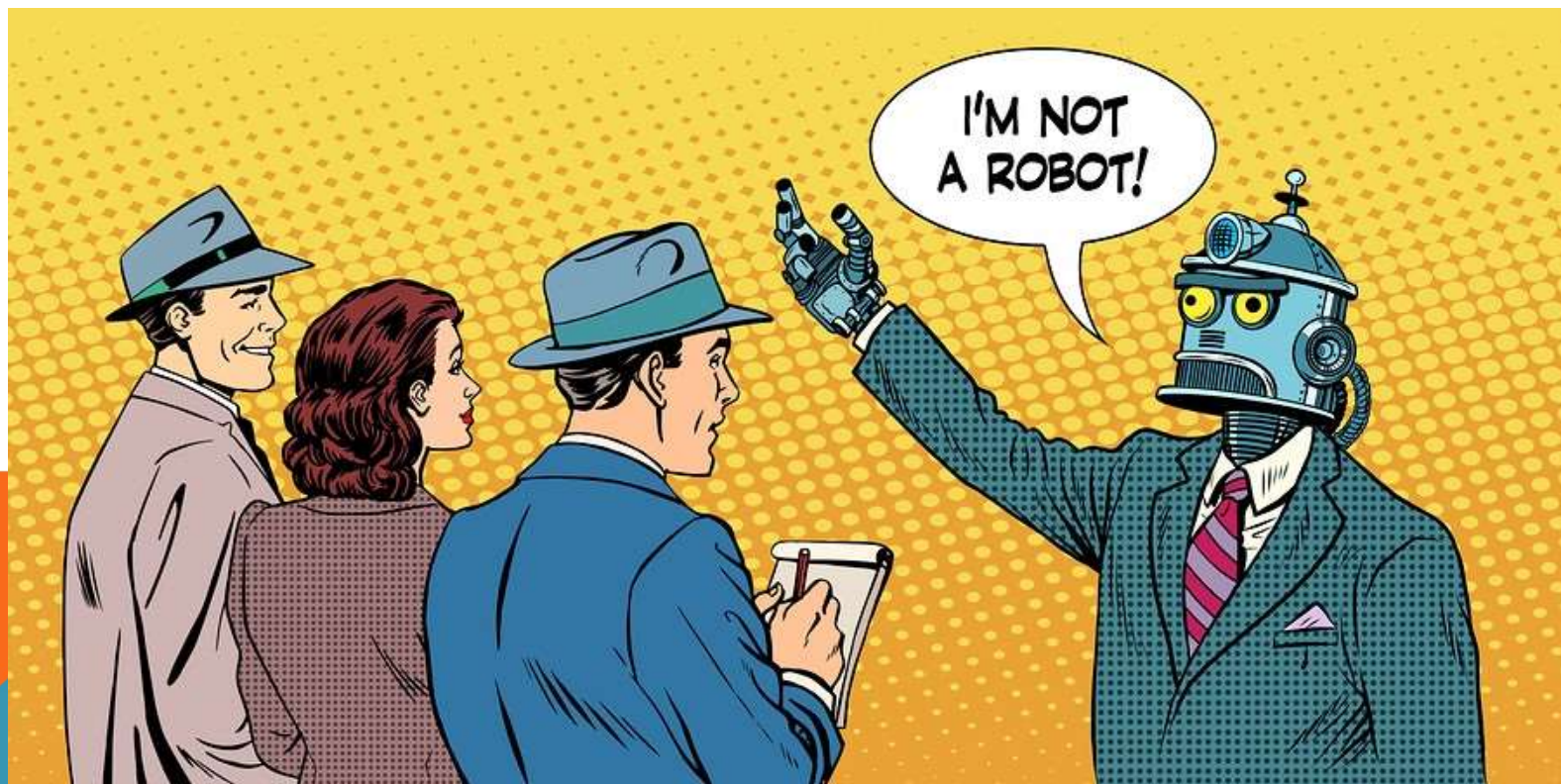
# The Problem of “Closed Theories”

Both Christianity and Marxism are described as facing two intellectual difficulties:



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

1. They do not allow any evidence to count against their theory (explaining away counterevidence).



# THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND HUMAN NATURE

**“ IT’S NOT THE CRITIC  
WHO COUNTS, NOT THE MAN WHO POINTS OUT  
HOW THE STRONG MAN  
STUMBLED OR WHERE THE DOER OF DEEDS  
COULD HAVE DONE BETTER.  
-TEDDY ROOSEVELT ”**

2. They answer criticism by analyzing the motivations of the critic.

