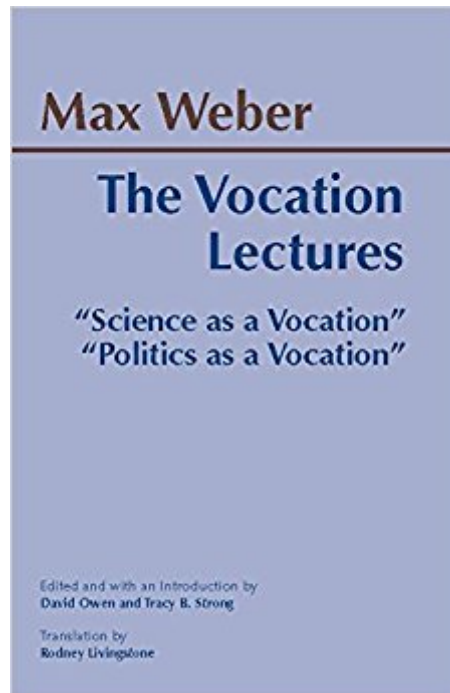




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The Vocation Lectures (Hackett Classics)



Synopsis

Originally published separately, Weber's *Science as a Vocation* and *Politics as a Vocation* stand as the classic formulations of his positions on two related subjects that go to the heart of his thought: the nature and status of science and its claims to authority; and the nature and status of political claims and the ultimate justification for such claims. Together in this volume, these newly translated lectures offer an ideal point of entry into Weber's central project: understanding how, as Weber put it, "in the West alone there have appeared cultural manifestations [that seem to] go in the direction of universal significance and validity."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[Owen and Strong] beautifully weave together the historical, philosophical, academic and personal circumstances that shaped Weber's world-view and these efforts reward the reader with a nuanced and thorough understanding. . . . Students, and even established academics, will benefit tremendously from this new edition. Rating: ***** --Jeffrey Roberts, University of Kent, in *Political Studies Review*

Tracy B. Strong is Professor of Political Science, University of California, San Diego. David Owen is Reader in Politics and Deputy Director of the Centre for Post-Analytic Philosophy, University of Southampton. Rodney Livingstone, Emeritus Professor of German, University of Southampton, has

translated works by Marx, Lukács, Benjamin, and Adorno.

I wonder why I did not read it earlier. It had changed my life! Excellent demonstration how thinking should work before decision making..

This book contains two lectures given by Max Weber in 1917 and 1918 (two years before his death). The lectures came about as a result of a repeated request from the University of Munich. The lectures center around two topics, what is required by somebody seriously pursuing vocation as a scientist, and what is the marking of a true politician? This is not a regular essay, it is not divided into chapters, and Weber is not trying to present any theories etc. I found the lectures to be very interesting, because they show us the thoughts of a great thinker at the end of his life. They contain a lot of observations on life and society in general, many of which are not uplifting. One can really sense here the dark, uncertain and gloomy times that was interbellum Germany. At one point in the politics-lecture, one it is almost eerie to read how close Weber came to predicting the events which were to take place in Germany 10 years later. Not a must have for most people, but for those interested in Weber, interbellum Europe, or great thinkers in general, I would recommend this book.

Books like this remind me why I love Hackett. This edition of Weber's lectures is given an outstanding introduction and plenty of insightful footnotes. If a better edition exists, I can't imagine what it would look like.

Individuals can feel a strong impulse to impose sanctions upon the world. Max Weber was the German thinker known best for the idea of a work ethic. Like a Saint Paul police officer who thinks he can write enough tickets to support governing the city, the student organization that invited Max Weber to give these lectures on vocations in science and politics wanted a way to live out ideas that would impose a Nagasaki of destitution eventually, but they were merely seeking monetary mushroom clouds to support their meanwhile existence. An American alter ego with similar influence might be Henry A. Murray, a personality psychologist at Harvard University featured on pages 36-37 of Harvard Magazine (March-April 2014) and in the book *Harvard and the Unabomber: The Education of an American Terrorist*. Ted Kaczynski was involved as a student in experiments conducted by the Department of Social Relations from 1959 through 1962. As we count by trillions now, we multiply by factors that were hardly on the horizon during the lifetime of Max Weber, who died in 1920. Then the roaring started for America. Max Weber started a lecture on

vocations by talking about a small salary in America that could make a difference for people who did not have some outside resources for support that was needed to start giving private lectures in the German educational system. Henry A. Murray was not eager to become a professor the first opportunity that was offered to him in 1946 because it would involve some changes in what he was doing and wanted to accomplish. He was a professor of clinical psychology from 1951 until he retired in 1962. At the end of Max Weber's life, he tried to lecture on the topic students requested. General Economic History was the book that tried to give students what they wanted to know. The first 40 percent of the Kindle file has material prepared by two editors to provide ample significance to what can be translated into English from the difficult kind of thinking that looks like a heap of trouble to people who suppose that simple attributions will provide mental pleasure addictions to a huge nation of shoppers now. If only the work ethic had saved us all from the kind of political trouble wilted two power pornographies have with each other after tossing the golden ball after lunch.

There is much of importance in the Science as a Vocation essay. But I will concentrate on my own domain, namely the qualities needed from political leaders. Having studied the German original and later taught the vocation lectures many years ago, still I decided to reread them in a new and much improved translation. I did so while finalizing a manuscript of my own on the qualities of mind required from political leaders in the emerging epoch of metamorphosis. The text is based on a lecture given before a student organization in Munich in January 1919, with some additions. This context influenced much of the contents. But this was a period of transformation, as is ours (and as was the period of Machiavelli), making some of his comments all the more pertinent. In particular relevant for our period are, inter alia, the following qualities which Weber demands from those wishing to be political leaders: living for politics and not from it; being fully committed to politics as a "vocation," including in the sense of "calling;" acting according to an ethics of responsibility for consequences, in some relation with an "ethics of commitment," making all of political leadership into an ethical endeavor; being fully mature, in the sense of ability "to scrutinize the realities of life ruthlessly, to withstand them, and to measure up to them inwardly (page 91); understanding the crucial importance of power and force; taking "distance" from issues and oneself; and, on important issues, "reaching the point where he says, 'Here I stand, I can do no other'" (page 92). These and other insights make the Politics as a Vocation text much superior to the vast majority of modern books on the requirements of political leadership. It should be a central text in all teaching and mentoring on political leadership. And at least pages 76-94 require reading and rereading by all politicians and whoever considers choosing politics as his vocation. Professor Yehezkel Dror

The book had a very solid, thorough introduction to the two lectures. It was an excellent preparation for reading Weber, also good for going back to and reading again.

The words in this book are not words that I like. I gave it to my dog to pee on.

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