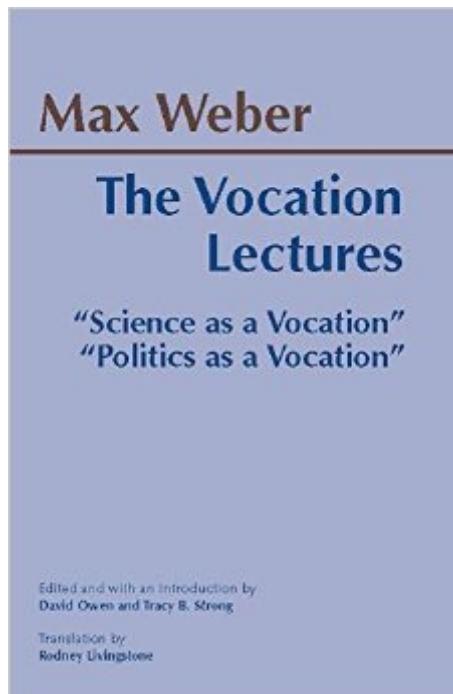


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The Vocation Lectures (Hackett Classics)



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.

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Customer Reviews

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.

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