



Social and Political Philosophy

Philosophy Department
PHI 240, Spring, 2013
OM G24 11:30-12:20 MWF
3 Credit Hours
Instructor: Dr. Andrew Fitz-Gibbon

If you need to get in touch with the instructor:

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Office Hours: Old Main 140-A, MW 2:30-4:00 and by appointment

Course Description

Catalog Description: "Focus on the relationship between the individual and the state, and opposing conceptions of democracy, freedom and a just society. (3 cr. hr.)"

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- a) Give an account of the major concepts and theories used in social and political philosophy (such as social justice, liberty, equality, community, democracy etc.).
- b) Understand the main political ideas of major political philosophers (such as Locke, Marx, Mill, hook, Mills, and Rawls)
- c) Apply these concepts and theories to areas of contemporary concern.
- d) Construct a reasoned philosophical argument.

Required Texts

John Locke. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980.
Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
bell hooks, *Feminism is For Everybody*. South End Press, 2000.
George Lakoff, *Moral Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Course Requirements

The course has a large discussion requirement, based on the required texts. Set reading and class participation are essential. Classes missed without prearrangement or a medical excuse will have negative consequences on final grade.

Final grade will be based on the following:

Class participation/attendance	10%
Class presentation	20%
5-7 Page paper	20%
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Two 3-5-page papers, final take home	30%

Grade Distribution:

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	
A = 94-96	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	
A- = 90-93	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	E = 0-59

Papers are due on:

Presentation 3-4-page paper is due on the day of your presentation
March 4 one 5-7-page critical philosophical book review
April 1: one 5-7-page critical philosophical book review
Final: two 3-5-page papers due last day of class, May 6

Presentations Requirements

You are required to carry out research followed by a group presentation lasting one whole class on one of the following issues:

- Social Justice
- Liberty
- Equality
- Community
- Democracy

In your presentation you need to incorporate:

- An understanding of philosophical principles
- A grasp of the issues: What is the argument? What is at stake in this issue?
- Application to today's society
- Personal experience

Each student is required to complete a 3-4-page paper outlining her/his particular research.

Writing a Critical Philosophical Book Review

You are required to write two of these. For each review choose one of the texts for the course. Each review 5-7 Pages. Divide your review into three parts:

- a) Description 1 page
- b) Analysis 2-3 page
- c) Response 2-3 page

Description

Summarize the author's thesis or argument.

Analysis

In your analysis you might want to consider these questions (amongst others): What philosophical positions does the author take? How does the author justify her/his argument? Are the author's premises true, probable or plausible? Is the argument of the book sound? Are there historical comparisons? What was the context of the writing? Which other philosopher's have taken a similar/opposite view to the author? *You will not be able to cover all of this in 3 pages, so careful thought and writing is important.*

Response

Do you agree with the author? Present a reasoned argument why you do or do not? What other philosophy/philosophers would you use to support your response? How would you modify the author's position?

Online helps:

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book_reviews.shtml

<http://www.lavc.cc.ca.us/Library/bookreview.htm>

Final papers

You are required to write two 3-5-page papers out of the following:

- Who should rule?
- What is the state of nature? What are the implications for this idea in political philosophy?
- Explain the idea of liberty.
- How should property be distributed?
- How would you justify the state?
- How does feminism challenge traditional social and political philosophy?

The Syllabus

Discussions in class are based on the readings. **The readings are essential**

Week One

General introduction and Expectations

Making good philosophical Arguments

Week Two

Locke Chapter 1-9

Social Justice

Social Justice

Discussion of Locke

Week Three

Locke Chapter 10-19

Liberty

Liberty

Discussion of Locke

Week Four

Lakoff Chapters 1-6

Equality

Equality

Discussion of Lakoff

Week Five

Lakoff Chapters 7-16

Community

Presentation #1 on Social Justice

Discussion on Lakoff

Week Six

Lakoff Chapter 17-23

Community

Democracy

Discussion on Lakoff

Week Seven

Mills Chapter 1

Democracy

Democracy

Discussion on Mills

Week Eight

No Classes Spring Break . . . head for the sun!

No Classes Spring Break

No Classes Spring Break

Week Nine

Mills Chapter 2

The State of Nature

Presentation #2 on liberty

Discussion on Mills

Week Ten

Mills Chapter 3

The State of Nature

Discussion on Mills

No Class

Week Eleven

hooks

Justifying the State

Presentation #3 on equality

Discussion on hooks

Week Twelve

hooks

Justifying the State

Discussion on hooks

Presentation #4 on community

Week Thirteen

Reading for Final

Feminism

Feminism

No Class Friday April 19: Transformations

Week Fourteen Reading for Final

The distribution of property

Who should rule?

Who should rule?

Week Fifteen Reading for Final

Presentation #5 on democracy

Loose Ends

Preparation for finals

Week Sixteen

Last Day of class May 6

Policies and Information

1. SUNY Cortland is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act 1973.

If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the office of Disability Services located in B-40 Van Hoesen Hall or call (607) 753-2066 for an appointment. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any request for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

2. No late work will be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Such arrangements will be made only under unusual circumstances.

3. Plagiarism. All work submitted must be your own. Ideas borrowed from others, either directly, or through paraphrase, must be well documented through endnotes or footnotes. If plagiarism is suspected the student will be reported to the Provost and can either accept the charge or defend her or himself in the Grievance Tribunal.

4. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what went on in class, whether any assignments were given, and for keeping up with your work.

SUNY Cortland Conceptual Framework

The mission of teacher education at SUNY Cortland is to build upon the foundation of liberal learning in the development of teachers who have exceptional pedagogical knowledge and skills. The foundation of liberal learning informs the professional education strand in an innovative thematic approach that emphasizes personal responsibility, global understanding and social justice. Graduates of SUNY Cortland's teacher education program will be prepared to think critically, utilize technology, communicate effectively, understand and value diversity, contribute to their communities, and make a difference in the lives of the