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## Philosophy 330-002: Social and Political Philosophy

Winter 2018-19, term 2; MWF 10-11, LASR 104

<i>Instructor</i>	Scott Anderson
<i>Office</i>	Buchanan E-373
<i>Phone</i>	822-4769
<i>Email</i>	scott.anderson@ubc.ca
<i>Office Hours</i>	

### Course overview

Political philosophy sits uneasily between ethics (roughly: theorizing about what it is right or good to do) and empirical social science (roughly: how individuals, groups, and institutions actually operate). If ethics demands actions of individuals that they fail to perform, or if it claims that they should be different than they are, this may not be any sort of fault of ethics. If a political philosopher makes demands that people will not or cannot meet, or expects them to be otherwise than they are, this more clearly constitutes a substantial objection to her views. Yet most political philosophers treat political philosophy as a normative endeavor: it tells us how we *should* organize society, and not just how we *do*. For this reason, political philosophy raises challenges for thinkers even more difficult than ethics, since adequacy in it would seem to require both a grasp of ethics as well as some mastery of a number of empirical disciplines, such as history, economics, psychology, sociology, and decision theory.

This course offers an introduction to some of the main themes and prominent authors in Western political philosophy and theory. As a result of this course, students should gain an appreciation for what philosophy can and cannot achieve in thinking about some of the fundamental concepts that underlie and guide much political discussion and debate, and how these arguments relate to some everyday issues in the world around us.

Western political philosophy has its origins in Ancient Greece and Rome, whose philosophers and historians left much of their thought and history to us in writings that continue to inform our appreciation of politics. It also has roots in the Judeo-Christian teachings of the Old and New Testaments, and the religious institutions that developed beside them. We will skip the ancient roots of our political views, and start from a very quick survey of thinkers from the early modern period (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and Mill) who generated much of the canon of Western political thought. Our main focus will be on relatively recent writings by notable scholars of the last 50 years, organized around a series of central topics: justice, equality, democracy, and the place of property and the market in political philosophy. Along the way, we will take note of some of the broader political programs which offer systematic answers to the sorts of problems covered in this course. These include liberalism, libertarianism, republicanism, communism, and communitarianism.

Students are encouraged to engage actively with the readings of the course, coming to class prepared to analyze and criticize them, and to consider their broader implications for policy and ethics.

### Prerequisites/Target audience

This course is aimed at undergraduates interested in majors or minors in philosophy or political science, or related programs. It does not have any formal pre-requisites, but students will likely benefit from having taken some other course(s) in philosophy, political theory, or history of political thought beforehand (such as “Introduction to Philosophy” “Introduction to Ethical Theory,” “Contemporary Moral Issues,” “Introduction to Politics,” “Currents of Political Thought,” or “History of Political Ideas”). Those who do not have any prior exposure to philosophy or political science, or who are not focusing on philosophy or political science, are encouraged to see me at the start of the term, so that I can give you a better idea of what is expected of you, and so that you can judge whether this is the right course for you.

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### **Course format**

The course will consist mainly of a combination of lectures and large-group discussions. Lectures will typically aim to introduce the current reading, explicate any especially difficult parts, and set an agenda for analysis or criticism of the work. Lectures will not typically aim to reprise the material in the readings, except when it is deemed especially difficult. It is expected that students will have read the material in advance of that class for which it was assigned, and will be active participants in raising questions and contributing to our collective understanding of it. In addition, you are expected to bring the relevant texts with you to class meetings.

This course involves a significant amount of reading: I anticipate that many weeks will require the majority of diligent students 4-5 hours of time to complete the readings in preparation for class.

### **Course readings**

The readings for this course will be made available to you for download from the course's Canvas site. Within the first week of the course, you should be able to access all course readings via the Canvas site. You are *strongly encouraged* to download and print out all of these readings as soon as possible, and place them in a single binder for the remainder of the term.

Please note: it is very unlikely you will be able to do well in this course without having done the readings carefully in advance of the sessions in which we discuss them.

### **Attendance**

The Academic Calendar says: "Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes."

Regular attendance is strongly recommended. It will be very difficult to do well in this course if you do not make use of readings and the lectures. However, I will not take attendance on a regular basis, and you do not need to make a formal request to miss a class. If you know that you will be absent in advance, please let me know, and I will help you keep up during your absence.

### **Canvas Website**

By virtue of being registered for this course, you will have access to the "Canvas" course website, a web-based program (<https://Canvas.ubc.ca>) we will use to supplement a number of areas of the course. Almost all of the readings for the course will be linked to via this site; in addition, you will frequently find optional reading assignments, bibliographies, suggestions for excelling in the course, paper assignments, feedback/grades, announcements, and general course and philosophical information. You will also be required to turn your papers in via the Canvas website. Please check it periodically to see what has been added. If you have trouble accessing Canvas, please let me know.

One caution, however: unless I have sent you one to which you are responding, please **do not send me email or instant messages (IMs) via Canvas**. I do not check messages regularly on Canvas; instead, please send any messages you have for me to my UBC mail account, [scott.anderson@ubc.ca](mailto:scott.anderson@ubc.ca).

### **Grading**

I hope that you will find that the intellectual work required in this course is difficult and rewarding because of its very nature. Facing up to and tackling the kind of challenges philosophy presents is critical to higher education. The purpose of giving marks in a course like this is three-fold: First, it gives you a very rough measure of your progress in learning and using the material that is the subject matter of the course. Second, it gives others a very rough measure of the quality of your intellectual work while at the University. Third, it gives you some external incentive to perform the reading assignments, attend the class meetings, and do the thinking that is part of studying philosophy, as well as to avoid some of the shortcuts or dishonest practices that undercut the value of attending a university. Marking is, however, only a blunt instrument in

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any of these areas, and it is, from my perspective, one of the least important aspects of this course or of a university education.

Your mark for this course will be determined by a combination of the following elements:

- Three papers (800, 1200, 1600 words) for 10%, 15%, and 20% of the course mark, respectively.
- 5-10 brief impromptu exercises (the lowest two scores will be dropped): 20%
- Final exam (2.5 hours, comprehensive): 35%

Standards for grading this course will be in accordance with those given in the Academic Calendar and the grading guidelines published in the university calendar. See:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,42,0,0>

The information below is copied verbatim from the above webpage:

In most faculties, individual courses are normally graded as follows:

Percentage (%)	Letter Grade
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
76-79	B+
72-75	B
68-71	B-
64-67	C+
60-63	C
55-59	C-
50-54	D
0-49	F (fail)

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Faculties, departments and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to university, faculty, department or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.

The instructor hopes to be able to determine overall scores for the course by simply adding the scores from the individual components, but I reserve the right to scale the final scores for the same reasons mentioned in the Academic Calendar. (Please consult Canvas for a record of your grades.)

Students should retain a copy of their submitted written assignments, in case of loss. You should also save frequently, and to a variety of backup locations, in the process of writing your papers, so as to avert difficulties in completing the assignment on time. You should also retain work that has been returned to you, in case you wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

### **How to submit written work; policy on late or missing work**

Papers will be accepted only in electronic form submitted to the appropriate section on the Canvas course website. They will be returned with comments in electronic form as well.

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Papers turned in after the specified date will be marked down for lateness, with increasing penalties as time goes by (roughly 2 percent per day). Early submission is accepted.

If you must submit your paper late, you must include with it a completed “Late Work Form,” which you can find on our course’s Canvas site. Late papers will not be accepted without this form appended to the paper. You should submit this as a separate upload from your paper, which should itself be anonymized.

### **Academic honesty**

I take academic honesty very seriously, as it is essential both to your ability to get full value from this course, as well as for treating fairly those who do their own work. I strongly encourage you to work together in reading and discussing the material, in preparing for the final examination, and thinking about the writing of your papers. Nonetheless, your work on the papers and examinations must be your own work. Cheating, copying, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty (including assisting others in dishonest activity) will be punished to the fullest extent provided for by the University. If you are unclear on what counts as honest or dishonest methods, you should read the Faculty of Arts’ pamphlet on plagiarism (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoid-plagiarism/>) as well as the University’s policy on academic misconduct (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/?tree=3,54,111,959>), and ask me specific questions about what is and isn’t allowed in this course. I will not think worse of you for wanting to be clear about this. I will, however, be vigilant in hindering, uncovering and punishing those who fail to take this warning seriously.

In this course you will be required to submit your papers in electronic form. These papers may be submitted to a service to which UBC subscribes, called TurnItIn. This is a service that checks textual material for originality. It is increasingly used in North American universities

### **Student use of technology in the classroom**

Many of you may wish to use computers during class for purposes of taking notes; this is perfectly acceptable. Many of you may also have the course readings in electronic form, which is also fine (though I would urge you to print and make a binder of the readings instead). So using a computer, etc., to access course readings is also permitted. *However, use of computers (or other devices) for other purposes during class is not permitted*, unless I instruct you to do so. This means you should not do such things as check your email, send messages to friends, go shopping for snow boards, or check hockey scores. Besides being a distraction for you, it also creates a serious distraction for those around you, and this is not acceptable. I hope to be able to rely on the honor system to create an atmosphere in which such activity is avoided; however, if this hope is defeated, I will take other measures to discourage such activity.

### **Office hours**

I will hold regular office hours at the times noted at the top of the syllabus – no appointment is necessary – as well as by appointment at other times. You are strongly encouraged to come visit me at office hours and/or to make time to talk with me outside of class. You may want to bring specific questions about material in this course, or you may want to show up just to talk about whatever school- or philosophy-related issues are on your mind. Getting to know the teachers at your university is one of the most valuable parts of your higher education; unfortunately, it is unlikely to occur here unless you take at least a small bit of initiative. I will do what I can to reciprocate in getting to know you.

### **Equity and special arrangements**

I take seriously the importance of making sure all students are given equal and full opportunities to participate and learn. The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know as soon as possible, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar

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commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with me before the drop date.

If you require any particular arrangements in the classroom to facilitate your participation or learning, please let me know, and I will do what we can to make things suitable for you.

If you encounter serious health or personal difficulties during the term, please let me know of these at your earliest opportunity. There are lots of things more important in life than this class, and when one of those things goes wrong, this class should not add to the burdens you may then confront. Within reason, I will do what we can to work around any genuine, serious difficulties you may confront, but it will be helpful to know of them as soon as you are able to notify me.

**Schedule**

All of the readings required for this course will be provided via links from the course’s Canvas website. It is highly recommended that you download all of these readings at your earliest opportunity, and either print them or save them to your own device, which you should bring with you to class.

The schedule of readings below is provisional: please see the Connect website for updates to the schedule, as well as listen at the start of class for changes in the schedule. However, barring significant disruptions, the due dates of the papers and the examination will not change.

The column headed “Supplemental Reading” contains some suggested extra readings which you may find useful and/or enjoyable, but you are not required to read them, and will not be held accountable for their content (though I may make some mention of them in lectures).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Main reading</b>	<b>Supplemental reading</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Wed., Jan. 2	Introduction		
Fri., Jan. 4	de-Shalit: “Political Philosophy and Empowering Citizens”	List and Valentini: “The Methodology of Political Theory”	
<b>Classics of Western Political Thought</b>			
Mon., Jan. 7	Hobbes: excerpts from <i>Leviathan</i>	Hampton: excerpt from <i>Political Philosophy</i>	
Wed., Jan. 9	Locke: excerpts from <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>		
Fri., Jan. 11	discussion		
Mon., Jan. 14	Rousseau: excerpts from <i>The Social Contract</i>		
Wed., Jan. 16	Rousseau: <i>The Social Contract</i> (cont’d)		
Fri., Jan. 18	discussion		
Mon., Jan. 21	Bentham: excerpts from <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> ; Mill: excerpts from <i>Utilitarianism</i>		
Wed., Jan. 23	Mill: excerpts from <i>On Liberty</i>		
Fri., Jan. 25	Discussion		First paper due Sun., 1/27, 5:00 p.m.
Mon., Jan. 28	Marx: <i>Wage Labour and Capital</i>		
Wed., Jan. 30	Marx: “Estranged Labour”; <i>Communist Manifesto</i>		
Fri., Feb. 1	Political Docs; discussion		
<b>Democracy and Social Organization</b>			

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Mon., Feb. 4	Held: "Democracy: From City-states to a Cosmopolitan Order?"	Shklar: "Liberalism of Fear"	
Wed., Feb. 6	Anscombe: "On the Source of the Authority of the State"		
Fri., Feb. 8	discussion		
Mon., Feb. 11	Barry: "Is Democracy Special?"	Waldron: "Democracy"	
Wed., Feb. 13	Brennan: "The Right to a Competent Electorate"		
Fri., Feb. 15	discussion		
Winter Break			
Mon., Feb. 25	Mills: "Racial Liberalism"	Shelby: "Race"	Second paper due, Mon., 2/25, 11:59 p.m.
Wed., Feb. 27	MacKinnon: "Difference and Dominance"	Satz: "Gender"	
Fri., Mar. 1	discussion		
Mon., Mar. 4	Young: "Polity and Group Difference"		
Wed., Mar. 6	Scott: "Cities, People, and Language," "Authoritarian High Modernism" (chs. 2-3 of <i>Seeing Like a State</i> )	Scott: "State Simplification"	
Fri., Mar. 8	discussion		
<b>Justice, Equality, Freedom, Property and Markets</b>			
Mon., Mar. 11	Rawls: "Distributive Justice"	Rawls: "Justice as Fairness"; "A Kantian View of Equality"	
Wed., Mar. 13	Parfit: "Equality and Priority"	Cohen: "Why Not Socialism?"	
Fri., Mar. 15	discussion		
Mon., Mar. 18	Hayek: "Equality, Value, and Merit"	Nozick: "Distributive Justice"; Wellman: "Justice"	
Wed., Mar. 20	Arneson: "Egalitarianism and the Undeserving Poor"	Shue: "Basic Rights"	
Fri., Mar. 22	discussion		
Mon., Mar. 25	Schmidtz: "The Institution of Property"	Gaus: "Idea and Ideal of Capitalism"	
Wed., Mar. 27	Waldron: "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom"	Essert: "Property and Homelessness"	Third paper due Thur., Mar. 28, 11:59 p.m.
Fri., Mar. 29	discussion		
Mon., Apr. 1	Anderson: "Private Government"		
Wed., Apr. 3	discussion/wrap-up		

**Other important dates**

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*Monday, January 14:* Last day for changes in registration and for withdrawal from most Term 2 courses without withdrawal standing of W recorded on a student's academic record.

*Friday, February 8:* Last day for withdrawal from most Winter Session Term 2 courses with withdrawal standing of W recorded on a student's academic record.