

Past Course Syllabus: the syllabus for 2022-23 will be similar but not identical

Philosophy 330-002: Social and Political Philosophy

Winter 2021-22, term 1; MWF 1-2, LASR 104

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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, Bentham, Mill and Marx) 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

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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.

COVID-specific Information

Most if not all of us are dealing with a variety of difficulties and complications arising out of the ongoing COVID pandemic; and it is very possible that things will continue to stay difficult and variable throughout the term. With that in mind, please note the following:

1. Ensuring your and my health and safety (and that of those we interact with outside of class) during the term is of paramount importance to me. I aim to make sure this class/room does not adversely impact anyone's health.
2. The pandemic has adversely affected many of us in ways that can impact the ability to perform at our best in courses and in instruction. To the best of my ability, I hope to make this course rewarding and manageable for you. If you are confronting difficulties that impact your ability to perform to your desired level in this course, please let me know, and I will do what I can to improve the way this course is structured/delivered, so that you can get the maximum benefit from it. I can't guarantee that all requests for accommodation will be honored, but I will do what I can to be flexible in response to all reasonable requests. Please reach out if you are running into difficulties, and we can try to work together to address them.

Specific policies:

Masks: You are required to wear a non-medical mask during our class meetings, for your own protection and for the safety and comfort of everyone else in the class. For our in-person meetings in this class, it is important that all of us feel as comfortable as possible engaging in class activities while sharing an indoor space. Non-medical masks that cover our noses and mouths are a primary tool for combating the spread of Covid-19. Further, according to the provincial mandate, masks are required in all indoor public spaces including lobbies, hallways, stairwells, elevators, classrooms and labs. There may be students who have medical accommodations for not wearing a mask. Please maintain a respectful environment. [UBC Respectful Environment Statement](#). If you require accommodation for health-related grounds that exempt them from this requirement, please contact both the Centre for Accessibility and me to let me know of this at the start of the term. Please see https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC_Jul2021_Mask-Policy-Guidance_Stage-3-Update_FINAL.pdf for further information on what grounds justify an accommodation for an exemption from the mask mandate.

Wearing a mask obviously is incompatible with eating and drinking. I ask that you refrain from eating while in class. If you want to drink a beverage, that is allowed, but please keep your mask in place in between sips of your beverage.

Illness and Absence: It is very important that you do not attend class if you are ill or have reason to believe you may be ill. Please do a self-assessment of your health before coming to campus/class, as described here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en> . In some cases, you may need to take a COVID test; information about how to determine if a test is warranted is here: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/When_to_get_tested.pdf . If you are unable to attend class because of illness or suspected illness, I will take steps to ensure that this does not adversely affect your mark for the course. I will be attempting to record and make

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available lectures and discussions to those not able to attend in person for health-related reasons. I recommend that you attempt to find at least one, perhaps several fellow students who you can communicate with in case of missed classes, so that you can get notes and other relevant information from them in case you are unable to attend class.

If you miss an exam due to illness or suspected illness, please contact me as soon as is feasible, and we will make arrangements for a make-up administration of the exam, or other reasonable accommodations.

Late arrival at start of the term: If you are unable to attend classes in person at the start of the term, please let me know this, as well as when you anticipate being able to arrive and begin attending class. I will attempt to record lectures/discussions throughout at least the beginning of the term and post these to Canvas; however, the feasibility of doing so effectively is not yet determined. Such recordings are not intended to replace class attendance over the long-term. So you should plan to attend class regularly after you arrive in Vancouver and have clearance to do so.

Course format

The course will consist mainly of a combination of lectures and large-group discussions. This course will follow a routine most weeks of the term, though some weeks will diverge from it due to holidays and other disruptions. Most Mondays and Wednesdays have specific readings assigned for them. You are expected to do the readings before class. I will do a fair amount of the talking on Monday and Wednesday course meetings, mostly to introduce the authors and some of the key ideas from the readings assigned for those days. There will be lecture slides that will accompany my lectures and discussion leading, but we may deviate from them somewhat; in any case, they will be posted to the Canvas website usually before the start of class, and generally serve as helpful guides to the content of the readings. Most Fridays will have no specific readings assigned, or perhaps a short reading tailored to that week's main themes. Class meetings on Fridays will largely feature discussion of the week's readings and involve more student talking and less of me talking. Some small-group activities may also be incorporated on Fridays.

I will attempt to integrate various assessment questions into lectures and discussion, and perhaps on Canvas as well, to help you determine whether you are understanding the material adequately to be in a position to do well on the midterm and final exams. These will not be marked or counted toward your course grade, but will hopefully give you a sense of how well you are understanding the material as we go.

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 3-5 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.

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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.

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 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:

2 papers of roughly 1600 words each: $25\% * 2 = 50\%$

2 midterm exams (50 minutes): $12.5\% * 2 = 25\%$

Final exam (100 minutes): 25%

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:

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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)

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.

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.

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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 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.

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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).

Date	Main reading	Supplemental reading	Evaluation
Wed., Sept. 8	Introduction		
Fri., Sept. 10	The Value of the History of Political Philosophy Terence Ball The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy	List and Valentini: “The Methodology of Political Theory”	
Classics of Western Political Thought			
Mon., Sept. 13	Hobbes: excerpts from <i>Leviathan</i>	Hampton: excerpt from <i>Political Philosophy</i>	
Wed., Sept. 15	Locke: excerpts from <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>		
Fri., Sept. 17	discussion		
Mon., Sept. 20	Rousseau: excerpts from <i>The Social Contract</i>		
Wed., Sept. 22	Rousseau: <i>The Social Contract</i> (cont’d)		
Fri., Sept. 24	discussion		
Mon., Sept. 27	Bentham: excerpts from <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> ; Mill: excerpts from <i>Utilitarianism</i>		
Wed., Sept. 29	Mill: excerpts from <i>On Liberty</i>		
Fri., Oct. 1	discussion		
Mon., Oct. 4	Marx: <i>Wage Labour and Capital</i>		
Wed., Oct. 6	Marx: “Estranged Labour”; <i>Communist Manifesto</i>		
Fri., Oct. 8	discussion		
Monday, Oct. 11 – Thanksgiving.			
Wed., Oct. 13	Political Documents		
Fri., Oct. 15	Midterm Exam		Midterm exam
Justice, Equality, Freedom, Property and Markets			
Mon., Oct. 18	Rawls: “Distributive Justice”	Rawls: “Justice as Fairness”; “A Kantian View of Equality”	
Wed., Oct. 20	Hayek: “Equality, Value, and Merit”	Nozick: “Distributive Justice”	
Fri., Oct. 22	discussion		
Mon., Oct. 25	Waldron: “Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom”	Essert: “Property and Homelessness”	
Wed., Oct. 27	Schmidtz: “The Institution of Property”	Gaus: “Idea and Ideal of Capitalism”	

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Fri., Oct. 29	discussion		First paper due: 5:00 p.m., Sun., Oct 31.
Mon., Nov. 1	Cohen: "Why Not Socialism?"	Arneson: "Egalitarianism and the Undeserving Poor"	
Wed., Nov. 3	Satz: "Liberalism, Economic Freedom, and the Limits of Markets"	Shue: "Basic Rights"	
Fri., Nov. 5	discussion		
Mon., Nov. 8	Midterm Exam		
Fall Break			
States, Politics, Democracy, and Disagreement			
Mon., Nov. 15	Anscombe: "On the Source of the Authority of the State"	Shklar: "Liberalism of Fear"	
Wed., Nov. 17	Waldron: "Democracy"	Held: "Democracy: From City-states to a Cosmopolitan Order?"; Barry: "Is Democracy Special?"	
Fri., Nov. 19	discussion		
Mon., Nov. 22	Brennan: "The Right to a Competent Electorate"		
Wed., Nov. 24	Scott: "State Simplifications"	Scott: "Cities, People, and Language," "Authoritarian High Modernism" (chs. 2-3 of <i>Seeing Like a State</i>)	
Fri., Nov. 26	discussion		
Mon., Nov. 29	Young: "Polity and Group Difference"	Shelby: "Race"; Satz: "Gender"	
Wed., Dec. 1	Calhoun: "The Virtue of Civility"	Guttman and Thompson: "Moral Conflict and Political Consensus"	
Fri., Dec. 3	Sandel: "Populism, Liberalism, and Democracy"		
Mon., Dec. 6	discussion/course wrap-up		Second paper due: 5:00 p.m., Tue., Dec. 7

Other important dates

Monday, September 20, 2021: 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, October 29: Last day for withdrawal from most Winter Session Term 2 courses with withdrawal standing of W recorded on a student's academic record.