

Course Syllabus
Political Philosophy
PHIL 462, Spring, 2007

Instructor: Dr. Matt Zwolinski
Office Hours: 3:00-5:00 (M/W); 4:00-5:00 (T/TH)
Office: F167A
Course Website: <http://pope.sandiego.edu/>
Phone: 619-260-4094
Email: mzwolinski@sandiego.edu

Required Books:

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism and On Liberty*
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*

Recommended Books:

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*
Jean Hampton, *Political Philosophy*

Content:

Government is unlike anything else in society. It can take your money without your consent. It can order you to leave your home and fight its wars. And if you disobey it, it can imprison or even kill you. Why is it OK for governments to do these things? Or *is* it OK? How can we tell?

These are some of the basic questions of political philosophy. This course will explore these questions through the careful study of some of the classic texts in this area of the Western philosophic tradition. Our plan of study revolves around five great modern and contemporary philosophers – Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), John Rawls (1921-2002), and Robert Nozick (1938-2002).

In this course, you will learn both philosophic content and philosophic methodology. In terms of content, we will be primarily concerned with questions of *distributive justice* and *political authority*. Questions of distributive justice are questions about who should get what, morally speaking. Is capitalism a fair method of economic organization, if it results in the unequal distribution of wealth? Is it just for property to be held privately by individuals, or is a more collective form of ownership desirable? Should the state be concerned with promoting equality – and if so, what *kind* of equality should it promote? Questions of political authority, on the other hand, are concerned with why and to what extent the state has legitimate power over us. Do governments derive their authority from ‘the consent of the governed’? If so, what does that consent look like (I never signed anything!)? Can the state do anything it wants to us, or are there limits? If there are limits, where do those limits come from?

Apart from the content, you will also learn various skills in philosophic methodology in this course.

- First, you will learn how to read difficult philosophic texts. The readings for this course consist *entirely* of primary sources, and they can be trying. To help you with this, we will spend most of our class periods with the text close at hand, going over it line-by-line in many cases.
- Second, you will learn the skills of conceptual analysis and philosophic argumentation. Much time will be spent in this course getting clear about subtle distinctions between closely related concepts (justice, fairness, desert, etc.), and you will be expected both to be able to analyze the arguments of other philosophers, and to forge new arguments of your own. These are skills that will serve you well in life, from reading the op-ed page of your newspaper to convincing others to see your point of view.
- Finally, you will learn how to write. Specifically, you will learn how to write analytic, argumentative essays which accurately represent philosophic positions and clearly articulate the reasons behind those positions. Again, this is a skill that will serve you well not only in this course, but in almost any endeavor you take on in life (from writing a cover letter to a resume, to getting yourself out of a parking ticket!).

Course Requirements:

Philosophical readings are dense and difficult. It will probably take longer than you expect to read them once, and it will probably be necessary to re-read most pieces at least once in order to come to an adequate understanding of the material. You should expect to spend at least **six hours per week** outside of class time reading and re-reading the material. If you do this, you will have a much easier time with the short writing assignments, which should probably take up an additional **five to six hours each** in preparation time. Use the study questions on WebCT for help.

The requirements set out in this syllabus are subject to revision at the instructor's discretion.

- **Quizzes** – I will give 5-10 unannounced, multiple-choice quizzes over the course of the semester. The purpose of these quizzes is to test your completion and comprehension of the day's reading assignment, and to encourage attendance at class. You will not be excused from quizzes missed due to absences *unless* you either a) notify me *at least 24 hours in advance and in writing* (email is fine) that you will be absent, or b) provide me with a *documented medical excuse* after your absence. These are the *only* acceptable excuses for missing a quiz, and you may only be excused from two quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes are difficult, so it is vital that you read the material carefully and in advance of class.
- **Study Questions** – On the dates indicated on the syllabus, I will collect your answers to the study questions for the readings assigned up to and including that date. For example, on February 22nd, I will collect your answers to the study questions for all readings up to and including chapter 8 of Locke. Your answers to these questions will be graded on a check/check-plus/check-minus basis, depending on their thoroughness and accuracy. A passing set of study questions will *replace your lowest quiz score* with a "3," a "4," or a "5," respectively. Therefore, if you turn in check-plus responses to all three sets of study questions, your three lowest quiz scores will all be converted to 5s.
- **Papers** – I will assign three writing assignments over the course of the semester.
 - **Short Papers:** The first two will be relatively short – no less than two and no more than three pages (typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins and normal fonts) in length. I will assign a topic for these papers which will involve two tasks: 1) reconstructing an argument or arguments from one or more of the readings we have covered in class, and 2) providing an original critical evaluation of that/those argument(s). These papers are short not to make life easy for you but in order to force you to think carefully about what is essential to an argument and what is not. I will grade these papers with an eye to *detail* and *conceptual rigor*. Expect to be challenged.
 - **Term Paper:** The third writing assignment will be longer – between 8 and 10 pages (typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins and normal fonts) in length. You will have more freedom on this assignment with regard to your topic, but will still be expected to reconstruct and critically evaluate some of the arguments we have covered in class. This paper will be due on the day of your scheduled final. I will provide more guidance on my expectations for this assignment as the due date draws closer.
 - **Topic Proposal:** You will be expected to clear your topic with me in advance, by submitting to me an approximately ½ - 1 page proposal no later than April 17th. This proposal should state the subject of your paper (what debate will you be looking at), a rough version of your thesis (what position will you be arguing for), and a preliminary list of sources that you will be consulting. These sources must include at least three philosophic articles which we have not covered in class. Philosophic articles means journal articles or book chapters – internet sites do not count!
 - **Late papers:** Papers are due on Turnitin.com (see below) at the beginning of the class period on the day indicated on the schedule below. Late papers will be penalized 5 percentage points per day, without exception.
- **Participation** – Philosophy is best learned through active conversation with others. It is therefore important that you be a regular participant in classroom discussions. Ideally, you will be sufficiently engaged with the material to contribute to these discussions spontaneously and voluntarily. As an additional stimulus, however, I will call randomly on students to answer questions in class. If you cannot answer a question satisfactorily (due to lack of preparation or absence), your class participation grade will be affected. Well thought-out contributions to the website will also count toward your participation grade.

Your Grade

Each activity in this class is worth a certain number of points. Your grade will be determined based on a straight (un-curved) analysis of percentage of points earned vs. total points.

Quizzes 5-10 @ 5 points each	25-50
2 Short Papers @ 10 points each	20
Term Paper Topic Proposal:	5
Term Paper:	30
Participation	10
Total Points:	90-115

A+	97 - 100%
A	93 - 96.9
A-	90 - 92.9
B+	87 - 89.9
B	83 - 86.9
B-	80 - 82.9
C+	77 - 79.9
C	73 - 76.9
C-	70 - 72.9
D+	67 - 67.9
D	63 - 66.9
D-	60 - 62.9
F	59.9 or below

Respect

This is a course in ethics, broadly construed, and one of the fundamental ethical values we will study is *respect*. I will treat you with respect in this course, and expect you to do the same for me and your fellow students. What this means in practice is (at a minimum):

For me:

- I will arrive on time and prepared for each class meeting scheduled on the syllabus.
- I will take student questions seriously and attempt to address them as helpfully as I can within the constraints of class time.
- I will keep my scheduled office hours, or provide advance notice if this is not possible.
- I will return written assignments within a reasonable time and provide you with ample constructive criticism and an adequate explanation of your grade.
- I will treat you as an adult. Part of what this means is taking your philosophical opinions seriously. But taking your views seriously does not mean treating you with kid gloves. It means that I will assume that you have put some thought into your position and that I will hold you accountable for it, and challenge you when appropriate. I expect the same from you.
- I will respect your time and not give you “busy work.”

For you:

- You will respect the opinions of your classmates, and respond to them with seriousness, courtesy, and charity.
- You will show up to class on time.
- You will read the material assigned for class prior to the meeting at which we are scheduled to discuss it.
- You will take responsibility for turning in your written assignments on time.
- You will respect my time and the time of your fellow students by helping to make our time together as productive and conducive to learning as possible.

Integrity

Doing your own work is part of what it means to have respect for me, for your fellow students, and for yourself.

As above, my treating you with respect involves treating you like an adult. As an adult, you are responsible for knowing the University’s regulations concerning Academic Integrity. **“I didn’t know it was plagiarism” is not an excuse.** Any violation of the Code of Academic Integrity is grounds for failure from the class in addition to any further penalties deemed appropriate by the Academic Integrity Committee.

USD subscribes to a service called Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com is a web-based application that compares the content of submitted papers to the Turnitin.com database and checks for textual similarities. All required papers for this course may be subject to submission to Turnitin.com for textual similarity review and to verify originality. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting textual similarities and verifying originality. Each student is responsible for submitting his or her papers in such a way that no identifying information about the student is included. A student may not have anyone else submit papers on the student’s behalf to Turnitin.com. A student may request in writing that his or her papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, if a student chooses this option, the student may be required to provide documentation in a form required by the faculty member to substantiate that the papers are the student’s original work.

KEY DATES AT A GLANCE

Feb 22	-	Study Questions #1 Due
Feb 27	-	WA1 Due
Mar 22	-	WA2 Due
Mar 29	-	Study Questions #2 Due
Apr 2 – 9	-	Easter Break: no classes
Apr 17	-	Term Paper Topic Proposal Due
Apr 19	-	No class: this course only
May 3	-	No class: this course only
May 10	-	Study Questions #3 Due
May 17	-	Term Paper Due at 11:00 AM

Schedule of Readings for PHIL 462: Political Philosophy Spring, 2007 Professor Matt Zwolinski

Introduction

1	Jan 30	Motivation/Syllabus/Structure of Course
---	--------	---

Hobbesian Contractarianism

2	Feb 1	<u>Introduction to Hobbes – Hobbes’ Theory of Human Nature</u> Required Reading: - Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapter XI, pages 69-70 Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Hobbes’ Moral and Political Philosophy”: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/ - Richard Tuck, “Introduction” to <i>Leviathan</i> - Gregory Kavka, <i>Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory</i> , chapter 2
3	Feb 6	<u>Hobbes on the State of Nature and the Laws of Nature</u> Required Reading: - Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapters XIII – XIV - Stanford Encyclopedia entry on “Game Theory”: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-theory/ - Stanford Encyclopedia entry on “Game Theory and Ethics”: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-ethics/ - Gregory Kavka, <i>Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory</i> , chapter 4
4	Feb 8	<u>More on the Laws of Nature; On the Social Contract</u> Required Reading: - Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapter XV, XVII-XVIII Recommended Reading: - Hampton, pp. 41-52 - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Contractarianism”: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/contractarianism/
5	Feb 13	<u>Hobbes on Individual Liberty, Law, and the Dissolution of the Commonwealth</u> Required Reading: - Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chapters XXI, XXVI Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “The Nature of Law”: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lawphil-nature/

Lockean Natural Rights Theory

6	Feb 15	<u>Locke on the State of Nature and the State of War; Slavery</u> Required Reading: - Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> , Chapters 1-4 Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “John Locke”: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke/ , sections 1, 3, and 4
---	--------	--

- 7 Feb 20 Locke on Property and Paternal Power
Required Reading: - Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 5-6
Recommended Reading: -Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Locke’s Political Philosophy”:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke-political/>, section 3
 - David Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property,” *Social Philosophy and Policy*, Summer 1994, 11(2): 42-62.
 - Robert Ellickson, “Property in Land,” *Yale Law Journal* 102: 1315-1400.
 - Daniel Russell, “Locke on Land and Labor,” *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 117: 303-325 (2004).
- 8 Feb 22 Locke on the Origins of Civil Society
Study Questions #1 Due
Required Reading: - Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 7-8
Recommended Reading: - Hampton, pp. 53-66
 - John Simmons, *On the Edge of Anarchy*, chapters 3-4
 - Hanna Pitkin, “Obligation and Consent I” and “Obligation and Consent II,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 59, no. 4 (Dec 1965): 990-999, and vol. 60, no. 1 (Mar 1966): 39-52.
- 9 Feb 27 Locke on the Ends and Powers of Government
WAI Due
Required Reading: - Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 9-13
- 10 Mar 1 Locke on the Limits of Political Power
Required Reading: - Locke, *Second Treatise*, Chapters 16-19
Recommended Reading: - John Simmons, *On the Edge of Anarchy*, chapters 5-6

Utilitarianism

- 11 Mar 6 Introduction to Utilitarianism
Required Reading: - J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 1
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “John Stuart Mill”:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill/>
 - J.S. Mill, *Autobiography*
 - Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, chapter 2
- 12 Mar 8 Mill’s Theory of The Good
Required Reading: - J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2, para 1-18
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Hedonism”:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hedonism/>
 - Roger Crisp, *Mill on Utilitarianism*, ch. 2-3
- 13 Mar 13 Mill’s Theory of The Right
Required Reading: - J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2, para 19-25
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Consequentialism”:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism/>
 - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Rule Consequentialism”:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism-rule/>
 - Roger Crisp, *Mill on Utilitarianism*, ch. 5
 - Jean Hampton, *Political Philosophy*, pp. 123-132
 - JJC Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (Cambridge, 1973)

- 14 Mar 15 Mill's Harm Principle
Required Reading: - J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 1
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "The Limits of Law":
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/law-limits/>
- 15 Mar 20 Mill on the Limits of State Authority
Required Reading: - J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 4
Recommended Reading: - Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford (1969)
- 16 Mar 22 Applying the Harm Principle
WA2 Due
Required Reading: - J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapter 5
Recommended Reading: - Joel Feinberg, *Harm to Others*
 - Joel Feinberg, *Offense to Others*, chapter 7.3, "A Ride on the Bus"

Rawlsian Liberal Egalitarianism

- 17 Mar 27 Introduction to Rawls – Overview of the Theory
Required Reading: - John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 1, sections 1-4
Recommended Reading: - Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, chapter 3
 - Jean Hampton, *Political Philosophy*, pages 133-143
- 18 Mar 29 Contrast with Utilitarianism; Reflective Equilibrium
Study Questions #2 Due
Required Reading: - John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 1, sections 5-6, 9
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Reflective Equilibrium":
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reflective-equilibrium/>

-- Easter Break --

- 19 Apr 10 The Two Principles of Justice
Required Reading: - John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 2, sections 10-13
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Distributive Justice," section 2:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/#Difference>
 - Thomas Nagel, "Rawls on Justice," in Norman Daniels, ed., *Reading Rawls*
- 20 Apr 12 The Two Principles of Justice continued
Required Reading: - John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 2, sections 14-17
Recommended Reading: - Norman Daniels, "Equal Liberty and Unequal Worth of Liberty," in *Reading Rawls*
- 21 Apr 17 The Original Position
Topic Proposal Due
Required Reading: - John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 3, section 20, 22-26
Recommended Reading: - Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on "Original Position":
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/>
- 22 Apr 19 **No Class (this course only)**

Nozickian Libertarianism

- 23 Apr 24 Introduction to Nozick – Anarchy and Contract Theory
Required Reading: - Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapters 1-2
Recommended Reading: - Jean Hampton, *Political Philosophy*, pp. 144-152
- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Distributive Justice,” section 6:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-distributive/#Libertarian>
- Murray Rothbard, *For a New Liberty*, chapters 2-3
- 24 Apr 26 Side Constraints and Political Theory
Required Reading: - Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapter 3
- Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on “Rights,” section 6.1:
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights/#6.1>
- Thomas Nagel, “Libertarianism Without Foundations,” in Jeffrey Paul, ed., *Reading Nozick*
- Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Some Ruminations on Rights,” in *Reading Nozick*
- Samuel Scheffler, “Agent-Centered Restrictions, Rationality, and the Virtues,” *Mind* 94 (1985): 409-19.
- 25 May 1 Distributive Justice – Liberty versus Pattern; Property and Provisos
Required Reading: - Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapter 7, pages 150-164, 167-182
Recommended Reading: - Onora O’Neill, “Nozick’s Entitlements,” in *Reading Nozick*
- G.A. Cohen, “Robert Nozick and Wilt Chamberlain: How Patterns Preserve Liberty,” chapter 1 of his *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality*
- 26 May 3 **No Class (this course only)**
- 27 May 8 A Critique of Rawls’ Theory
Required Reading: - Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapter 7, pages 183-197
Recommended Reading: - Loren Lomasky, “Libertarianism at Twin Harvard,” *Social Philosophy and Policy*, Winter 2005, 22(1): 178-199
- 28 May 10 A Critique of Rawls’ Theory, continued
Study Questions #3 Due
Required Reading: - Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, chapter 7, pages 198-231
Recommended Reading: - Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, chapter 4
- Peter Singer, “The Right to be Rich or Poor,” in *Reading Nozick*