

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Political Science 201 & Philosophy 201

Bellevue College

Fall 2015

M-F 12:30pm-1:20pm in A228

INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Larry Cushnie, PhD
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Office: A200F

Office Hours:
Tuesday 2:30-3:30, Wednesday 10:15-11:15,
Thursday 10:15-11:15 & appointment

DESCRIPTION

This course explores political theory of the Western canon. We focus on issues of justice, power, legitimacy, freedom, and the motivations behind how human beings organize themselves. These questions push us towards a deeper consideration of the purpose behind human society as well as what constitutes a 'good life'. In an attempt to find clearer answers to these difficult questions we consider the works of ancient, modern, critical, and post-modern political thinkers.

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Substantial parts of lecture will be dedicated to large-group discussion. Participation is strongly encouraged. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to the lecture for which it is assigned. They are also expected to bring the readings to lecture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To obtain a specialized knowledge of political theory with emphasis in the areas of legitimacy, justice, rights, and freedom.
2. To enlarge our political vocabularies, so that we may engage each other in political argument with greater force, flexibility, intelligence, and exactitude.
3. To conduct political dialogue with sympathy, critical attention, passion, and respect.
4. To strengthen our command of English prose through careful writing.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There will be two midterms and a final exam. Grades will be broken down as follows:

Attendance & Participation – 25%
In-Class Discussion & Questions – 10%
Midterm #1 – 15%
Midterm #2 – 20%
Final Exam – 30%

Participation will be graded through involvement during in-class discussions, debates, discussion questions, short (10-15 minutes) in-class writing assignments, and participation in post-lecture activities.

Each student will be required to provide discussion questions (3-5) for one week of the assigned readings. Discussion questions must be emailed to me by 8am on the Friday they are due. Students are expected to help lead discussion about their questions on the day they are considered.

Midterm #1: Friday, October 9th

Midterm #2: Friday, November 12th

Final Exam: Thursday, December 10th (11:30am - 1:20pm)

REQUIRED TEXT:

Charles Mills; *The Racial Contract* (Cornell University Press, 1999)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Aristotle; *Politics* (Hackett, 1998)

Thomas Hobbes; *Leviathan* (Hackett, 1994)

John Locke; *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett, 1980)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau; *The Basic Political Writings* (Hackett, 1987)

Karl Marx; *Selected Writings* (Hackett, 1994)

Readings outside of these texts will be posted on the course website.

COURSE POLICIES

Expectations

This is a college-level course, which means you are responsible for your own learning. Expectations include: completing assignments by the date/time listed in the syllabus; coming to class prepared to discuss the day's readings; bringing reading materials to class; participating in classroom discussions; fulfilling course requirements missed during absences; and taking initiative to answer questions about content and assignments.

Rules of Engagement

This course involves discussion of controversial political issues. We will be respectful of each other and avoiding inflammatory, derogatory and insulting words, phrases, and labels. I encourage robust discussion of contentious issues, however be prepared to support provocative claims with evidence.

Please note that all electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom during class time unless necessary to note taking. If an overwhelming need to check the interwebs persists, please leave the classroom to do so. Students engaging in extracurricular electronic usage will lose participation points for the day's class. You may or may not be informed of this deduction at the time, due to the distraction it causes to the class.

Missed Exams and Assignments

All major due dates are indicated in the attached course schedule. Late work will be penalized 5 points a day. Please note that all missed exams will receive a grade of 0 and make-up exams will not be administered unless you receive prior permission from me or you can document a true catastrophe.

Grade Dispute Policy

- 1) Wait 24 hours to contact me about disputing a grade
- 2) Submit your reason for contention in writing (at least 500 words) within 5 days
- 3) I reserve the right to change grades (higher or lower) after considering your comments

Disability Resources

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. Please visit the DRC if you have any questions about classroom accommodations. If you are a student who has a disability or a learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact the DRC staff as soon as possible. The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call the reception desk at 425-564-2498. Deaf students can reach the DRC by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit the DRC website for application information into the program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc. If you are someone who has either an apparent or non-apparent disability and requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with me to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College (http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050P_Student_Code_%28Procedures%29.asp). Such behavior will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment/exam in question. Please note that these are serious offences, which can result in possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. If you have questions about academic integrity, please familiarize yourself with BC's Student Code of Conduct and/or come talk to me during my office hours.

Cases of suspected cheating and plagiarism will be referred to the dean and an Academic Honesty Violation Report will be filed. University policies and guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism will be followed strictly. Please see the Academic Honesty Policy for specific information about what constitutes plagiarism.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus over the course of the quarter.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- 1) Monday, September 21 – Introduction and Syllabus Review
No readings
- 2) Tuesday, September 22 – The Ancients
Plato – *Apology*
- 3) Wednesday, September 23 – The Ancients
Aristotle – *Politics (Book I: Ch. 1-9, 12-13)*
- 4) Thursday, September 24 – The Ancients
Aristotle – *Politics (Book III: Ch. 1, 4-9, 11-18)*
- 5) Friday, September 25 – Discussion/Debate
- 6) Monday, September 28 – Modern Political Theory
Aristotle – *Politics (Book IV: Ch. 1-11; Book VI: Ch. 2-3; Book VII: Ch. 1-3)*
- 7) Tuesday, September 29 – Modern Political Theory
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan (Hobbes' Introduction, Ch. 6, 13-15)*
- 8) Wednesday, September 30 – Modern Political Theory
Thomas Hobbes – *Leviathan (Ch. 16-21, 29)*
- 9) Thursday, October 1 – Liberal Political Theory
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 1-4)*
- 10) Friday, October 2 – Discussion/Debate
- 11) Monday, October 5 – Liberal Political Theory
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 5, 7-9)*
- 12) Tuesday, October 6 – Liberal Political Theory (Midterm Review)
John Locke – *Second Treatise of Government (Ch. 10-15, 18-19)*
- 13) Wednesday, October 7 – The Birth of Critical Perspectives
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Part I*
- 14) Thursday, October 8 – The Birth of Critical Perspectives
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Part I (cont.)*
- 15) Friday, October 9 – Midterm #1
- 16) Monday, October 12 – Conceptualizing the State of Nature
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Part II*
- 17) Tuesday, October 13 – Conceptualizing the State of Nature
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Part II (cont.)*
- 18) Wednesday, October 14 – The Social Compact
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Books I)*

- 19) Thursday, October 15 – The Social Compact
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Book II)*
- 20) Friday, October 16 – Discussion/Debate
- 21) Monday, October 19 – The Social Compact
Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *The Social Contract (Book III)*
- 22) Tuesday, October 20 – No Class
- 23) Wednesday, October 21 – The American Critical Tradition
Thomas Jefferson – Selections from *Political Writings*
- 24) Thursday, October 22 – Human Potential
GWF Hegel – ‘Introduction’ to the *Philosophy of History*
- 25) Friday, October 23 – Discussion/Debate
- 26) Monday, October 26 – Human Potential
Karl Marx – *Alienated Labor*
- 27) Tuesday, October 27 – Human Potential
Karl Marx – *Alienated Labor* (cont.)
- 28) Wednesday, October 28 – Inspiring Revolution
Karl Marx – *Communist Manifesto*
- 29) Thursday, October 29
Karl Marx – *Communist Manifesto* (cont.)
- 30) Friday, October 30 – Discussion/Debate
- 31) Monday, November 2 – Imagining Communism
Karl Marx – *Critique of the Gotha Program*
- 32) Tuesday, November 3 – Imagining Communism
Karl Marx – *Critique of the Gotha Program* (cont.)
- 33) Wednesday, November 4 - Anarchism
Mikhail Bakunin – “What is Authority?”
Emma Goldman – “Anarchism – What it Really Stands For” (1911)
- 34) Thursday, November 5 - Anarchism
Emma Goldman – “Anarchism – What it Really Stands For” (1911) cont.
- 35) Friday, November 6 – Discussion/Debate
- 36) Monday, November 9 – Anarchism and Late Capitalism
Murray Bookchin – “Radical Politics in an Era of Advanced Capitalism” (1989)
- 37) Tuesday, November 10 – Midterm Review

- 38) Wednesday, November 11 – Veteran’s Day (No class)
- 39) Thursday, November 12 – Midterm #2
- 40) Friday, November 13 – Anti-Colonialism & Political Violence
Franz Fanon – Selections from *Wretched of the Earth* (1961)
- 41) Monday, November 16 – Anti-Colonialism & Political Violence
Franz Fanon – Selections from *Wretched of the Earth* cont.
- 42) Tuesday, November 17 - The Racial Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Introduction)*
- 43) Wednesday, November 18 – The Racial Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 1)*
- 44) Thursday, November 19
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 1)* cont.
- 45) Friday, November 20 – Discussion/Debate
- 46) Monday, November 23 – The Racial Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 2)*
- 47) Tuesday, November 24 – The Racial Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 2)* cont.
- 48) Wednesday, November 25 – Discussion/Debate
- 49) Thursday, November 26 – Thanksgiving Holiday
- 50) Friday, November 27 – Thanksgiving Holiday
- 51) Monday, November 30 – The Racial Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 3)*
- 52) Tuesday, December 1 – The Racial Contract
Charles Mills – *The Racial Contract (Chapter 3)* cont.
- 53) Wednesday, December 2 – Make-Up Day
- 54) Thursday, December 3 – Final Exam Review
- 55) Friday, December 4 – Class Wrap-Up & Reflection
- 56) Thursday, December 10 – Final Exam (11:30-1:20)