

# PHIL 130-[01] – Political and Social Philosophy

Department of Philosophy  
San Francisco State University  
Fall 2014

**Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:10-12:00**  
**Humanities Building, 207**

Instructor: Ryan M. Murphy  
E-mail: rmmurphy@mail.sfsu.edu  
Office Hours: 12:15-1:15 Mon. & Wed., and by appointment  
Office: HUM 391A

## ABOUT THE COURSE

This course aims to familiarize students with important concepts and themes in political and social philosophy. In the first part of the course, we will engage a thematic study of topics including the state of nature, traditional conceptions of the social contract and their critics, theories of democracy, and the place of liberty with those frameworks. The second section of this course considers the dialectic surrounding distributive justice, including notions such as desert, property and markets, morality, and the interplay it has with the concept of equality. Prepared with this theoretical background, we turn to legal case studies regarding individuals and minorities in democracy before concluding the course by considering social forces involved in exploitation, oppression, power, obedience, and nonviolent resistance.

This course seeks to help students understand liberal democratic theories of decision making and social policy along with their place in the world today. We will consider their place in the history of social and political philosophy, as well as radical and conservative political criticism of those theories. This course satisfies the Area D1: Lower Division Social Science, General Education requirement, including the American Ethnic and Racial Minorities (AERM) and Social Justice overlays.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, Revised Edition. (Oxford 2006), ISBN: 978-0199296095, Available at the SFSU Bookstore.
- Zwolinsky, Matt, editor. *Arguing About Political Philosophy*, Second Edition. (Routledge 2014) ISBN: 978-0415535823, Available at the SFSU Bookstore.
- Additional readings are available on iLearn

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### *Reading*

This course requires substantial reading. You are responsible for carefully reading all assigned readings by the class meeting for which they are listed in the course schedule. Many readings are difficult—it is okay if you do not fully understand them after your first attempt. You are encouraged to raise questions about the readings. If you continue having difficulty with the readings, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

### ***Short Writing Responses***

Each week you should submit a short writing response (no more than one page) regarding the readings and class discussions. Short writing responses can include short summaries, questions, comparisons, or should otherwise thoughtfully engage with the course content. These assignments are graded as credit/no credit. If you submit your response on time and have made an honest effort to engage with the material, you will receive 100% credit. The deadline to submit a short writing response for the week is by the end of class each Friday. You may miss three (3) short writing assignments with no grade penalty, no questions asked.

### ***Take-Home Exams***

There are two (2) take-home exams for this class. They will be primarily composed of short essay questions. Exam questions will be distributed at least one week before they are due. All take-home exams must be submitted in both of the following formats: (a) upload an electronic copy to the link on the course iLearn page, and (b) submit a typed paper copy in class on the day the exam is due. The first exam is due on **Friday, October, 10<sup>th</sup>** and will cover assigned readings and information for class meetings from August 25<sup>th</sup> through October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The second exam is due on **Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>**. It assumes you will be familiar with all class material covered through November 14<sup>th</sup> but will focus primarily on material covered after October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Be sure to see the instructor immediately if you are having difficulty with any of the course material.

### ***Final Paper with Proposal***

You will be asked to write a short (3-5 pages) argumentative paper. This paper consists of two parts: (a) your reconstruction of one argument from class readings and lectures, and (b) your analysis of that argument in which you state your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing. This assignment is due in two stages. A paper proposal is due on **Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Your proposal should be about one page long and should identify the argument you wish to reconstruct and analyze. The proposal may be the introduction to your term paper. The term paper is due during the final exam meeting period on **Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**. The term paper must be submitted both as an electronic upload on iLearn and as a paper draft during the final exam meeting. Detailed instructions for the proposal and term paper will be discussed in class.

### ***Attendance and participation***

Regular class attendance and participation are essential in learning the materials covered in this course. If you know you will be absent from a class session in advance, please email the instructor at [rmmurphy@mail.sfsu.edu](mailto:rmmurphy@mail.sfsu.edu) to document your absence. All excused absences must be documented. If you cannot notify the instructor prior to being absent, you must notify the instructor by e-mail within seven (7) calendar days to document the absence as an excused absence.

### **GRADING SCALE**

The course grade will be based on 1000 total points, distributed as follows:

|                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Take-Home Exams      | 500 points (250 points each) |
| Final Paper Proposal | 50 points                    |

Final Paper                      200 points  
Short Writing Responses      250 points  
\*Extra Credit\*

Opportunities for earning extra credit in the course could be announced during the term. If you would like to propose a project for earning extra credit, please discuss your idea with the instructor for approval. All opportunities for earning extra credit will be available to every student in the class.

### **Policy on Submitting Late Work**

Take-home exams and short writing responses can be made-up only in cases of documented excused absences (described above in "Attendance and participation") and cases pursuant to University policy. Submission of all late work must be arranged with the instructor and must be completed before Friday, December 12, 2014. Because it is due during the final exam period, the final term paper cannot be submitted late (except under extreme circumstances according to university policy). Assignments missed due to unexcused absences will not be accepted. Please speak with the instructor as soon as you know you will need to submit any late work.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES**

#### ***Accessibility***

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email [dprc@sfsu.edu](mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu).

#### ***Religious Holidays***

Students who must be absent from class in order to observe religious a holiday must inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. Students who meet these conditions will not be penalized for their absence, and will be able to make up the work missed.

#### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. A second instance of plagiarism will result in an "F" for the course. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Humanities will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

#### ***Tutoring Resources***

The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides free, on-campus writing tutoring for SF State students. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with some same day appointments

available. The LAC is open Monday through Friday from 9am-4pm and Friday from 9am-12pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see <http://www.sfsu.edu/~lac/index.html>.

The Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) also provides free, on-campus tutoring for writing and other subjects. It offers both one-time and ongoing tutoring sessions, with some same day appointments available. CARP is open Monday through Thursday from 4pm-8pm and Friday from 11am-2pm. For more information and to schedule an appointment, see [www.sfsu.edu/~carp1](http://www.sfsu.edu/~carp1) or call (415)-405-0971.

### ***Maintaining a Classroom Learning Environment***

Maintaining an environment conducive to classroom learning is necessary for this class to function. Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices while class is in session. Disruptive behavior, including derogatory or intentionally disrespectful language, will not be tolerated. Classroom participants who are asked modify their behavior and fail to comply will be asked to leave the class.

### ***Communication with the Instructor***

Any questions or concerns related to this course should be brought to the attention of the instructor immediately. Meeting during office hours and/or communication via email are the best means of communicating. I usually respond to e-mail communication within 48 hours. In addition to the office hours listed above, you are encouraged to contact the instructor if you would prefer to meet at another time. I am happy to meet by appointment.

The course website on iLearn *and* SFSU e-mail will be the primary modes of communication about course matters outside of class. If you have not already acquired the habit of using iLearn, please explore the website by logging in at <https://ilearn.sfsu.edu/login/index.php>

Any grades appearing on the iLearn page for this course are for informative purposes only; they are not official. You may ask about your official grade at any point in the semester by contacting the instructor.

I strive to stick to the schedule so that you can plan your semester accordingly. Still, this syllabus is subject to change. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes, and the best way to do so is to regularly check the course page on iLearn.

---

## **Course Schedule (Subject to Change)**

### **Abbreviations**

AP=*Arguing About Political Philosophy*, Second Edition.

Wolff=*An Introduction to Political Philosophy*

iLearn=Reading posted electronically to course iLearn Page

### **Week 1—Literary Departures**

Mon. 8/25—Welcome, Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview

Wed. 8/27—Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (iLearn)  
Fri. 8/29—Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron” (507-512 in AP)

**Week 2—State of Nature**

Mon. 9/1—Labor Day (No Class)  
Wed. 9/3—On Hobbes (1-17 in Wolff)  
Fri. 9/5—Hobbes, The State of Nature as a State of War (7-22 in AP)

**Week 3—State of Nature Continued**

Mon. 9/8—On Locke (17-24 in Wolff)  
Wed. 9/10— On Rousseau and Anarchism (24-33 in Wolff)  
Fri. 9/12—Rousseau, selections from “Discourse on the Origins of Inequality” (553-565 in AP)

**Week 4—Justifying the State: The Social Contract**

Mon. 9/15—The State, Justification, and Consent, (34-48 in Wolff)  
Wed. 9/17—Utilitarianism and The Principle of Fairness (48-61 in Wolff)  
Fri. 9/19—Rousseau, selections from “On the Social Contract” (on iLearn)

**Week 5—Critique of the Social Contract**

Mon. 9/22—Hume, “Of the Original Contract” (51-58 in AP)  
Wed. 9/24—Held, “Non-Contractual Society” (70-83 in AP)  
Fri. 9/26—Mills, “The Racial Contract”, Part I (86-94 in AP)

**Week 6—Who Should Rule?**

Mon. 9/29— Plato on Democracy (62-77 in Wolff)  
Wed. 10/1—Rousseau and the General Will, Freedom and Equality, Radical Critiques of Rousseau (77-90 in Wolff)  
Fri. 10/3—Participatory Democracy, Representative Democracy, Protecting the minority, (90-103 in Wolff)

**Week 7—The Place of Liberty**

Mon. 10/6—Mill on Liberty (104-125 in Wolff)  
Wed. 10/8— Problems with liberalism, Marxist objections to liberalism, Communitarianism and Liberalism (125-135 in Wolff)  
Fri. 10/10— **Take Home Exam # 1 Due.** No Reading Assigned

**Week 8—Property and Distributive Justice**

Mon. 10/13—Churchill, selections from “Perversions of Justice” (on iLearn)  
Wed. 10/15—Distributive Justice, Property, and Markets (133-152 in Wolff)  
Fri. 10/17—Locke, Property (360-366 in AP)

**Week 9—John Rawls’ Theory of Justice**

Mon. 10/20—Rawls’ Theory of Justice (152-176 in Wolff).  
Wed. 10/22—Rawls, from *A Theory of Justice*, The Role of Justice, The Main idea of the theory of justice, The original position and justification (211-217 in AP)

Fri. 10/24—Rawls continued, Two principles of justice and the Veil of Ignorance (223-226 and 231-234 in AP)

**Week 10—Objections to Rawls**

Mon. 10/27—Nozick and Patterns (171-176 in Wolff)

Wed. 10/29—Nozick, The Entitlement Theory of Justice (394-405 in AP)

Fri. 10/31—Gauthier, selections from The Social Contract as Ideology (on iLearn)

**Week 11—Socialist Considerations on Distributive Justice**

Mon. 11/3—Cohen, “Why not Socialism?” (416-424 in AP)

Wed. 11/5—Cohen, “Why not Socialism?” (424-430 in AP)

Fri. 11/7—Marx, Critique of the Gotha Program, part I (309-313 in AP)  
Marx, Alienated Labor (on iLearn)

**Week 12—Community, Individuals, and Equality**

Mon. 11/10—Walzer, selections from *Spheres of Justice* (on iLearn)

Wed. 11/12—Individualism, Justice, and Feminism (175-199 in Wolff)

Fri. 11/14—Anderson, selections from “What is the Point of Equality?” (on iLearn)

**Week 13—Case Studies: Democracy, Minorities, and Individuals**

Mon. 11/17—Executive Orders 9066 & 9012 (on iLearn)

Excerpts from *Korematsu v. United States* (on iLearn)

Wed. 11/19—California Proposition 8 and excerpts from *Hollingsworth v. Perry* (both on iLearn)

Fri. 11/21— **Take-Home Exam #2 Due**, No Reading Assigned

**Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)**

**Week 14—Exploitation and Oppression**

Mon. 12/1—Young, The Five Faces of Oppression (on iLearn)

Wed. 12/3—Mills, The Racial Contract, part II (94-104 in AP)

**Final Paper Proposal/Introduction Due**

Fri. 12/5—Satz, selections from *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale* (on iLearn)

**Week 15—Power, Obedience, and Nonviolent Resistance**

Mon. 12/8—Milgram, The Perils of Obedience (119-128 in AP)

Wed. 12/10—Foucault, Power/Knowledge (on iLearn)

Fri. 12/12—King, Letter from A Birmingham Jail (128-137 in AP)

**Final Meeting Period: Wednesday, December 17 from 10:45-1:15**

Final Paper is due at this time—Please submit a paper copy during the meeting and an electronic copy on iLearn.