

**Political Philosophy**  
**50:730:342**

Fall 2014  
Location: TBD  
TTh 6:00 – 7:20 p.m.

Professor: Melissa Yates

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TBD

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**I. Rationale:**

Critical examination of the philosophical problems involved in theories of the state and its relationship to citizens. Topics include the nature and justification of political obligations, natural rights, justice, anarchism, and the development of political ideals of communism, socialism, liberalism, and democracy. *Satisfies requirement in ethical/political/social theory for Philosophy Major and Minor. Formerly 50:730:319.*

**II. Course Aims and Objectives:**

***Aims***

In general, the course aims to teach students how to analyze and evaluate philosophical arguments, to promote the development of thoughtful class discussions about the reading materials, and to encourage critical reflection on our beliefs and values.

***Specific Learning Objectives:***

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be able to *define* key terms deployed by authors assigned in the course.
  - Key terms include principles and concepts developed by a unique author (e.g. the “political liberalism” is a key term unique to John Rawls, and also general terms defined in a special way by different authors (e.g. “justice” or “authority” will be key terms that changes under different authors).
  - Students will be expected to recall the definitions of key terms during class, and to explain key terms on take home writing assignments.

- Be able to *summarize* the main thesis of each essay assigned in the course.
  - The main thesis of an essay is the general or overarching conclusion advanced by an author. In order to summarize the thesis, students will need to be able to discriminate between different arguments advanced within an essay and evaluate which is the most general.
  - Students will be expected to propose essay thesis statements in class discussion and during in-class tests and take home assignments.
- Be able to *reconstruct* the key arguments and reasons used by the authors in support of their thesis.
  - A reconstruction of an essay is similar to an outline of an essay. In a reconstruction, students take the content of an essay and organize it in terms of a thesis statement and a series of claims or reasons offered by the author in support of the thesis.
  - To reconstruct an argument, students will need to identify and discriminate among a series of different reasons offered by an author to determine which ones would be most helpful in supporting an argument.
  - Students will be expected to participate orally in class collective reconstructions initially, but then will be expected to be able to reconstruct an essay in writing.
- Be able to *apply* previously learned philosophical terms and principles to concrete examples.
  - The application of philosophical concepts to real world examples is an important way to test the plausibility of an author's argument. Students will practice creating counter-examples during class discussions, and will creatively apply an author's arguments to those counter-examples. Students will also be able to apply principles from one author to examples developed by another author.
  - Students will be expected to apply key principles, terms, and concepts to examples during in class tests and on take home assignments.
- Be able to *evaluate* the appropriateness and plausibility of the conclusions reached in the assigned materials, and *compare* two competing arguments about a topic, giving reasons for their positive evaluation of one over the other.
  - The evaluation of philosophical arguments involves an appreciation for a charitably interpreted version of the argument, and the development of a critical dialogue between the proponent of the view and plausible objectors. Sometimes this requires the application of objections from the perspective of other assigned authors, but other times this requires the creative development of objections from one's own perspective.
  - Students will be expected to weigh reasons for and against arguments on essay assignments.

### **III. Format and Procedures:**

This course will proceed as a combination of lecture and discussion. An outline of each class will be presented at the start of the class, and we will generally follow closely the content of the reading materials assigned. Students will be expected to read all assigned material before class, and to come prepared to ask and answer questions about the terms and arguments developed in the essays. Students are always encouraged to slow down lecture material for the purpose of improving comprehension and clarity.

**IV. Tentative Course Schedule:** *\*\*This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Date	Main Topic(s)	Readings – to be completed <u>before</u> class	Evaluation
<b>PART ONE: Power and the State</b>			
9/2	Introduction: Meet Instructor, and your classmates/ syllabus; Explanation of reading presentations	1. No Assigned Readings	
9/4	<b>Justice and Political Knowledge</b> Discuss readings	1. Plato’s <u>Republic</u> , Books 1-2	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
9/9	Discuss readings	1. Plato’s <u>Republic</u> , Books 5-7	
9/11	<b>Against political Idealism</b>	1. Aristotle’s <u>Politics</u> , Books 1-2	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
9/16	Discuss Readings	1. Aristotle’s <u>Politics</u> , Books 3-4	
9/18	<b>Sovereign Authority and the Social Contract</b> Discuss Readings	1. Thomas Hobbes’s <u>Leviathan</u> , Part 1, Chs. 13-15, Part 2, Chs. 17-19	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
9/23	Discuss Readings	1. Thomas Hobbes’s <u>Leviathan</u> , Part 2, Chs. 20-21, Ch.30	
9/25	<b>Exceptional Uses of Executive Power</b> Discuss Readings	1. Carl Schmitt, from <i>The Concept of the Political</i> (1932) pp. 62-69 <u>Handout</u> 2. Carl Schmitt, from <i>Political Theology</i> , Part One pp. 1-12 <u>Handout</u>	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
9/30	Discuss Readings	1. F.A. Hayek, from <i>The Constitution of Liberty</i> (1960) pp. 70-79 <u>Handout</u>	
10/2	<b>The Public and the Right of Revolution</b> Discuss readings	1. Emma Goldman, from “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For” (1910) pp. 15-21 <u>Handout</u> 2. Hannah Arendt, “On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding” (1954) pp. 90-106 <u>Handout</u>	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
10/7	Discuss Readings	1. Hannah Arendt, from <i>The Human Condition</i> (1958) pp. 85-89 <u>Handout</u>	

**PART TWO: Rights-Based Liberalism and its Critics**

10/9	<b>Foundational Accounts of Liberty</b> Discuss readings	1. John Locke's <u>Second Treatise of Government</u> , Preface, Book 2, Chs. 1-5	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
10/10	Discuss readings	1. John Locke's <u>Second Treatise of Government</u> , Chs. 7-13	<b>Paper 1 Rough Draft Due by Midnight</b>
10/14	Discuss readings	2. J.S. Mill's <u>On Liberty</u> , Introductory, Ch. 2	
10/16	Discuss Readings	1. J.S. Mill's <u>On Liberty</u> , Chs. 3-4 2. Isaiah Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty"	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
10/17			<b>Paper 1 Final Draft Due by Midnight</b>
10/21	<b>Contemporary Liberalism</b> Discuss readings	1. John Rawls, from <u>A Theory of Justice</u> , Chs. 1-2	
10/23	Discuss readings	1. John Rawls, from <u>A Theory of Justice</u> , Chs. 4-5	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
10/28	Discuss readings	1. John Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus"	
10/30	<b>Libertarian Criticism of Liberalism</b> Discuss readings	1. Robert Nozick, from <u>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</u>	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
11/4	Discuss readings	1. Robert Nozick, from "Distributive Justice", Ch. 7	
11/6	<b>Multicultural Criticism of Liberalism</b> Discuss readings	1. Will Kymlicka, from <u>Multicultural Citizenship</u> , Ch. 6	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
11/11	<b>International Applications</b> Discuss readings	1. Amartya Sen, from <u>Development as Freedom</u> pp. 439-451 <u>Handout</u>	

**PART THREE: Equality, Race, and Gender**

11/13	<b>A Democratic Social Contract</b> Discuss readings	1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's <u>The Social Contract</u> , Books 1-2	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
11/14			<b><u>Paper 2 Rough Draft</u></b> <b><u>Due by Midnight</u></b>
11/18	Discuss readings	1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's <u>The Social Contract</u> , Book 3	
11/20	<b>Race and Colonialism</b> Discuss readings	1. W.E.B. Du Bois, from <u>The Souls of Black Folk</u>	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
11/21			<b><u>Paper 2 Final Draft</u></b> <b><u>Due by Midnight</u></b>
11/25	Discuss readings	1. Franz Fanon, from <u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
12/2	<b>Passive Resistance</b> Discuss readings	1. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" 2. Mahatma Gandhi, "Satyagraha: Not Passive Resistance" (1917) <u>Handout</u>	
12/4	<b>Gender, Justice, and Equality</b> Discuss readings	1. Susan Moller Okin, from <u>Justice, Gender and Family</u> , Chs. 5 and 8	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
12/9	Discuss readings	1. Iris Young, from <u>Justice and the Politics of Difference</u> , Ch. 1	Online Discussion Posts Due by 10:00 p.m.
12/12			<b><u>Paper 3 Rough Draft</u></b> <b><u>Due by Midnight</u></b>
12/19			<b><u>Paper 3 Final Draft</u></b> <b><u>Due by Midnight</u></b>

## V. Course Requirements:

### 1. Class attendance and participation policy:

- (a) You are expected to attend all classes on time. If you expect to miss any class please use the [University's absence reporting](#) website to indicate the date and reason for your absence, which will automatically generate an email to me.
- (b) You are expected to obtain class notes from fellow students and class handouts from me in the event that you are absent when assignments are distributed.
- (c) You are expected to provide at least fourteen days notice in the event that you must be absent for an event connected with your studies or athletics at Rutgers, or for reasons of observance of a religious holy day.

### 2. Course Readings/Materials: this text is required

*The Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought, Essential Readings*, Edited by Andrew Bailey, Samantha Brennan, Will Kymlicka, Jacob Levy, Alex Sager, Clark Wolf. Broadview Press, 2012. ISBN 9781554811021.

### 3. Assignments, Assessment, and Evaluation

<b>10%</b>	<b>Attendance and Participation</b>
	The participation grade depends on attendance and contributions to in class online discussions. Roughly half of the class will be devoted to discussions of the reading assignments. Students should come to class prepared to raise questions about the material. While absences will result in loss of credit for that class, excessive absences will receive additional penalties: for each absence over three (over the course of the semester) the Attendance and Participation grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.
<b>15%</b>	<b>Online Forum Posts</b>
	<p>Students are required to propose one question and possible response per week. Questions should be anchored in specific textual references (and should include page numbers for clarity), and can be interpretative, comparative, or critical in nature. Students may earn extra credit each week by submitting additional posts responding to other students' posts. Extra credit can be used to make up for missed weeks, but will only be worth half credit for the missed week. Posts will receive a score of 1-3 points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 points: online post is anchored in specific textual passages, reflects student's awareness of full reading assignment (not just first few pages), asks a clearly formulated and helpful question, and proposes a plausible answer.</li><li>• 2 points: online post is anchored in specific textual passage <u>or</u> reflects student's awareness of full reading assignment (not just first few pages), asks and answers a question, though without attention to clearly explaining either.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 point: online post refers to text in general, proposes a question, may or may not propose an answer, development of question and/or answer lacks depth and clarity or merely repeats questions posed by other students.</li> </ul>
<b>20%</b>	<b>Essay 1: Argument Reconstruction and Objection</b>
	<p>The first essay will draw from resources in Part One, “Power and the State.” Students will be required to explain an author’s argument using a style of writing called philosophical reconstruction (which will be taught during class), and then to propose another author’s objection to that argument. Students will be provided with appropriate author pairings, but will also be permitted to choose their own pairings with prior instructor approval. The first essay will be roughly 5-7 pages in length.</p> <p>First draft: Due 10/10 by midnight on Sakai (worth 10%) Final draft: Due 10/17 by midnight on Sakai (worth 10%)</p>
<b>25%</b>	<b>Essay 2: Argument Reconstruction, Objection, and Rebuttal</b>
	<p>The second essay will draw from resources in Part Two, “Rights-Based Liberalism and its Critics.” Students will again be required to reconstruct an author’s argument, and then to propose another author’s objection to that argument. But Essay 2 will also require students to propose a possible rebuttal on behalf of the original author. Students will be provided with appropriate author pairings, but will also be permitted to choose their own pairings with prior instructor approval. The second essay will be roughly 7-9 pages in length.</p> <p>First draft: Due 11/14 by midnight on Sakai (worth 10%) Final draft: Due 11/21 by midnight on Sakai (worth 15%)</p>
<b>30%</b>	<b>Essay 3: Argument Reconstruction, Objection, Rebuttal, and Evaluation</b>
	<p>The third essay will draw from resources in Part Three, “Equality, Race, and Gender.” Students will again be required to reconstruct an author’s argument, to propose another author’s objection to that argument, and to develop a possible rebuttal. But Essay 3 will also require students to develop their own, independent evaluation of the debate. Students will be provided with appropriate author pairings, but will also be permitted to choose their own pairings with prior instructor approval. The second essay will be roughly 9-11 pages in length.</p> <p>First draft: Due 12/12 by midnight on Sakai (worth 10%) Final draft: Due 12/19 by midnight on Sakai (worth 20%)</p>

(a) **Late assignment policy:** All deadlines are listed on the course schedule and are firm. For every 24 hours an assignment is late the grade will be subject to dropping one third of a letter grade (from a B+ to a B, for instance). Students should make every effort to alert me in advance if a take-home exam will be late. Assignments will not be accepted more than six days after the deadline.

(b) **Critical dates for registration changes:** Please check with the [academic calendar](#) to view last day to drop without penalty.

(c) **Course Grades and Symbols:** Please see the [Rutgers registrar's website](#) for an explanation of the grade codes and their numerical equivalents in terms of GPA.

#### 4. Use of *Sakai* in class

In this class I use *Sakai*—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> -- to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit assignments. You can find [support](#) in using Sakai at the Help Desk at 848-445-8721, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or [sakai@rutgers.edu](mailto:sakai@rutgers.edu).

## VI. Tutoring and Resources

### Rutgers Learning Center

Free academic tutoring is available through the Rutgers Learning Center. For more information regarding subjects being tutored and scheduling appointments please see the [RLC website](#).

### Rutgers Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs works to improve the quality of student life on and off campus, and is a very good resource if you are struggling with concerns that are wider than comprehension of the material in this class. This resource can help students find help for issues concerning new, transfer, or international student questions or problems, academic advising, health concerns, and can help you address stress management. For more information regarding their resources see the [Division of Student Affairs website](#), or contact them at (856) 225-6050.

## VII. Academic Integrity

### Rutgers University Student Code of Conduct

Students are required to properly cite all materials, to only submit their own, individually produced work, and to adhere to the requirements of each assignment regarding the use of internet or print resources. Take home assignments must be submitted through the course Sakai site, which will check all assignments against the Turnitin.com database, an electronic plagiarism detection software program. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and strictly enforced, and can be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. Please review the University's [academic honesty policy and disciplinary procedures](#), or speak with me if you have any questions.

## VIII. Other University Notices and Policies

### Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are [available here](#).

## **Documented Disability Statement**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) for Students at (848) 445-6800 (voice) or [dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from ODS. Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, handouts are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

## **Audio-Visual Recording, Transmission, or Distribution**

Students in this class are prohibited from recording and/or transmitting classroom lectures and discussions unless written permission from the class instructor has been obtained and all students in the class as well as guest speakers have been informed that audio/video recording may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments.

Recordings, course materials, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than study by students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

The policy aims to prohibit or limit recording of classroom lectures or re-distribution of classroom materials in order to:

- respect the integrity and effectiveness of the classroom experience;
- protect students and faculty dignity and privacy;
- respect faculty and University rights in instructional materials; and
- comply with copyright law.