PHIL 342

Political Philosophy

prf. Bryan Sacks

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office hours: R 5-6pm (Zoom link)

Course Description:

This class will offer students an introduction to major themes in political philosophy by way of excerpts from major philosophical works, secondary sources, contemporary articles, videos of speeches from scholars, and scholarly debates. These are presented in combination with short selections from the world of film and literature illustrating key ideas.

The purpose of such an approach is to engage students both by the presentation of philosophical ideas in their own habitat, so to speak, and also to see these ideas at work in art and contemporary politics.

Course presentations, including the framing of course discussions, will be undertaken with the hope of encouraging students to further engage the ideas presented in the classroom on their own time. Emphasis will be given to associating key ideas with the traditions in political philosophy from which they emerged.

GEN ED: ETHICS AND VALUES (EAV)
General education courses in this area focus on the exploration of the nature and demands of ethical reasoning about right and wrong human conduct and/or the ways in which individuals and

communities articulate and embody their values. Students will learn how to think critically about and to evaluate individual, social, and cultural judgments of good and bad, right and wrong, justice and injustice, and to apply these ethical concepts to historical debates and contemporary dilemmas in areas such as politics, medicine, business, gender, ethnicity, the environment, culture, and religion. Upon completing a course in this category, students should be able to do at least three of the following:

1. Interpret, explain, and compare significant systems and theories of human ethics and/or values.
2. Examine ways in which ethical values change over time and/or differ across cultures and historical periods.
3. Analyze ethical debates in terms of their underlying assumptions and implications.
4. Recognize the ethical values at stake in practical, concrete, and/or everyday situations.
5. Apply ethical reasoning toward solving practical problems.
6. Formulate, communicate, and evaluate effective ethical arguments.

Course Outline:

Part I: The Concept of Liberty

1. J.S. Mill (1859). Introduction, *On Liberty*
2. I. Berlin (1969). *Two Concepts of Liberty.*
3. I. Berlin (1962). "*What is Freedom?*"
4. I. Kant (1784). What is Enlightenment?

VIDEO: Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty

Part II: The Just Society

5. Rawls vs. Nozick (longer version here)

6. J. Rawls (1969): A Theory of Justice

7. J. Britton-Purdy (2019). What John Rawls Missed

8. M. Sandel (2010). Towards a Just Society

8a. Citizen Ethics in a Time of Crisis

9. B. Parker (2015). Civil Disobedience: A Necessary Freedom

VIDEO: Justice vs. Power

Quiz 1: Oct 6-10

Final Project Specifications announced.

Part III: The Origins of Political Obligation, State Authority and Democracy

Table setting: Locke and Hume on consent to governance. (Carneades, 2018)

10. N. Economides (2018). The Theory of Social Contract and Legitimacy Today

11. N. Fraser (1992). Rethinking the Public Sphere (Nancy Fraser, course files)

VIDEO: Corruption is Legal in the US

Supplemental reading: On Rousseau's General Will

Part IV: Philosophical Modernity

VIDEO: W. Brown (2016): <u>In the account of Neoliberalism</u>

VIDEO: <u>What is Modernity</u>?

12. Fred Dallmayr (1987). The Discourse of Modernity: Hegel and Habermas (course files)

13. M. Foucault (1984). <u>What is Enlightenment?</u>

14. M. Foucault (1977). <u>Panopticism</u>

15. C. Taylor (2011). <u>Biopower</u>

16. T. Gieryn (1983): Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists (course files)

Oral Quiz 2: Nov 16-18

Part V: Technology, Philosophy, and the Sociopolitical Realm

VIDEO: <u>Factory Scene from "Modern Times"</u> (1936)

17. M. Heidegger (1953). <u>The Question Concerning Technology</u>

18. A. Noni and B. Stiegler (2016) on <u>Automation and the Future of Work</u>

19. T. Choi (2015). <u>Notes on the Control Society</u>.

20. M. Andrejevic (2011). Social Network Exploitation (course files)

21. F. Pasquale and J. Sadowski. (2015). <u>The Spectrum of Control: A Social Theory of the Smart City</u>

VIDEO: M. Andrejevic on <u>Automated Media</u>

Applications:

Cyphers and Doctorow (2021). On <u>technological self-determination</u>: The ACCESS Act

Doctorow (2021). <u>Right or Left, you should be worried about Big Tech Censorship</u>

Final projects due Dec 13

Grading:

The 2 quizzes will each take 15% of your grade (30% total). The final book review project (paper and in-class presentation together) will take 30% of the final grade (10% presentation, 20% paper).

The remaining 40% of your grade will be taken from course participation and the completion of homework assignments.

Changes to Syllabus:

I reserve the right to make additions, subtractions of other changes to the syllabus at any time. I will notify students as soon as possible after any such decision has been made.

Academic Integrity and Code of Student Conduct

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. Rutgers' academic integrity policy is at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/.

Multimedia presentations about academic integrity may be found at http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html

and http://wps.prenhall.com/
hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064-,00.html

Academic integrity means, among other things:

- Develop and write all of your own assignments.

- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.

- Do not look over at the exams of others or use electronic equipment such as cell phones or MP3 players during exams.

- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.

- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

- Do not submit work that you have previously submitted for another class- yes, it IS considered plagiarism if you plagiarize yourself!

If you are doubtful about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with the instructor. Please take it seriously – I do.

Students are also responsible for adhering to the policies of this course and of Rutgers University, which includes the Code of Student Conduct. Please see http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/docs/UCSC.pdf for more information. Failure to comply with the policies of this course and of the university will result in disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. If you have documented disabilities, please contact the Rutgers Disabilities Service Office at http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/ for details.

Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me.