

Philosophical Issues: Religion & Democracy

50:730:322 (W)

50:840:322 (W)

Fall 2013

Location: Armitage Hall TBD

MW 2:50-4:30p.m.

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Office Hours: W 10:00a.m.-12:00p.m., or by appointment

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I. Rationale:

A writing-intensive seminar in which we examine the distinctive American approach to political philosophical questions about the role of religion in democratic governance, developed in 20th century by John Rawls. Classical theories of liberalism have struggled to defend both religious freedom and tolerance. In the past twenty years the place of religion in the public sphere has created new challenges for liberal political philosophers. Should religious arguments be used to justify laws regarding abortion or homosexual marriage? Does liberalism privatize or disenfranchise religious citizens? We will start by considering John Rawls's Political Liberalism, perhaps the most influential defense of pluralism in political philosophy. The course will then consider objections to Rawls's position from various philosophical and theological viewpoints, including communitarianism, discourse ethics, and comprehensive liberalism.

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 “greatest happiness principle” is a key term unique to J.S. Mill, and also general terms defined in a special way by different authors (e.g. “legitimacy” or “public reason” will be a key term 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 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)	Work to do at home Readings – to be completed <u>before</u> class	Evaluation
9/4	PART ONE: Liberalism Introduction: Meet Instructor, and your classmates/ syllabus; Explanation of reading presentations		
9/9	Week 1: Classical Liberalism and Religious Toleration Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” • Kant, “Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone”, Preface to 1st Edition. 	
9/11	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Locke, “A Letter Concerning Toleration: Humbly Submitted” 	
9/12	Last day to drop a class without a W grade		
9/13	Last day to add a course		
9/16	Week 2: Fundamentals of Political Liberalism Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i>, Lecture 1, 1-46. 	
9/18	Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rawls, <i>Theory of Justice</i>, Selections. 	

9/23	Week 3: Reasonable versus Unreasonable Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i>, Lecture 2, 47-71 (Sections 1-4), 81-86. 	
9/25	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i>, Lecture 4, 133-172. 	
9/30	Week 4: Right and Good Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i>, Lecture 4 continued, 133-172. 	First paper topics distributed
10/2	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawls, <i>Political Liberalism</i>, Lecture 5, 173-211. 	
10/7	Week 5: Public Reason Discuss Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" in <i>Political Liberalism</i> and under resources on Sakai. 	
10/9	Discuss readings	Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" continued, in <i>Political Liberalism</i> and under resources on Sakai.	<u>First paper due at 11:00pm</u>
10/14	Class Canceled		
10/16	PART TWO: Objections to Political Liberalism Weeks 6-7: The Demands of Democratic Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul J. Weithman, <i>Religion and the Obligations of Citizenship</i>, "Public Argument", 93-120. <u>Handout.</u> 	
10/18	Academic warning grades		
10/21	Discuss readings	Paul J. Weithman, <i>Religion and the Obligations of Citizenship</i> , "John Rawls on Public Reason", 180-211. <u>Handout.</u>	
10/23	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John A. Coleman, S.J. "The Circumcision Wars" and Reader Comments. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Why Can't We All Just Get Along with Each other?" 	Second paper topics distributed
10/28	Discuss readings Last day to withdraw from all courses and receive tuition refund	David Hollenbach, "Catholics as Citizens" <u>Online.</u> Kent Greenawalt, "Religious Convictions and Lawmaking" <u>Online.</u> (Optional)	
10/30	Weeks 8-9: Defenses of Nonreligious Comprehensive Liberalism Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Gardbaum, "Liberalism, Autonomy, and Moral Conflict." <u>Online.</u> Jean Hampton, "Should Political Philosophy Be Done Without Metaphysics?" <u>Online.</u> 	
11/4	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joseph Raz, "Facing Diversity: The Case of Epistemic Abstinence," Sections One and Two. <u>Online.</u> Thomas Nagel, "Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy," <u>Online.</u> (Optional) 	
11/6	Discuss readings;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joshua Cohen, "Truth and Public Reason," <u>Online.</u> 	<u>Second paper due at 11:00pm</u>
11/11	PART THREE: Applications to Ethical Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	

	Week 10: Religion and Bioethics Discuss readings		
11/13	Discuss readings	• TBD	
11/15	January 2014 Graduates, Diploma Application closes		
11/18	Week 11: Religion and Education Policies Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Macedo, "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism," Online. • William Galston, "Two Concepts of Liberalism," Online. 	
11/20	Discuss readings; Valedictorian speech video.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Galston, "Two Concepts of Liberalism," continued. • The Pledge of Allegiance Case: Newdow vs. U.S. Congress, Online. 	<u>Rewrite of first or second paper due at 11:00pm</u>
11/25	Week 12: Multiculturalism and its Constitutional Limits Discuss readings Last day to withdraw from a class with a W grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph Raz, "Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective," Handout. 	Third paper topics distributed
11/27	Observe Friday Schedule	No class	
12/2	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veit Bader, "Religious Pluralism: Secularism or Priority for Democracy?" Online. 	
12/4	Weeks 13-14: Religious Pluralism and Global Politics Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, <i>Law of Peoples</i>, Chapter 1. 	
12/9	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rawls, <i>Law of Peoples</i>, Chapters 2-3. 	
12/11	Discuss readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings on the formation of the European Union and on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 	
12/18			<u>Third Paper Due by 11:00pm</u>

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.
- (d) You are expected to attend and take the mid-term exam on March 14th during our regularly scheduled class. Make-up exams will only be permitted in documentable emergency cases, and must be completed before the corrected tests are handed back on March 26th.

2. Course Readings/Materials: these texts are optional, as they are also available online.

(a) **John Rawls**, *Political Liberalism*

(b) **John Rawls**, *The Law of Peoples*

(c) Students are also responsible for downloading and printing off articles stored online, and for collecting handouts when listed on the syllabus.

3. Assignments, Assessment, and Evaluation

20%	Participation
	<p>The participation grade depends on attendance and contributions to online and in class discussion. 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes. Students who are absent more than three times over the course of the semester will be penalized one letter grade (for their participation grade) for each absence over three.○ Online Reading Questions: Students will be required to submit one philosophical question <i>each week</i> about an assigned reading, and to propose an answer to that question, on the course Sakai site, under “Forums.” The reading question is due at 1:30p.m. the day <i>prior</i> to the class when we will discuss the reading material. The Forum will close after that deadline and new questions will not count toward the participation grade. Questions and answers should be no fewer than 200 words combined, and will be graded in terms of the clarity and importance of the question posed as well as the quality of the answer developed.○ In Class Discussion: Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading, raise and answer questions about passages and arguments, and to be responsive to other students.○ Extra Credit: Students who wish to supplement their in class discussion grade may opt to contribute additional questions/answers about the reading materials in the online forum, and may choose to attend select Philosophy Society or Department of Philosophy and Religion events throughout the semester (TBA).
20%	First Paper
	<p>The first paper will be due on October 9th at 11:00p.m. and will be roughly 5-7 pages in length. Students will be provided assigned topic choices.</p>
20%	Second Paper
	<p>The second paper will be due on November 6th at 11:00p.m. and will be roughly 5-7 pages in length. Students will be provided assigned topic choices.</p>
15%	Rewrite of either First or Second Paper
	<p>Students will be required to rewrite and supplement either their first or second paper in consultation with feedback they receive from the instructor. The rewritten paper will be assessed in terms of both its overall quality, and its improvement over the original paper. This paper should be between 7-9 pages in length and will be due on November 20th at 11:00p.m.</p>
25%	Third Paper
	<p>The third paper will be due on December 18th at 11:00p.m. and will be roughly 9-10 pages in length. Students will choose their own topic for this paper, but will be required to propose a paper topic and guiding question in advance, which will be subject to approval. Papers may reflect on the application of core course material to broader research interests, if approved.</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.

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. 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.