

HISTORY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Fall, 2004

Syllabus

1. General Information

Course Number: PHIL 3713, Section 001
Meeting Times: M,W,F 1:30 - 2:20 PM
Meeting Place: 101 Gould Hall
Instructor: Dr. Zev Trachtenberg
Office: 610 Dale Hall Tower
Phone: 325-6324
E-Mail: ztrachtenberg@ou.edu
Office Hours: M: 3:30-4:30, T: 9:30-10:30, or by appointment

2. Course website

The website for this course will include the class schedule, links to electronic versions of the readings, lecture notes, and links to other useful sites. The course website can be accessed via iThink (<http://ithink.ou.edu>) – enter your id and password, select this course, and look for the link at the bottom of the page. Or, you can access it directly at:

<http://www.ou.edu/ztclasses/phil3713>

3. Goals

By taking this course you should gain a better understanding of the Western tradition of philosophical speculation about society. Over the term we will explore several fundamental questions that face us when we think about politics and social life. Among the questions we will consider are:

- Why should we obey the government? What is the basis of our obligations?
- Who should rule? What makes a government legitimate?
- Are there absolute moral standards to which political life should conform?
- What aspects of life should the government be allowed to regulate? What aspects are purely private?
- What is the proper relation between economic life and political life?
- How does a philosopher's theory of the proper political structure rest on a conception of human nature?
- Does government have an obligation to oversee society's cultural life, in particular its religious and educational institutions, or should it stand apart from culture?

Over the centuries philosophers have offered various theories of society in attempts to explain and justify answers to these (and other) questions. We shall study some of the most influential theories, offered by some of the leading figures in European philosophy. We shall pay particular attention to each thinker's arguments: the reasons and principles he offers in support of his theory. And we shall consider the differences between theories, taking note of how the authors we shall read responded to each

other's views. Thus, in this course you will also gain experience at interpreting and evaluating philosophical arguments and comparing philosophical positions.

4. Readings

All readings are in *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001). You are free to use other versions of the assigned works, including the electronic versions posted on the course website.

5. Written Work

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>
1) 13 out of 15 in-class exercises	25%
2) Term paper	35%
3) 2 term paper sections	20%
4) Final exam	20%

- 1) At one class each week (typically Monday), you will write a short (150-200 word) essay on a topic related to the reading for the week. Typically you will write your exercise at the beginning of class, then do further work on it with one or more other students. *You must be present at the beginning of class to submit your exercise for that day.* I will grade your exercises as Excellent, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. I will give your work an S on the basis of my judgment of your effort, and the quality of your writing. Work that shows minimal effort (including unfamiliarity with the assigned reading), or is written poorly, will receive a U. Work that shows an exceptional insight into the reading and is very well written will receive an E. Work that is missed will receive no credit at all. At the end of the semester I will drop your 3 lowest exercise scores (except if you receive a 0 for either of the exercises related to the term paper sections).
- 2) Your main written work for the course will be a 2000 word (6-8 pp.) term paper. In it you will compare and contrast the views of two of the authors on the syllabus on one of the questions listed above, and will argue for the superiority of one of the two views over the other. (You may write about a question you propose yourself, with my prior approval.) Your term paper is due Friday, November 19.
- 3) To help your work on the term paper, twice during the semester you will turn in short (500 word/2 pp.) sections. In the first, due Friday, September 24, you will restate the position of either Plato or Aristotle on one of the questions listed above. In the second, due Friday October 29, you will restate the position of either Aquinas, Hobbes, or Locke on that (or another) question. In class on those two days your exercise will involve exchanging sections with another student, so that you can give comments to each other. In addition, I will review your sections and make comments, though I will not grade your work. You will receive P/F credit, on the basis of my judgement of your effort (including your familiarity with the reading). Note: although you may use your two sections (appropriately revised) in your final term paper, you are not committed to the question(s) you write about in them, nor are you committed to the two authors you write about. The purpose of

the sections is to give you practice at the kind of writing you must do for the term paper.

- 4) The final will be held Wednesday, December 15, 8:00 – 10:00 AM. You must take the final to pass the course. In the exam you will discuss your own view on one of the questions listed above. This can be the question you considered in your term paper, or a different one. (You may write about a question you formulate yourself, with my prior approval.) In your exam you must explain and defend your position, and answer one or more objections to it, making use of arguments drawn from the readings on the syllabus. The exam will be closed-book, but you will be permitted to bring one page of notes, which you must hand in.

6. Various Policies

Attendance. Full attendance is expected, and you will be unable to do well without attending class. *Attendance* here includes paying *attention*. Your mere physical presence is not enough—I expect you to take part in the activities of the class. It also includes arriving to class on time; I will not accept work from students who arrive late. I will use my evaluation of attendance to decide whether or not to round up your final grade if your average is on a borderline.

Cell phones. You must set your cell phone to silent during class. If you must take a call, you may excuse yourself to the hallway. After one warning, if your cell phone rings during class I will not accept any work from you that day.

Late work. I will not accept late exercises. I will accept late term paper sections with a grade penalty of up to 20% per day (counting weekends). I will accept late Term Papers only at my discretion, and with a substantial grade penalty. Exceptions to this policy will be granted only if arranged in advance (except in case of emergency) on the basis of a substantial and verified hardship (e.g. conflict due to a medical, family, or job-related problem).

Re-writes. I will not accept re-writes of any work.

Religious observances. It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays. If any assignment in this class conflicts with your religious observance, or if you have any questions on this matter, please contact me.

Reasonable accommodation. Any student who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her understanding of the material in this course should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities.

7. Academic honesty

I will rigorously enforce the University's policies on academic honesty. In written work *you must cite all the sources you consult*. But academic honesty does *not* mean you should not make use of ideas you receive from other students – in or out of class. Indeed I urge you to discuss the issues of the course outside of class – but you must do your written work on your own, and must cite any assistance you receive from others. Please ask me if you have any questions about academic honesty in general, or about specific situations that might arise during this course.

In keeping with the UOSA policy on academic integrity, at the end of your term paper, and of your final exam, you must include and sign the UOSA Statement of Academic Integrity:

On my honor I affirm that have neither given nor received inappropriate aid in the completion of this exercise.

8. Note to Philosophy majors

In order to aid in the assessment of its program, the Philosophy Department has a specific requirement for majors in Philosophy and in Ethics and Religion. Majors will be required to assemble a portfolio of written philosophical work--typically papers or exams written for philosophy classes--produced over several semesters. Majors will NOT be graded on their portfolios. Instead, portfolios will be sent, anonymously, to outside readers, to help them evaluate the quality of the Philosophy Department's teaching. Majors will discuss the progress of their portfolios with their advisors.

You should submit the term paper for this course for your portfolio. To do so, simply turn in two copies of your paper, one of which must include a title page that lists: the paper title; the course name and number; this semester and year; and the date the paper is turned in. This portfolio copy must not show your name anywhere except on the title page.

9. Schedule

This schedule shows the reading assignments for the first 5 weeks of the semester. Readings in Plato are indicated by the "Stephanus numbers," which appear in the margin of the text. Assignments for the remainder of the term will be posted on the course website.

8/23 Exercise: Introduction to the course	8/25 Lecture: Plato, <i>Crito</i>	8/27 Discussion
8/30 Exercise: Plato, <i>Republic</i> , 327a-354c	9/1 Lecture: <i>Republic</i> , 357a-392c	9/3 Discussion
9/6 No Class	9/8 Exercise: <i>Republic</i> , 412b-427c	9/10 Lecture <i>Republic</i> , 471c-521b
9/13 Exercise: Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , I.1-4, 13, X.8-9	9/15 Lecture: Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , I.1-9, II.1-5	9/17 Discussion
9/20 Lecture: <i>Politics</i> , III.1-2,4-5, VII.1-3,13-15	9/22 Discussion	9/24 Exercise: Term paper section due
9/27 Exercise: Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i>	9/29 Lecture: <i>Summa</i>	10/1 Discussion
10/4 Exercise: Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>	10/6 Lecture: <i>Leviathan</i>	10/8 No Class
10/11 Exercise: <i>Leviathan</i>	10/13 Lecture <i>Leviathan</i>	10/15 Discussion
10/18 Exercise: Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i>	10/20 Lecture: <i>Second Treatise</i>	10/22 Discussion
10/25 Lecture <i>Second Treatise</i>	10/27 Discussion	10/29 Exercise: Term paper section due
11/1 Exercise: Rousseau, <i>Second Discourse</i>	11/3 Lecture: <i>Second Discourse</i>	11/5 Discussion
11/8 Exercise: <i>Second Discourse</i>	11/10 Lecture: Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i>	11/12 Discussion
11/15 Exercise: <i>Social Contract</i>	11/17 Lecture <i>Social Contract</i>	11/19 Discussion Term paper due
11/22 Discussion	11/24 No Class	11/26 No Class
11/29 Exercise: Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>	12/1 Lecture: <i>On Liberty</i>	12/3 Discussion
12/6 Exercise: <i>On Liberty</i>	12/8 Discussion	12/10 Semester review
	12/15 Final Exam	

