COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on political philosophy, a method of thinking about politics and political activity that centers on perennial normative questions, such as the tension between individual freedom and social order, justice, and which forms of government and representation are best. You will encounter some of the most fundamental concepts in the study of politics and examine how they have been developed by different theorists in different times and circumstances.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the course are for students to:

- Appreciate the nature and value of normative thinking
- Demonstrate knowledge of key political thinkers and concepts
- Develop the skill of comparing thinkers with respect to key concepts and questions
- Develop the skill of analyzing and explaining texts in political philosophy
- Appreciate the relevance of political philosophy to contemporary politics
- Demonstrate the ability to apply texts and key concepts to new issues and situations.

CONDUCT OF THE COURSE

The course will be organized around three basic questions:

- What fundamental characteristics define humans? What are the implications for organizing political life?
- What is the relationship between individual rights, property, and human freedom?
- What is justice?

In each of the three sections we will use class discussions, small group discussions, presentations by the instructor, and “explain and comment” assignments to develop an understanding of key readings and concepts. Each section will conclude with an in-class examination to test content knowledge and understanding and then an application paper and discussion that applies key concepts and to a contemporary issue or controversy.

REQUIRED READING


All other readings listed in this syllabus are available on OAKS. Readings for Application Papers will be added in advance of those assignments. Additions may be made to existing reading assignments but these will be relatively infrequent and generally consist of shorter newspaper or magazine articles. In addition, I strongly recommend that you read a daily newspaper, preferably the *New York Times*. Student rates offer a discount and the *Times* is available on the web at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).
METHOD OF EVALUATION

Examination #1 (2/4) ............................................ 20%
Examination #2 (3/13) ............................................ 20%
Examination #3 (4/10) ............................................ 20%
Application Papers #1 (2/11) ................................. 10%
Application Paper #2 (3/18) ................................. 10%
Application Paper #3 (4/17) ................................. 10%
Explain and Comment Paper 1 (3) ......................... 7.5%
Attendance/Preparation/Participation ...................... 2.5%

Each section of the course will include an explain and comment paper, an application paper, and an examination.

Examinations will consist of short essay questions, discussion questions, terms and other more narrowly focused questions. No one will be permitted to take an exam if they arrive more than 30 minutes late. Make-up exams will only be given if the student notifies me of the difficulty at least an hour before class, agrees to take a make-up not later than three days after the regularly scheduled exam, and presents a written, bonafide excuse.

Explain and Comment Papers (3) are papers (approximately one half page) that require you explain the meaning and significance of a particular passage or section of text. This will require understanding the larger text from which the passage is drawn. You must complete one text analysis paper in each section of the course and dropbox deadlines for submission will be set prior to the start of the class where that text will be discussed. Your assigned passages and additional guidance is provided later in the syllabus. If you miss an explain and comment deadline you may do another passage of your choice but you can only substitute in this way once during the semester.

Application Papers (3) are papers (between 4 and 6 pages, doublespaced) that use the theorists and ideas developed in that section of the course to analyze a current controversy or issue. There is one controversy or issue for each of the three sections of the course.

Class attendance, preparation, and participation will be extremely important to success in this course. Some of the material we will cover is likely to be unfamiliar to you, many of the writers developed their perspectives in different times and cultural contexts, and you will be expected to grapple with ideas that cannot usually be understood after a quick read. Reading and interpreting original works by political philosophers, using texts and other commentaries on political ideas and theorists, participating in class discussion, listening carefully to class presentations, taking good notes on assigned readings and class presentations, and completing written work are all necessary to meet the objectives of the course. Please be sure to turn off cell phones and any other devices that might be disruptive.

Grading Scale/Special Needs: 92 and above = A, 90-92 = A minus, 88-89 = B plus, 83-87 = B, 80-82 = B minus, 78-79 = C plus, 73-77 = C, 70-72 = C minus, 68-69 = D plus, 63-67 = D, 60-62 = D minus, 59 and below = F. If you are in the SNAPS program or have other special needs please let me know during the first week of class. Deadlines and expectations are subject to change but adequate notice of such changes will be given.

Writing Lab I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/.
Honor Code and Academic Integrity
Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive an XF for the course, indicating failure due to academic dishonesty. Unauthorized collaboration is a form of cheating and research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or part for any assignment without obtaining prior permission from the professor. Plagiarism includes the verbatim repetition, without acknowledgement, of another’s work, borrowing without acknowledging a source, paraphrasing without acknowledgement, and allowing any other person or organization to prepare work which one then submits as his or her own. For to complete Honor Code see http://www.cofc.edu/studentaffairs/general_infor/studenthandbook.html

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

1/9: An Overview

1. What fundamental characteristics define humans? What are the implications for organizing political life? 
Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and J.J. Rousseau (1712-1778)

1/14 Hobbes: The State of War


“The felicity of this life consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied” (Leviathan, p. 278). Explain his reasoning. Two what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

1/16 Hobbes: The Social Contract


How does Hobbes explain why creatures without reason or speech can live together without a coercive power to regulate them? (Leviathan, p. 304). What does this say about his view of human nature?

1/21 Hobbes: Powers of the Sovereign and Liberty


1/23 Rousseau: Human Nature


“Although it may behoove Socrates and minds of his stamp to acquire virtue through reason, the human race would have perished long ago if its preservation had depended only on the reasonings of its members.” (Second Discourse, p. 388). Explain. Some would say Rousseau has it wrong, that reason is what rescues us from constant conflict. What do you think?

1/28 Rousseau: Politics

*James Madison, Federalist Paper #10 (4)
*Jonathan Wolff, On Rousseau’s General Will, An Introduction to Political Philosophy, pp. 77-84.
1/30 Rousseau: The General Will and Freedom

*Jonathan Wolff, On Rousseau and His Critics, An Introduction to Political Philosophy, pp. 84-90.

*Study Guide Out and Application Paper Readings Posted

2/4 EXAMINATION 1 (Knowledge of Concepts and Thinkers)

2/6 The Common Good and Individual Rights

*Readings to be announced*

2/11: Compare and Apply to New Issues: Application Paper #1 Discussion

Application Paper #1 Due in OAKS drop box by 9 am Tuesday February 11th.

2. What is the Relationship Between Individual Rights, Property, and Human Freedom?
John Locke (1632-1704) and Karl Marx (1818-1883)

2/13 Locke: Natural Rights

*Robert Filmer’s Patriarcha. An Excerpt (OAKS) (3).
*Locke’s Second Treatise Bk. II (J. Porter, pp. 330-338)

“The State of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.” (Locke, Second Treatise, p. 332). How does he defend this view? Be specific. How would Hobbes respond to this argument?

2/13 (Thursday) Political Science Convocation of Majors, 4 pm Physician’s Auditorium

This year’s speaker is John Prendergast, a human rights activist and best-selling author who has worked for peace in Africa for over 25 years. He is co-founder of the Enough Project, an initiative to end genocide and crimes against humanity. We will return to his presentation during the last section of the course. Attendance is required, Mr. Prendergast’s presentation will be part of the reading assigned for your second application paper.

2/18 Locke: On Property and the Social Contract

*Locke, Second Treatise. Bk. II (J. Porter, pp. 338-352)

2/20 Locke: On Consent


How does Locke distinguish between tacit and express consent to a government’s rule? Which does he think is required? Do you think this is enough to justify government’s rule? (Second Treatise, p. 354-356).
2/25 Marx: Human Nature and Freedom

*Karl Marx’s Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, excerpts (J. Porter, pp. 547-555).

“[Alienated labor] makes species life into a means of individual life.” What does Marx mean by our species life? What characteristics of humans as a species are ignored or harmed by labor in a capitalist factory?” (Economic and Political Manuscripts, pp. 552-554).

2/27 Marx: Critique of Rights and Private Property


Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange, of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells” (Manifesto, p. 572). Explain.

*Study Guide Out and Application Paper Readings Posted*

March 4 and 6 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

3/11 Marx: Revolution and the Durability of Liberal Capitalism


3/13 EXAMINATION 2 (Knowledge of Concepts and Thinkers)

3/18 Compare and Apply to New Issues: Application Paper #2 Discussion

Application Paper #2 Due in OAKS drop box by 9 am Tuesday March 18th.

3. What is Justice?

3/20: Liberalism and Limited Government

*Jonathan Wolff, On Rawls, An Introduction to Political Philosophy, pp. 152-156.

“Just as each person must decide by rational reflection what constitutes his good, that is, the system of ends it is rational for him to pursue, so a group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust. The choice which rational men would make in this hypothetical situation of equal liberty, assuming for the present that this choice problem has a solution, determines the principles of justice” (Rawls, A Theory of Justice, pp. 11-12). Describe this “hypothetical situation.” Why, according to Wolff, does Rawls use this device to develop principles of justice? What difficulties is it designed to address?

3/22 LAST DAY TO DROP WITH A “W”

3/25 John Rawls: Principles of Justice

3/27 Rawls and Nozick


4/1 Michael Sandel: Justice, Virtue, and the Common Good


“Despite its appeal, the liberal vision of freedom lacks the civic resources to sustain self-government. America’s Search for a Public Philosophy, p. 58.

4/3 Plato: A Broader Conception of Justice

*Plato, The Republic, Bk 4 (44-50 in Porter); Bk. 2 (18-31 in Porter)

“Come then, I said, let us create a city....” (Plato, The Republic, Bk 2, p. 28). What is that a city is based on, according to Plato? Why and how does it emerge? (28-31). How does this compare to the way that social contract theorists describe the emergence of the commonwealth?

*Study Guide Out and Application Paper Readings Posted*

4/8: Plato: Just and Unjust Societies

*Plato, The Republic, Bk. 8 (73-89 in Porter).

4/10 EXAMINATION 3 (Knowledge of Concepts and Thinkers)

4/15 NO CLASS

4/17 Compare and Apply to New Issues #3 Discussion

*Application Paper #3 Due in OAKS drop box by 9 am April 17th.

4/22 Compare and Apply to New Issues #3 Discussion
Explain and Comment Papers: Assignments

Locate your name on the pages that follow to determine when you have an explain and comment paper due. Papers are due in the OAKS drop box by 9 am the day of class.

Explain and Comment Paper Assignments for Group A: Rory Benz, Andres Caceres, Stefan Castellucci, Ashley Cox, Danielle Cox, Amanda Dexter, David Feller, Maria Figueroa, Sarah Flessas, Nathan Gillespie.

1/14 Hobbes: The State of War


“The felicity of this life consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied” (Leviathan, p. 278). Explain his reasoning. Two what extent to you agree or disagree with this statement?

2/20 Locke: On Consent


How does Locke distinguish between tacit and express consent to a government’s rule? Which does he think is required? Do you think this is enough to justify government’s rule? (Second Treatise, p. 354-356).

4/3 Plato: A Broader Conception of Justice

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“Come then, I said, let us create a city…” (Plato, The Republic, Bk 2, p. 28). What is that a city is based on, according to Plato? Why and how does it emerge? (28-31). How does this compare to the way that social contract theorists describe the emergence of the commonwealth?

Explain and Comment Paper Assignments for Group B: Leland Gross, Catherine Gunnells, Sam Hartling, Payton Hudson, Trevor Jones, Jozita Konczal, Loren Massarone, Rachel May, Henry Mullin, Cory Nelson.

1/16 Hobbes: The Social Contract


How does Hobbes explain why creatures without reason or speech can live together without a coercive power to regulate them? (Leviathan, p. 304). What does this say about his view of human nature?

2/27 Marx: Critique of Rights and Private Property


Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange, of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells” (Manifesto, p. 572). Explain.
3/20: Liberalism and Limited Government

*Jonathan Wolff, An Introduction to Political Philosophy, pp. 152-156.

“Just as each person must decide by rational reflection what constitutes his good, that is, the system of ends it is rational for him to pursue, so a group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust. The choice which rational men would make in this hypothetical situation of equal liberty, assuming for the present that this choice problem has a solution, determines the principles of justice” (Rawls, A Theory of Justice, pp. 11-12). Describe this “hypothetical situation.” Why, according to Wolff, does Rawls use this device to develop principles of justice? What difficulties is it designed to address?

1/23 Rousseau: Human Nature


“Although it may behoove Socrates and minds of his stamp to acquire virtue through reason, the human race would have perished long ago it its preservation had depended only on the reasonings of its members.” (Second Discourse, p. 388). Explain. Some would say Rousseau has it wrong, that reason is what rescues us from constant conflict. What do you think?

2/13 Locke: Natural Rights

*Robert Filmer’s Patriarcha. An Excerpt (OAKS) (3).
*Locke’s Second Treatise Bk. II (J. Porter, pp. 330-338)

“The State of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.” (Locke, Second Treatise, p. 332). How does he defend this view? Be specific. How would Hobbes respond to this argument?

4/1 Michael Sandel: Justice, Virtue, and the Common Good


“Despite its appeal, the liberal vision of freedom lacks the civic resources to sustain self-government. America’s Search for a Public Philosophy, p. 58.