

# SYLLABUS

## Academic Discipline

**Philosophy**

## Course Title

**Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy**

## Course Rubric and Number

**PHIL 2307 – 61412**

## Course Semester Credit Hours (SCH)

**3 SCH**

## Contact Hours

**48 Contact Hours**

## Course Length

**12 weeks**

## Type of Instruction

**Distance Education**

## Instructor Contact Information

**Nathan D. Smith, PhD, Instructor**

**Department of Philosophy**

**Voicemail/on-campus phone: 713-718-7258**

**E-Mail Conferencing: [nathan.smith2@hccs.edu](mailto:nathan.smith2@hccs.edu)**

## Instructor Office Location and Hours

**Office : Spring Branch 900-D**

**Office Hours: Daily, by appointment.**

## Course Description

Critical examination of the major theories concerning the organization of societies and government. (Texas ACGM – Approval Number: 38.0101.54 12)

This course is a critical analysis of political theories and social issues. Consideration will be given to historically significant and contemporary systems, problems, and thinkers (HCCS Catalog). HCC CORE Course.

## CORE Requirements, Certificates, AA-Degree Plan, and Transfer Information

HCC CORE HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCE, or MULTICULTURAL AREAS, or Elective. Fulfills introductory Social and Political Philosophy requirement for various academic and professional four-year college majors, and HCC Philosophy AA-degree plan.

**DISCIPLINE NOTICE:** Students who are pursuing an HCC AA-degree plan are advised that except as noted, this course may not be used to satisfy any other HCC

CORE requirement, though it may satisfy certain transfer institution college major requirements. Students who are in doubt about their enrollment in this course should immediately see an HCC academic counselor who can review his or her AA-degree plan.

### Prerequisites

## ENGL 1301 and 1302 (concurrent) or Departmental Permission

### Course Goals

This course is a critical analysis of political theories and social issues. Consideration will be given to historically significant and contemporary systems, problems, and thinkers (HCCS Catalog). Questions of justice, human rights, and economic rights serve as points of departure for this largely thematic inquiry into the formation and fabric of social and civil order. Particular emphasis is placed on the scope and problems of sound reasoning and decision-making and may include correlative inquiries into current social, workforce, and professional moral issues.

### Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1. Recall and Identify** major thinkers, schools, and core philosophical concepts in political philosophy from ancient to modern and contemporary theories.
- 2. Interpret and Explain** core philosophical questions and concepts of political philosophy in a way that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the relevant philosophical and social issues.
- 3. Apply** core philosophical questions and concepts of political theory to contemporary issues and social and political institutions.
- 4. Compare and Contrast** correlative philosophical questions and concepts in political philosophy from ancient to modern and contemporary theory.
- 5. Justify** a sound philosophical response to a topic, or topics, of contemporary human interest in political philosophy that **Integrates** and **Logically Demonstrates** a **Synthesis** in thought.

### Course Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Acquire** a broad familiarity with the names of major thinkers, the schools they represent, geographical location, and historical periods.
- 1.2 Learn** historically significant questions of ethics, definitions of special terms, and concepts of ethics and ethical decision-making.
- 2.1 Cultivate** reading comprehension of writings specific to ethics and cultivation of character.
- 2.2 Distinguish** various approaches to ethics, including conceptual analysis and practical bases for ethical decision-making.
- 3.1 Articulate** the relevance of ethics and questioning about ethics to everyday life.

**3.2 Consider** how ethics may or may not apply to differing ways of thinking and cultural influences.

**4.1 Inventory, Summarize, and Assess** correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the history of ethics, both personal and professional.

**5.1 Create and cultivate** alternative ethical positions on presented course content.

**5.2 Develop coherent arguments** for chosen positions, bringing to bear the rules of logic, written expression and disciplined thinking.

**5.3 Critique** chosen positions and adequately **Defend** against possible objections, both theoretical and applied.

### CORE Curriculum Competencies

This course stresses the HCC CORE Competencies of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy.

### Course Calendar

See Eagle Online Course Calendar - Check course calendar regularly for updates and revisions. Depending on class learning progress, your instructor reserves the right to either accelerate, or slow the completion of course curriculum *per the* Calendar tool.

### Instructional Methods and Internet Component

This is a *distance education* course that uses *Eagle Online*. The HCC *Eagle Online* logon page is:

<https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>

Your Eagle Online ID is now the same as your HCC User ID which is used for Online Registration. [For example: W0034567]

If you don't know your HCC User ID, you can [retrieve it here](#).

Your default Eagle Online password at the beginning of the term is: "distance".

This password is independent of your Online Registration password or Blackboard Vista password. You will be required to change your password when you first log in.

### Text Information:

#### Required Texts:

Reeve, C.D.C.// **PLATO: Republic** //  
Hackett Publishing, 1st Edition, 2004//  
ISBN: 0-87220-736-6

Hobbes, Thomas// **Leviathan** //R. Flatman, D. Johnston, eds  
Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc  
1996, ISBN: 0393967980

Sandel, M. J.// **Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?** //

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010

ISBN: 0374532508 / 978-0374532505

Benhabib, Seyla// **The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens**

//Cambridge U. Press, 2004

ISBN 0-521-53860-2

### Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office, and to do so in a reasonable manner.

To visit the ADA Web site, log on to [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu), click Future Students, then scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.

For questions, please contact Donna Price at 713.718.5165 or the Disability Counselor at your college.

District ADA Coordinator - Donna Price - 713.718.5165

Northwest ADA Counselor - Mahnaz Kolaini - 713.718.5422

### Academic Honesty

The pressure to earn high grades and belief that *a good end can justify any means whatsoever* leads many students to try cutting corners by resorting to less than honest methods. Do yourself a favor by avoiding that trap. The HCC *Student Handbook* lists cheating, plagiarism, and collusion as scholastic dishonesty. It defines *plagiarism* as "the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit." It defines *collusion* as "the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work for credit." Work submitted for this course that is determined to be the result of either cheating, plagiarism, or collusion will earn a "0" for that assignment, and may cause the student to receive either an "F", or "I" in the course depending on your professor's stated requirements for the assignment and the weight it carries in determining your course grade. Students receiving an "I" for a course are ineligible for graduation until the "I" has been removed from a student's transcript. Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. See *Student Handbook*.

### Attendance and Withdrawal Policies

HCC Students are expected to attend class regularly. A daily record of absences will be maintained throughout the semester. NOTE: IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO DROP, OR OFFICIALLY WITHDRAW FROM THIS COURSE IF, FOR ANY REASON, THAT STUDENT IS NO LONGER ATTENDING. NEW RULES ARE IN EFFECT THAT GREATLY CHANGE HOW AND WHEN THAT CAN BE DONE. YOU WILL NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THIS COURSE BY YOUR PROFESSOR. FURTHERMORE, THERE ARE POSSIBLE PENALTIES OTHER THAN LOSING ONE'S PAID TUITION THAT EVERY STUDENT MUST CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE WITHDRAWING. THESE INCLUDE:

- (1) Students who repeat a course for a third, or more times, may face a significant tuition/fee increase at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities.
- (2) The Texas Legislature passed a law limiting new students (those starting college in Fall 2007) to no more than six total course withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. There may be future penalties imposed.
- (3) No student may withdraw from a course following the set "last date to withdraw", which for Fall 2011 on Thursday, November 11 at 12:00 pm. After that date and time, a student can only be given a grade earned, or an "I" for incomplete. Incompletes must be made up by the end of the following long semester, after which they will automatically change to a grade of "F". Your instructor will not withdraw you for non-attendance and will withdraw a student if and only if provided a written request from that student.

EARLY ALERT: HCC has instituted an Early Alert process by which your professor will "alert" you through counselors of concerns that you might fail a class because of excessive absences and/or poor academic performance.

ALL STUDENTS ARE ADVISED: Contact your professor/counselor about opportunities for private tutoring and other assistance prior to considering withdrawal, or if you are not receiving passing grades. There are many opportunities available to assure your success!

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Receiving either a "W", or "I" in a course may affect the status of your student Visa. Once a W is given for the course (after you have formally submitted a withdrawal form), it will not be changed to an F because of the visa consideration. An "I" does convert to an "F", but only after six months have passed from the end of the term it was received. Please contact the International Student Office at 713-718-8520, if you have any questions about your visa status and other transfer issues.

#### HCC Student Services Information

<http://northwest.hccs.edu/northwest/campus-services>

#### HCC Distance Education Student Handbook

The Distance Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars. Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting this link:

<http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook>

## Grading Components and Weights

- **Quizzes (8 x 25 points each)** – Quizzes will follow nearly every course Topic. These will be based on study questions related to the readings. You may take these quizzes up to three times, but the value of a perfect score will diminish with each attempt. Assesses Learning Outcome 1.
- **Discussions (8 x 25 points each)** – Most course Topics will have an accompanying discussion. Please read the instructions carefully; participation is mandatory. Prepares for Learning Outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- **Group Memo, Justice Project (50 points)** – The second course Topic is a group project, called the Justice Project. One component of this assignment is a memo prepared by your group in response to several questions. Every person in the group will receive the same grade. Prepares for Learning Outcome 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- **Papers (2 x 100 points)** – There will be two short (3 pg.) papers on a selected topic from among topics given. These papers will be closely related to specific readings and will be graded for both substance and style. Assessing Learning Outcome 2; preparing for Learning Outcomes 3, and 4.
- **Final Exam (250 points)** – You will be given some options of topics to address. Your responses should demonstrate the ability to apply concepts learned to original examples, consider alternative positions, compare and contrast various philosophical views, and justify your own position Assessing Learning Outcomes 3, 4, and 5.

## Minimum Writing Requirement (Per Philosophy Discipline)

**4,000 Words (Required discussions, blogs, essays, exams)**

## Grading Policy

**All grades will be figured according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 1000. The term grade legend and analysis are as follows:**

**A = 90% to 100% (900 to 1000 point)**  
**B = 80% to 89.9% (800 to 899 points)**  
**C = 70% to 79.9% (700 to 799 points)**  
**D = 60% to 69.9% (600 to 699 points)**  
**F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 599 points)**

## Tutoring Information

[www.hccs.askonline.net](http://www.hccs.askonline.net)