Philosophy Syllabus

Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy – PHIL 2307-78165

Fall 2013, Distance Education (3 Credit Hours)

HCC – Northwest College

Instructor: Nathan D. Smith, PhD

Learning Web Page:

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Office hours: T-Th, by appointment

Course Description:

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). This course stresses the HCC CORE Objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

PREREQUISITE(S):

- ENGL 1302

FREQUENT REQUISITES

- Departmental approval

Course Goals:

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.

Student 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.

Learning Objectives:

1.1 Acquire a broad familiarity with major thinkers, schools of thought, theoretical views, and historical developments in political philosophy.

1.2 Learn historically significant questions in political theory, definitions of special terms, and concepts in the philosophy of social and political organizations.

2.1 Cultivate reading comprehension of readings specific to political philosophy and the formation of a just political state and the foundation of laws and rights.

2.2 Distinguish various approaches to the problem of justice and rights in social and political institutions.

3.1 Articulate the relevance of political philosophy for contemporary issues related to social justice, political organizations, and human rights.

3.2 Consider how political theories studied in the course may or may not apply to political organizations both in our country and around the world.

4.1 Inventory, Summarize, and **Assess** correlative questions, concepts, and schools of thought found in the history of political philosophy.

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

5.2 Develop coherent arguments concerning chosen topics by bringing to bear the rules of logic, written expression, and disciplined thinking.

5.3 Critique philosophical arguments and Defend against criticisms, both theoretical and applied.

Notice About Online Learning Management Software:

This is a *web-enhanced* lecture course that uses *Eagle Online 2*. The *Eagle Online* login page is:

https://eo2.hccs.edu/login/index.php

Your Eagle Online username is the same as your HCC Eagle ID (or User ID) which is used for Online Registration (for example: W0034567). Your password is the same password you use to log in to PeopleSoft, HCC Webmail, and Active Directory (computer terminal login). For any questions about your Eagle ID or password, please go check online here.

IMPORTANT: Eagle Online works best with the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Download it free, here. (Please check your Operating System to see if you have Firefox in your applications.)

Adopted Texts:

- Sandel, M. J. **Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?** Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010   ISBN: 0374532508 / 978-0374532505
- Anderson, E. *What is the Point of Equality?* Ethics 109:2 (1999), 287-337. (Article from JStor, provided in pdf form)
- Benhabib, S. *Cosmopolitanism and Democracy: Affinities and Tensions*. The Hedgehog Review (Fall 2009), 30-41. (Article provided in pdf form)
- Plato. **Republic**. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. (Selections provided in pdf form)
- Aristotle. **Politics**. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. (Selections provided in pdf form)
- Hobbes, T. **Leviathan**. (Selections provided in pdf form)
- Locke, J. **Second Treatise on Government**. (Selections provided in pdf form)
- Rousseau, J.-J. **On the Social Contract**. Translated by G. D. H. Cole. (Selections provided in pdf form)

Course Calendar:

This is a rough outline of the semester. For detailed readings and assignments, please check the Eagle Online course calendar regularly.

Week 1   Introduction and syllabus review:

- Syllabus quiz
- Class introduction forum

Week 2   Overview of social and political philosophy

- Quiz 1
- Complete "What is Justice?" writing assignment
- Discussion Forum on "What is Justice?"

Week 3   An Overview of Contemporary positions: Michael Sandel, *Justice*

- Read: Ch.
- Quiz 2
- Begin Paper 1
- Discussion Forum on Modern Political Theories

Week 4   What do we owe each other?

- Read: Sandel, *Justice*, Ch. , and Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?"
- Quiz 3
- Discussion Forum on Affirmative Action

Week 5   Plato, *The Republic*

- Read: pdf selections from *The Republic*

- Quiz 4
- Discussion Forum on Ancient Political Philosophy
- Paper 1 Due

Week 6   Aristotle, *Politics*

- Read: pdf selections
- Quiz 5

Week 7   Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*

- Read: pdf selections
- Quiz 6
- Begin Paper 2
- Discussion Forum on Social Contract Theory

Week 8   John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*

- Read: pdf selections
- Quiz 7
- Begin "Project Justice" group project

Week 9   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*

- Read: pdf selections
- Quiz 8
- Paper 2 Due

Week 10   Justice: At Home and Abroad

- Read: Benhabib, "Cosmopolitanism and Democracy"
- Discussion Forum on Global Justice
- Finish "Project Justice" group memo

Week 11   Complete "Project Justice" reflection paper and any outstanding assignments and quizzes

Week 12   Final Exam

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 (6 x 25 points each, 1 x 50 points) –** Most course Topics will have an accompanying discussion. Please read the instructions carefully; participation is mandatory; grading is explained at the beginning of each discussion (the group project discussion is worth double points). **Prepares for Learning Outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

- **Justice Project (100 points)** – This is a group project, called the Justice Project. There are two components to this grade: creation of a group memo answering a series of questions, and a reflection paper on the entire process. **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 (200 points)** – The final exam will consist of two parts: 1) an online test of 50 questions, based on the quizzes from the semester and (100 points) 2) a long-answer essay with four questions that you respond to in paragraph form, with a total of about 5 pages of written work (100 points). 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.**

Grading Policy:

All grades will be calculated according to a percentage of *total points*. The total number of points for this term is 900. The term grade legend follows:

A = 90% to 100% (810 to 900 point)	4 points per semester hour
B = 80% to 89.9% (720 to 809 points)	3 points per semester hour
C = 70% to 79.9% (630 to 719 points)	2 points per semester hour
D = 60% to 69.9% (540 to 629 points)	1 point per semester hour
F = 0% to 59.9% (000 to 539 points)	0 points per semester hour
FX (Failure due to non-attendance)	0 points per semester hour
IP (In Progress)	0 points per semester hour
W (Withdrawn)	0 points per semester hour
I (Incomplete)	0 points per semester hour
AUD (Audit)	0 points per semester hour

IP (In Progress) is given only in certain developmental courses. The student must re-enroll to receive credit. COM (Completed) is given in non-credit and continuing education courses.

FINAL GRADE OF FX: Students who stop attending class and do not withdraw themselves prior to the withdrawal deadline may either be dropped by their professor for excessive absences or be assigned the final grade of "FX" at the end of the semester. Students who stop attending classes will receive a grade of "FX", compared to an earned grade of "F" which is due to poor performance. Logging into a DE course without active participation is seen as non-attending. Please note that HCC will not disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class.

Students who receive financial aid but fail to attend class will be reported to the Department of Education and may have to pay back their aid. A grade of "FX" is treated exactly the same as a grade of "F" in terms of GPA, probation, suspension, and satisfactory academic progress.

To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades "IP," "COM" and "I" do not affect GPA.

Late policy:

Late work will be accepted with penalty, unless I have received a valid excuse or the student has arranged for late submission *prior to the deadline*. I will deduct a minimum of 10% of the grade from the first day the assignment is late and an additional 10% of the grade for every week it is late after that.

!! Philosophy Tutoring is available at http://hccs.askonline.net/ **Please use it if you need it !!**

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; two instances of cheating, plagiarism, or collusion will result in an automatic "F." Probation or dismissal from HCC and ALL its several colleges may also result. *See HCC Student Handbook.*

Make-up Policy:

Students are responsible for materials covered in-class and online during their absences, and it is the student's responsibility to contact and consult with the instructor for make-up assignments. In addition, any student who is absent on posted exam dates should be prepared to schedule the make-up of missed examinations on the first day of returning to class. Make-up examinations are taken by appointment at the campus Testing Center. This scheduling cannot occur during class time. Any other assignments not turned in on time (due to absences) must also be either turned in, or scheduled for late submission on the first day of returning to

class. Finally, there will be no extension of due dates and/or make-ups for Online Requirements. <u>Except for a medical excuse or documented family or personal emergency, there is no exemption from these rules.</u>

Attendance and Withdrawal Policy:

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. Your instructor will withdraw a student if and only if provided a written request from that student. Additionally, system-wide rules affect withdrawals:

(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 2013 on Monday, November 11 at 4:30 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". Students receiving an "I" for a course are ineligible for graduation until the "I' has been removed from a student's transcript.

Students with Disabilities:

To visit the ADA Web site, log on to www.hccs.edu, click Future students, 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 Northwest College, Mahnaz Kolaini at 713.718.5422.

EGLS3 – Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System:

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time near the end of the term, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and department chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.