PHI 175
Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy
Fall 2022

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Course Description:
Social and political philosophy is concerned with issues such as the justification of the state, the limits of the coercive power of the state, the relationship between justice and equality, what rights individuals should have, and concerns regarding exploitation. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to several major theoretical issues in social and political philosophy through an examination of the relationships among individuals, groups, and institutions in civil societies.

While our main focus will be on the question "What is justice?", we will also engage with issues regarding rights and their distribution, the notion of power, and the value of equality and freedom. Specifically, we will examine competing political theories (liberalism, libertarianism, utilitarianism, egalitarianism, and feminism) to discuss public policy and law, including measures dealing with surrogacy, racism, immigration, climate change, gender equality, income inequality, and poverty.

Contacting me: I am available to meet with you during my office hours. If that time slot does not work for you, please email me to make an appointment. If you need to contact me regarding any class related matter, email me; if you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, write again to remind me.

Required Readings:
Readings will be available on the class Blackboard site.

Course Requirements:

1. **Prelim #1 (in class on 9/29) and prelim # 2 (in class on 11/10) 20% and 25% of the grade.** Details TBA

2. **Paper 25% of the grade (due 12/8)** Details TBA

3. **Short writing assignment 15% of the grade (due 10/13)** Details TBA

4. **Class participation and attendance (15% of the grade)**.
Class participation is only possible if you attend all class lectures. In philosophy, learning requires your engagement in dialogue with the instructor and your peers, which means that you cannot simply sit through lectures. Meaningful participation in class discussions

requires that you raise questions that emerge from the assigned texts and offer comments as well as respond to issues raised in class by others. Note that our aim is to learn from one another, which involves engaging productively and respectfully with peers and allowing everyone to have a chance to contribute.
You may miss three classes over the course of the semester without having to provide any explanation. Additional absences will be excused only in cases of sickness (you must provide a doctor's note), death in the family, religious observation, or an athletic meeting (you must provide an official note). Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your grade.

5. Class readings and information regarding assignments, due dates etc. will be posted on class Blackboard site. It is your responsibility to check class Blackboard regularly for such information.

6. Students must complete ALL assignments. Any missing assignment will result in failing the class.

7. **All work submitted must be your own**. Failure to cite sources used will count as plagiarism and will result in disciplinary action. When in doubt, provide references. The Syracuse Code of Academic Integrity can be reviewed online at https://policies.syr.edu/policies/academic-rules-student-responsibilities-and-services/academic-integrity-policy/
Please talk or write to me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

8. If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities that require accommodations, please let me know by the end of this Thursday so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office that can be reached at 315-443-4498

9. **Laptop/cell phone policy:** I will follow a very strict policy regarding the use of laptops, cell phones, iPads, kindles, iPods, and the like. Please switch off your cell phone for the duration of the class. Laptop or iPad use will NOT be allowed with the exception of students registered with the office of disability services.

10. All information regarding class assignments, readings (or any changes made thereof) and any other related topic will be made available on the class blackboard available to all enrolled students. Please contact me if you have any questions about assignments or readings. **Original class materials (handouts, assignments, tests, etc.) are the intellectual property of the course instructor. You may download these materials for your use in this class. However, you may not provide these materials to other parties (e.g., web sites, social media, other students) without permission. Doing so is a violation of intellectual property law and of the student code of conduct.**

Tentative Reading Schedule: What follows is a list of required readings for each week. Note that the schedule is tentative, as we will make changes, whenever necessary, to accommodate the class discussions and the interest expressed by you. I will announce

any such changes in advance.

Week 1: August 30- September 1
Introduction to Course
What is political philosophy? What is justice?
John Locke, "Of Property"

Week 2: September 6-8
Libertarianism
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia* (selections)

Week 3: September 13-15
Surrogate Motherhood and Justice
Elizabeth Anderson, "Is Women's Labor a Commodity?"
Recommended: H. McLachlan & J.K. Swales, "Babies, Child Bearers and Commodification"

Week 4: September 20- 22
Liberal Democratic Justice: The Contractarian Approach
John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (selections)

Week 5: September 27-29
Liberal Democratic Justice: The Contractarian Approach
John Rawls, A *Theory of Justice* (selections)
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia* (selections)
In-class Prelim #1 on 9/29

Week 6: October 4-6
Liberal Democratic Justice: The Utilitarian Approach
John Stuart Mill, "Freedom of Action"
http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
Garrett Hardin: "Lifeboat Ethics"

Week 7: October 11-13
Liberal Democratic Justice: The Utilitarian Approach
Peter Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
Angus Deaton: "Rethinking Robin Hood"
Writing assignment due 10/13

Week 8: October 18-20
Racial Justice
Kwame Appiah: "Racisms"
Davis, Angela: "Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation"

Week 9: October 25-27
Justice and Immigration

David Miller: “Immigration”
Joseph Carens: “Migration and Morality”

Week 10: November 1-3
Gender Justice
Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction: The Second Sex”
Martha Nussbaum, “The Challenge of Gender Justice”

Week 11: November 8-10
Economic (In) justice
Gregory Mankiw, “Defending the One Percent”
Prelim # 2 in class on 11/10

Week 12: November 15-17
Economic (In) justice
Joseph Stiglitz, “Income Inequality”
Eduardo Porter, “Richer But Not Better Off”

Week 13: November 22-24 Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: November 29-December 1
Environmental Justice
Henry Shue, “Human Rights, Climate Change, and the Trillionth Ton”
John Schwartz: “Global Climate Change”
Paper due on 12/1

Week 15: December 6-8
Student class discussion
Wrap-up