

SYLLABUS

PSC 382/PHI 417: Contemporary Political Philosophy

Fall 2021

Professor Elizabeth Cohen
Office Hours: By appointment
Eggers 310
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Course Description:

This course will focus on a set of social and political problems that political theorists, policy makers and citizens have grappled with since the dawn of modernity. We will explore questions such as: what is the nature of power? How does it manifest itself in our lives? How do we experience it both as individual citizens and members of groups? Though abstract in style, the readings will address and be applied to problems familiar to average citizens. Each week's readings will be accompanied by a discussion of contemporary political quandaries that are relevant to the subjects at hand. In this way, we can explore the ways in which political theory is salient all of our lives.

The information on this syllabus is subject to minor adjustments as we proceed through the course. For example, occasionally we may get behind or discover we need to address the connection between a current event and material that we cover. All changes will be announced in class and via Blackboard.

Learning Outcomes:

In addition to being introduced to the fundamental concepts that guide political thought and basic political philosophy and ideology, this class will emphasize writing, reading, and critical thinking skills. You can expect to leave this semester with an improved understanding of how to formulate and articulate a strong argument and how to better identify and evaluate the arguments of others.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to complete all reading assignments for class. Readings can be found on Blackboard.

There will be two 80-minute in class exams.

Students will also complete two written assignments critically analyzing course readings. These assignments will be discussed further in class.

Class participation, defined as thoughtful, respectful, active engagement in discussions, is a graded opportunity worth 15% of the final grade for the course.

Grading Breakdown:

Exam 1: 20 % Paper 1: 15 %
Exam 2: 25 % Paper 2: 25 %
Participation: 15 %

Written work will be graded using a rubric that prioritizes reasoning, evidence, and, for essays, quality of writing.

Letters of Reference:

Many students will require letters of recommendations at some point. It is important that letters of reference be authoritative and credible. I have therefore instituted criteria to ensure that the letters I write on your behalf are as effective as possible. Before requesting a letter of reference please be sure you meet the following criteria:

1. You have taken and entirely completed at least one course with me. This means I cannot write letters of reference for students currently enrolled in their first course with me.
2. You received an A in the coursework you have completed with me.

Week 1-2: Introduction; Freedom

August 31 Sept 2; Sep 9

Class will not be held on 9/7

Introductions

Read for Sept 2: Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"

Read for Sep 9: John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* Chapter 1

Week 3: The State

September 14 and 16

Max Weber "The Profession and Vocation of Politics" in *Political Writings* (Cambridge Edition, 1994).

Week 4: The Social Contract

September 21 and 23

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Selections)

Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* Chapter 1: "Contracting In" Pp. 1-18.

Charles Mills, (Selection)

Week 5: Democracy

September 28 and 30

Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, Chapters 6, 7, and 12.

Week 6: Citizenship and Membership

October 5 and 7

Readings TBA

Week 7: Social Justice and (Re)Distribution

October 12 and 14

John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness"

Week 8: Social Justice Cont.

October 19 and 21

Week 9-10: Responses to Rawls:

October 26 and 28

Okin, *Justice, Gender and the Family*, Ch. 5

Michael Walzer (selections)

Week 10-11: Feminism and Universalism

November 2 and 4

Iris Marion Young, "The Politics of Difference" in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.

Kate Manne, *Down Girl* (selection)

Week 11: Marxism

November 9 and 11

Karl Marx, "The German Ideology" and "The Communist Manifesto"

Week 12: Utilitarianism

Nov 16 and 18

Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal" and "Down on the Factory Farm" from *Animal Liberation*

Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson, *Zoopolis* (Selections)

Trolley Problems

Week 13: Postmodernism

Nov 3 and Dec 2

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Selections)

James Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (Ch 1)

Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos* (selections)

Week 14: Conclusions

Dec 7 and 9

Syllabus Boilerplate

Campus resources.

Mental health and overall well-being are significant predictors of academic success. As such it is essential that during your college experience you develop the skills and resources effectively to navigate stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns. Please familiarize yourself with the range of resources the Barnes Center provides and seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315.443.8000. I encourage you to explore the resources available through the Wellness Leadership Institute.

As you go through the semester, you may need other assistance, academically or otherwise. There are a wide variety of campus resources that may be able to help you. Here are a few helpful links and contacts.

Writing Center: <http://wc.syr.edu/index.html>

Tutoring Services: Center for Learning and Student Success:
<http://class.syr.edu/>

Financial Counseling: <http://financialaid.syr.edu/financialliteracy/>

Sexual Harassment/Title IX Concerns: Sheila Johnson-Willis, compliance officer sjohnson@syr.edu (315) 443-0211

Career Services: <https://bit.ly/2P51FXK>

Other personal health resources: <https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/find-services/>

Personal Pronouns

Syracuse University community members may indicate a preferred name and designate the pronouns they use for themselves in “MySlice” under “My Profile.” For more information on designating personal pronouns and preferred names, access: answers.syr.edu/PronounFAQ or answers.syr.edu/PreferredNameFAQ

Harassment

Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If a student has been harassed or assaulted, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team at the Counseling

Center (315-443-4715, 200 Walnut Place, Syracuse, New York 13244-5040). Incidents of sexual violence or harassment can be reported non-confidentially to the University's Title IX Officer (Sheila Johnson Willis, 315-443-0211, titleix@syr.edu, 005 Steele Hall). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University's Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, harassment, and crimes I learn about to help make our campus a safer place for all.

Grading and Academic Integrity:

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. In this class, academic integrity violations may result in receiving no credit for an assignment or exam, failure for the course, and other grade-related penalties. Syracuse University students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure, regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

This class may use the plagiarism detection and prevention system Turnitin. You will have the option to submit your papers to Turnitin to check that all sources you use have been properly acknowledged and cited before you submit the paper to me. I will also submit all papers you write for this class to Turnitin, which compares submitted documents against documents on the Internet and against student papers submitted to Turnitin at Syracuse University and at other colleges and universities. I will take your knowledge of the subject matter of this course and your writing level and style into account in interpreting the originality report. Keep in mind that all papers you submit for this class

will become part of the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Please also note that Turnitin on Blackboard digitally confirms for you that your work has been uploaded. If you do not receive digital confirmation of your submission within the first 5 minutes after you submit work, it is your responsibility to contact either your TA or the instructor for this class about the problem. If you do not, your work will be considered unsubmitted or will be penalized for lateness based on when it is submitted.

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Disability

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to meet with me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit their website at <https://disabilityresources.syr.edu>. Please call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu for more detailed information.

CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

Privacy:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sets forth requirements regarding the privacy of student records. FERPA governs both the access to and release of those records, known as education records, and the information they contain. Under FERPA, faculty have a legal responsibility to protect the confidentiality of student records. For

additional information about FERPA and Syracuse University's FERPA policy, see <http://supolicies.syr.edu/ethics/ferpa.htm> or contact the Office of the Registrar.

Religious Observance:

Syracuse University's religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students should have an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors no later than the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibility formatted classes. Student deadlines are posted in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.