

PHIL/POL 2770 – Political Philosophy

Monsoon 2021, Monday and Wednesday 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM | Office hours via appointment

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About This Course: Topic and Goals

This course covers some of the main topics in political philosophy. We will start with an overview of some key topics and the rest of the content will be determined by class goal.

Below are the **goals** for this course:

- Gain some understanding of some of the key topics in contemporary political philosophy.
- Improve your skills at summarizing complicated ideas concisely and clearly, commenting on those ideas with questions, objections, or extensions, and revising your writing.

Course Content

Due to the difficulties of online instruction, class attendance is not mandatory, but you are expected to attend class if you are able to, because in-class discussion is extremely valuable. We meet via Zoom. All course material is available on the course website at <https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/3073570>.

Assignments and Grading

There are 4 kinds of assignments in this class: **reading quizzes**, **Perusall annotations**, **500 word papers**, and **revisions**. Late papers will lose 10% of the grade for each day they it's turned in late, up to a maximum of 50% off. The late penalty is calculated per hour (0.42% lost per hour). Your grade also depends in part on **discussion participation**.

Reading Quizzes (10% of your grade) are to help you focus on the important parts of the reading and to get instant feedback on whether you have understood the reading. There is one quiz per reading. The lowest 5 reading quiz scores will be dropped. You will earn maximum credit (10% of your grade) if your average reading quiz score (after the lowest 5 have been dropped) is 80% or higher. Otherwise you will earn whatever your average quiz score is.

Perusall Annotation Assignments (20% of your grade) allow you to collaboratively read the readings by using the Perusall website. Canvas has a document detailing examples of annotations you can make on Perusall and explaining the grading system. The lowest 5 Perusall annotation assignment scores will be dropped. You will earn maximum credit (10% of your grade) if your average reading Perusall score (after the lowest 5 have been dropped) is 80% or higher. Otherwise you will earn whatever your average Perusall score is.

500 Word Papers (20% of your grade) are short writing assignments designed to give you practice writing concisely about philosophy and to give you more detailed feedback about how well you are understanding the material. There are 8 due and the lowest 4 will be dropped.

Paper Revisions (30% of your grade) are revised resubmissions of 500 word papers. Using my feedback and your own thoughts about how the assignment could be improved, you rewrite one of your papers with the aim of making it better. There are 5 revisions due and the lowest 2 scores will be ignored.

Discussion Participation (20% of your grade) can be earned discussion participation by participating in class discussions, by watching recordings of class discussions and posting a discussion response post on Canvas, or by posting discussion questions and replies.

Grade Breakdown:

- 10% - **Reading Quizzes** (25, lowest 5 dropped)
- 20% - **Perusall Annotations** (25, lowest 5 dropped)
- 20% - **500 Word Papers** (8, lowest 4 dropped)
- 30% - **Paper Revisions** (5, lowest 2 dropped)
- 20% - **Discussion Participation**

Class Grade Rubric:

100-94% = A	<77-74% = C
<94-90% = A-	<74-70% = C-
<90-87% = B+	<70-67% = D+
<87-84% = B	<67-64% = D
<84-80% = B-	<64-60% = D-
<80-77% = C+	<60-0% = F

Disabilities

If you have disabilities which require some form of accommodation, contact me ahead of time.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Any time you use **words, phrases, ideas, or anything else** in your writing that you did not think up on your own, you must **cite** your source the best of your ability. Words and phrases from others must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that you did not write them yourself. Failure to cite a source is **plagiarism** and it's not okay. You should not need to use (or cite) outside sources for this class, but if you do use them, you must cite them. It is perfectly okay to use points made by your classmates (or anyone else), *as long as you cite them to the best of your ability*. The one exception is that you do not need to cite me on your writing assignments in this class, unless you want to. Plagiarism or other academic integrity violations, like hacking into Canvas and changing your grade to an A++++, may result in a zero on the assignment or in other point reductions.

Office Hours and Email Communication

If you have questions or comments about the course it is best to talk during office hours. I do not have scheduled office hours. If you would like to meet, you can either email me to set up a time to meet, or book an appointment in the open appointment slots via the link on Canvas. I am available to meet outside those slots, so email me if those slots do not work. If you contact me via email, please include "PHI 2770" in the subject line so that I know you are emailing about this course.

Resources

My website has resources on reading, writing, and researching at dannyweltman.com/resources.html. These resources include a glossary for unfamiliar words or phrases, some of which occur in some of the readings for this course. I encourage you to examine these resources.

Schedule

Each day's reading has an accompanying reading quiz and Perusall annotation assignment, both of which are due 8 AM that day. You should aim to complete them much earlier than that. You have 24 hours after the due date to add replies to comments that others have written on Perusall. Lectures for the readings should be watched before the readings, although sometimes the lecture will note that it can be watched after the reading instead.

Aug 30: Course introduction (no reading)

Sep 1: Rawls, A Theory of Justice Sections 1-4

Sep 6: Rawls, A Theory of Justice Sections 10-13 (up until "chain connection") (also, optionally, section 14)

Sep 8: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* Sections 17, 22, 24, 29

Sept 13: Sen, "What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?"

Sept 15: Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia* pages 150-64

Sep 20: Estlund, "Utopophobia"

Sept 22: Williams, "Realism and Moralism in Political Theory"

Sep 27: Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear"

Sep 29: Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate"

Oct 4: Arneson, "The Supposed Right to a Democratic Say"

Oct 6: Anderson, "Democracy: Instrumental vs. Non-Instrumental Value"

Readings for the rest of the weeks will be chosen by vote. If you have topic suggestions, please let me know sooner rather than later. Possible topics include:

Annihilation of Caste, Capitalism, Anarchism, Colonialism, Civil Disobedience, Communism, Cosmopolitanism, Deliberative Democracy, Dirty Hands, Egalitarianism, Feminist Political Philosophy, Global Justice, Identity Politics, Immigration, Lying, Martha Nussbaum, More on Democracy, More on Liberalism, Multiculturalism, National Minorities, Non-Human Animals, Patriotism and Nationalism, Political Obligation, Political Violence, Rule of Law, Secession, Voting Ethics

Final Schedule after Votes:

Oct 18: Brennan, "Murderers at the Ballot Box"

Oct 20: Ramsay, "Democratic Dirty Hands"

Oct 25: Young, "Social Difference as a Political Resource" parts 1-5

Oct 27: Young, "Social Difference as a Political Resource" part 6

Nov 1: Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition"

Nov 3: Parekh, "Redistribution or Recognition? A Misguided Debate"

Nov 8: Ambedkar, "Annihilation of Caste"

Nov 10: Manoharan, "'Anti-Casteist Casteism?' A Fanonist Critique of Ramasamy's Discourse on Caste"

Nov 15: Dhanda, "Philosophical Foundations of Anti-Casteism"

Nov 17: Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society"

Nov 22: Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia* pages 246-65

Nov 24: Mueller, "Capitalism's Image" pages 21-41

Nov 29: Cohen, "Why Not Socialism?"

Dec 1: Arneson, "Why Not Capitalism?"