

# PHI 2770 – Political Philosophy

Spring 2024, Monday and Wednesday, 8:30 to 10:00, AC04 LR 008

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**Office:** AC01 611 | **Office Hours:** As listed on Canvas

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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

We will start with some important topics in political philosophy. The further readings have been chosen via vote. All course material is available on the course website at <https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/8395384>. Do the assigned reading for each class before that class. **Please bring the readings to class meetings**, either printed out or in *easily accessible* electronic form.

## Assignments

There are four kinds of assignments in this class: **reading quizzes**, **Perusall annotations**, **reading outlines**, and **500 word papers**. There is also an **attendance requirement**. Late quizzes will have a 10% lower score for every 24 hours they are late, with a maximum reduction of 50%. Late Perusall annotations and outlines won't be accepted. 500 word papers are never late, but they have strongly suggested due dates.

**Reading Quizzes** 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 quiz is due 8:00 AM the day we discuss the reading but you should complete it much earlier. The lowest five reading quiz scores will be dropped.

**Perusall Annotation Assignments** allow you to collaboratively read the readings by using the Perusall website. This allows you to share thoughts and questions with fellow students and to see their thoughts and questions. Canvas has a document detailing examples of annotations you can make on Perusall. Your Perusall annotations are due 8:00 AM the day we discuss the reading but you should write them far earlier. The lowest five Perusall annotation scores will be dropped.

**Reading Outlines** are to help you get a comprehensive understanding of the readings and to facilitate in-class discussions. Your outlines are due 8:00 AM the day we discuss the reading but you should write them far earlier.

**500 Word Papers** are to help you practice thinking about and writing about the complicated ideas that are present in the books we read. They also help you understand those ideas through the feedback you receive. Details about 500 word papers are available on Canvas and we will discuss them in class too.

## Grading

Paper assignments will be given one of two grades: **satisfactory** or **not yet satisfactory**. The level of achievement required for a satisfactory grade is roughly equivalent to a B+. You can resubmit any not yet satisfactory assignment for a regrade. You can submit a maximum of two papers per week. So, if you want to resubmit papers, do not leave all your resubmissions until the end of the semester.

**For an A grade:** An average score of 75% or better on the reading quizzes. An average score of 75% or better on the Perusall assignments. Eleven or more satisfactory reading outlines. Five or more satisfactory 500 word papers. Miss six or fewer class meetings.

**For a B grade:** An average score of 70% or better on the reading quizzes. An average score of 70% or better on the Perusall assignments. Ten or more satisfactory reading outlines. Four or more satisfactory 500 word papers. Miss seven or fewer class meetings.

**For a C grade:** An average score of 65% or better on the reading quizzes. An average score of 65% or better on the Perusall assignments. Nine or more satisfactory reading outlines. Three or more satisfactory 500 word papers. Miss eight or fewer class meetings.

**For a D grade:** An average score of 60% or better on the reading quizzes. An average score of 60% or better on the Perusall assignments. Eight or more satisfactory reading outlines. Two or more satisfactory 500 word papers. Miss nine or fewer class meetings.

I currently do not anticipate assigning + or – grades, but if I do, it will likely be on the basis of participation, both in class and on Perusall.

## Office Hours and Email

You can come meet me during office hours in my office AC01 616 without an appointment to talk about anything you would like to talk about, like feedback on your papers or questions about the readings. If you cannot meet during office hours you can email me to schedule an appointment. If you contact me via email, please include “PHI 2770” in the subject line so I know that the email is about this course.

## Disabilities

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

## ChatGPT/AI

You should not use ChatGPT or other AI tools for this course. The reason I assign papers, Perusall comments, etc. is not because I need more of them. I have enough student papers to last me the rest of my life. I assign them because the process of thinking about and writing them helps **you** develop the sorts of skills you are attending university to develop. Using ChatGPT or similar AI tools prevents you from developing these skills and thus wastes your time. It also wastes my time, because I do not care what ChatGPT has to say, nor is it useful for me to give feedback on what ChatGPT has generated.

## 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 not written by you 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 in discussion (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 violations of academic integrity, like cheating on quizzes, may entail sanctions like an F in the course.

## Resources

My website has resources on reading, writing, and researching at <http://dannyweltman.com/resources.html>.

## Schedule

Jan 22: Course introduction (no reading)

Jan 24: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* Sections 1-4

Jan 29: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* Sections 10-13 (up until “chain connection”) (also, optionally, section 14)

Jan 31: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* Sections 17, 22, 24, 29

Feb 5: Sen, “What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?”

Feb 7: Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia* pages 150-64

Feb 12: Estlund, “Utopophobia”

Feb 14: Williams, “Realism and Moralism in Political Theory”

Feb 19: Shklar, “The Liberalism of Fear”

Feb 21: Taylor, “Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate”

Feb 26: Arneson, “The Supposed Right to a Democratic Say”

Feb 28: Anderson, “Democracy: Instrumental vs. Non-Instrumental Value”

March 4: Brennan, “Murderers at the Ballot Box”

March 6: Ramsay, “Democratic Dirty Hands”

March 18: Gheaus, “The Challenge of Care to Idealizing Theories of Distributive Justice”

March 20: Jaggar, “*L’Imagination au Pouvoir*: Comparing John Rawls’s Method of Ideal Theory with Iris Marion Young’s Method of Critical Theory”

March 27: Abizadeh, “Democratic Theory and Border Coercion: No Right to Unilaterally Control Your Own Borders”

April 1: Miller, “Why Immigration Controls Are Not Coercive: A Reply to Arash Abizadeh”

April 3: Abizadeh, “Democratic Legitimacy and State Coercion: A Reply to David Miller”

April 6: Steinhoff, “Border Coercion and ‘Democratic Legitimacy’”

April 8: Amighetti and Nuti, “A Nation’s Right to Exclude and the Colonies”

April 15: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* chapter 3

April 17: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* chapter 8

April 20: Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* chapter 9

April 22: McMahan, "The Ethics of Killing in War" pages 693-718

April 24: McMahan, "The Ethics of Killing in War" pages 718-733