

Introduction to Political Philosophy

Phil 6 / Summer (A Session) 2022

Lecture: TR 3.15-5.20

Location: Rolfe Hall 3134

Office Hours: Tuesday 1.20-2.20; Wednesday 10-11 on Zoom

Instructor: Ekin Zeytinoglu

Email: ezeytinoglu@humnet.ucla.edu

Course Description

We will focus on the question of what constitutes a just political society. In the first half of the course, we will study three central theories of justice: utilitarianism, liberalism, and libertarianism. With the basics of these theories in mind, in the second half of the course we will turn our attention to the subjects of homelessness, oppression, responsibility for justice, and reparations. We will ask: (a) to what extent the theories we started with can help us understand the nature of these issues and (b) to what extent these issues show the limitations of the theories.

Course Objectives

This course has two aims. The first is to expose you to different ideals of politics that motivate a wide range of political views. John Rawls's account of a just state has been very influential in the last century. In studying his work, alongside the view he was criticizing and his own critics, we will get an understanding of the kinds of questions and issues that have driven most of contemporary political philosophy.

The second aim of the course is to get some exposure to philosophical writing and argumentation in order to think and write rigorously about live issues which concern our society. Learning and identifying basic philosophical skills will serve you in a variety of settings, within academia and outside it. The only way to learn these skills is by practicing, and you will be asked to read, write, and discuss regularly.

Readings

All readings will be posted online.

Course Requirements

Reading responses: 35%

Course attendance and participation: 25%

Final paper: 40% (4-5 pages, tentative due date July 31st; optional draft due July 24th)

Responses: You are expected to submit a reading response of around 500 words in advance of each class session. Reading responses are due at 9 am on the day of class. These responses will (1) state the thesis of the relevant reading assigning; (2) list and define any technical terms; (3) explain how the author supports the conclusion; (4) formulate a question or objection. Only 7 will count for your final grade.

Course Participation: This score will be based on your participation in class, section, office hours, and even through other methods (e.g., discussion posts, highlighting relevant news articles, etc.). Raising thoughts, questions, concerns, confusions are all possible (and helpful!) ways of participating. I'll make audio recordings of lectures. If you have an excused absence, I will make the recording available to you.

Papers: It should be submitted on Bruin Learn. Please remove all identifying information other than a student ID number from your submission. There will be a deduction of 1/3 a letter grade for every day the paper is late. Except for emergencies, extensions will not be granted in the last 48 hours. You have the option to submit a draft, which you then can revise for the final submission. Only the final submission will count towards your course grade.

Electronics Policy

Electronic devices are not allowed unless needed for accommodation

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to know and comply with University policies regarding academic integrity. All students should be familiar with the Student Conduct Code which can be found here: <https://deanofstudents.ucla.edu/student-conduct-code>. Please pay special attention to Section 102 on academic dishonesty. Without exception, any work suspected to be in violation of University policies will be reported to The Office of the Dean of Students for Investigation. If you have any questions, please come talk to me.

Accommodations

Students needing academic accommodations should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE, previously known as the Office for Students with Disabilities) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at A255 Murphy Hall. For more information visit www.cae.ucla.edu.

Tentative Schedule

- Week I – Introduction, Utilitarianism
 - T: Jean Hampton, “Utilitarianism” from *Political Philosophy*; Robert Nozick, “The Experience Machine” from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*; John Rawls, “Classical Utilitarianism” from *A Theory of Justice*
- Week II – Rawls
 - T: Rawls, *Justice as Fairness (selections)*
 - R: Rawls, *cont’d*,

- Week III – Rawls, *cont'd*,
 - T: Rawls, *cont'd*,
 - R: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Section 7 (selections)
- Week IV – Nozick, Homelessness, Oppression,
 - T: Nozick, *cont'd*, Jeremy Waldron, “Homelessness and the Issues of Freedom”
 - R: Ann Cudd, “Oppression by Choice”
- Week V – Responsibility for Justice
 - T: Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, Ch.1-2 (selections)
 - R: Young, *cont'd*, Ch.4-5 (selections)
- Week VI – Reparations
 - T: Young, Ch.7, Seana Shiffrin “Reparations for U.S. Slavery and Justice Over Time”
 - R: Olúfemi O. Táíwò, *Reconsidering Reparations* (selections)