

PHIL-0330: Political Philosophy.

Spring 2017

John Lawless, CL 1009A

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:00-1:00; Wednesday, 3:00-4:00

lawless@pitt.edu

johnlawless.wixsite.com/home

Course summary. The course will have three units. In the first, we will engage critically with the concepts of freedom and equality in order to understand diverse approaches to justice. In the second, we explore the role of the state, addressing the kinds of problems that state power is meant to solve. Why can't justice rule directly? And in the third, we will investigate the limits of the state's authority, and the ways in which the state should relate to its subjects. We will explore both the role of democratic institutions, and the conditions and ways in which citizens might justly resist the state.

- Lecture will meet Mo/We 11:00 to 11:50 in G24 CL.
- Recitations will meet:
 - M 1:00-1:50 in CL 119 (Tegtmeyer),
 - M 2:00-2:50 in CL 119 (Tegtmeyer),
 - M 3:00-3:50 in CL 119 (Tegtmeyer),
 - T 9:00-9:50 in VICT 116 (Segal),
 - T 10:00-10:50 in VICT 116 (Segal),
 - T 11:00-11:50 in VICT 116 (Segal).
- Writing recitations will meet:
 - M/W 3:00-3:50 in CL 219 (Snow),
 - M/W 4:00-4:50 in CL 135 (Snow),
 - M/W 1:00-1:50 in CL 121 (Lawless).

Course goals. In this course, we will work to cultivate students' capacities to read philosophical articles; to think critically about justice, virtue and happiness; to communicate their thoughts on these matters to others both in conversation and writing; and to engage with others' moral views – even when they apparently diverge from one's own.

Two short papers (each worth 15% of the final grade). We will evaluate your papers by attention to three criteria: first, your abilities to present particular philosophical views clearly; second, your comprehension of these philosophical views; and third, your abilities to respond creatively to these philosophical views. These skills build on one another. A strong capacity for moral thinking is nothing without a capacity to communicate one's thoughts to others. As such, a well-written, well-structured paper is a prerequisite for a grade of B- or higher. Good philosophy will boost your grade beyond that.

Mid-term and final exam (20% and 35%, respectively). These exams will consist in a set of short answer and short essay prompts testing your comprehension of the philosophical views we have discussed in class. If you cannot attend either exam on the dates scheduled, it is your responsibility to reschedule it.

Participation (15% of your final grade). We take this component of your grade quite seriously. Good philosophy involves the practice of a set of skills that we cultivate best in conversation with others. As a result, your success in this course will depend on your active engagement with the

material during your recitation sections. You will need to be prepared to contribute each day, and to help make the environment conducive to everyone's participation – one that is open, respectful, and positive.

Attendance. We expect students' regular attendance, both in lectures and in recitations. We will allow each student one free absence from her or his recitation section per semester. Beyond that, you must speak to your recitation leader about any absence, preferably beforehand. For each unexcused absence, you will be docked 1 point off of your final grade. For each failure to speak with your recitation leader, you will lose an *extra* point off of your final grade.

Late work. Papers are due at midnight on the relevant dates. Unexcused late work will drop one full letter grade for each day past the due date, beginning at 12:01 am. Recitation leaders may waive these penalties at their discretion, but their decisions on these matters will be final.

Required texts. All students should have a copies of G.A. Cohen's *Why Not Socialism?*, John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. All other assigned readings will be posted on CourseWeb.

Notice that the following reading schedule is tentative. It is subject to change, for instance, if we discover that we need more time to cover particular materials.

Your rights. All students have the right to an environment that is conducive to success. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Your responsibilities. Academic integrity is essential to all of your work at the University of Pittsburgh. You must do your utmost to ensure that you submit only your own work, that you do nothing to compromise other students' integrity, and that you do not threaten others' opportunities for success. For more information, please visit
<http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.

Tentative Schedule

Unit 1. Justice

- Jan 5* Plato, *Republic* (Book 1)
Jan 10 Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism”
Jan 12 Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?*
Jan 17 Cohen, continued
Jan 19 Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (ST) IV-V
Jan 24 Feinberg, “The Nature and Value of Rights”
Jan 26 Feinberg, continued
Jan 31 Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”
Feb 2 Richardson, *Democratic Autonomy* (excerpt)
Feb 7 Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (DOI)
Feb 9 Rousseau, continued
Feb 14 ★ *First paper assigned.*

Feb 16 ★ *Midterm.*

Unit 2. Authority

- Feb 21* Hobbes, *Leviathan* (excerpts)
Feb 23 Hobbes, continued
Feb 28 Aquinas, “Treatise on Law” (excerpts)
★ *First paper due.*
Mar 2 Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (excerpt)
Mar 5 Spring Break
Mar 14 Scheppelle, “The Reasonable Woman”
Mar 16 Scheppelle, continued
Mar 21 Locke, ST II-III
Mar 23 Locke, ST VII-IX
★ *Second paper assigned.*

Unit 3. Legitimacy

- Mar 28* Locke, ST X, XVII-XVIII
Mar 30 Locke, continued
The 13th (Documentary)
Apr 4 Martin Luther King, Jr, “Letter From a Birmingham Jail”
Srinivasan, “The Aptness of Anger”
Apr 6 Frye, “A Note on Separatism”
Apr 11 Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (excerpt)
★ *Second paper due.*
Apr 13 Rousseau, continued
Apr 18 Conclusion.