

PHIL 508: Social and Political Theory

Fall 2019

Instructor: Tony Reeves

Email: areeves@binghamton.edu

Office: LT 1217

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30 – 3:30. Also available by appointment.

Course Description

The course will consider some of the major topics, approaches, and thinkers in the social and political philosophy of the last half-century. The course aims to both familiarize students with some current theoretical terrain of the disciplines and to prepare them for advanced work in philosophy. We will consider philosophical theory concerning rights, distributive justice, the common good, public reason, equality, liberty, authority, legitimacy, and democracy.

Objectives

Students will:

- Be familiar with much of the central recent philosophical work in social and political philosophy
- Be able to explicate the basic concerns that have driven theorists to write on these topics
- Develop and be able to articulate cogent and defensible views on these topics
- Improve ability to write analytical papers
- Develop an ability to read and critically consider difficult texts
- Improve ability to reason through and intelligently talk about complex problems generally

Readings

As a graduate seminar, there will be a focus on in-class discussion rather than lecture. Careful and reflective reading of the texts prior to our meetings, then, is essential. Below are the required texts. Many can be found quite cheaply online, and all should be available at library reserves. Also, most are available electronically through the library – these are indicated with an asterisk below.

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974)

G.A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (Cambridge, 1995)*

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Harvard, 2001)

Anna Stilz, *Liberal Loyalty* (Princeton, 2011)*
Philip Pettit, *On the People's Terms* (Cambridge, 2012)*
Kevin Vallier, *Must Politics be War?* (Oxford, 2019)*

In addition to these texts, many of the readings will be available on Blackboard electronic reserves (marked “[ER]” on reading schedule).

Requirements

Grade Breakdown:

Short Paper	25%
Long Paper	50%
Participation	25%

Participation: Regular and informed participation on the part of everyone is essential. A large part of your grade will be based on your contributions in seminar. The grade will be based on the frequency and quality of your verbal contributions to the class. Such contributions include informed responses to my questions, participation in classroom discussions, responding to your peers, and raising relevant and cogent questions. Familiarity with the readings is, naturally, crucial.

Short Paper: The short paper is a two-stage process. I will assign a paper topic. Stage One is writing the best 5 to 7 page first draft you are able – you will have three weeks. I will then provide you with feedback on your draft. Stage Two is revising to produce the best final draft you are able.

Long Paper: The long paper is a three-stage process. Stage One is writing a two to three page topic proposal. You should identify a central claim, the main literature you will be responding to and incorporating, and the overall argumentative strategy. This will be submitted to me, and we will schedule a time to discuss your topic outside of class.

Stage Two is writing the best 15 to 20 page draft you are able – you will have close to a few weeks. I will then provide you with feedback on your draft. Stage Three is revising the draft to produce the best final draft you are able.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance in class is mandatory. Each unexcused absence beyond one will result in a 1/3 letter grade reduction in the final grade.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with harshly in accordance with SPEL policies. At minimum, the student would fail the course. See the SPEL Handbook for a description of official policy.

Papers Drafts: Drafts are to be submitted electronically, by email. When I receive a paper draft, I will confirm with an email.

Schedule of Readings

The following plan is subject to revision – I will let you know of any changes as we go. Listed on the left are the dates of the meetings, on the right are the readings that will be discussed on those dates. Items marked [ER] are available on Blackboard.

Date	Reading
Aug 26	<p>First Meeting: Introduction and Rights I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HLA Hart, “Are There Any Natural Rights?” <i>The Philosophical Review</i>, 64, 2 (1955), 175-191 [ER] 2. Joseph Raz, “On the Nature of Rights,” in <i>The Morality of Freedom</i> (1986), 165-192 [ER] 3. Charles Taylor, “What’s Wrong with Negative Liberty?” in <i>Philosophy and the Human Sciences</i>, 175-194 [ER]
Sep 4	<p>Rights II</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joel Feinberg, “The Nature and Value of Rights,” <i>The Journal of Value Inquiry</i>, 4 (1970) 243-251 [ER] 2. Ronald Dworkin, “Is There a Right to Pornography?” <i>Oxford Journal of Legal Studies</i> 1, 2 (1981), 177-212 [ER] 3. Reeves, “Ronald Dworkin’s Theory of Rights” <i>Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy</i> (2017) [ER] 4. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 [ER] 5. Joseph Raz, “Human Rights without Foundations” (2010) [ER] 6. James Griffin, “Human Rights and the Autonomy of International Law” (2010) [ER]
Sep 9	<p>Rawls I</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. John Rawls, “Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics” <i>Philosophical Review</i> 60, 2 (1951), 177-197 [ER] 2. Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness</i>, 1-119
Sep 16	<p>Rawls II</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness</i>, 119-179 2. Susan Moller Okin, “Justice as Fairness: For Whom?” in <i>Justice, Gender, and the Family</i> (1989), 89-109 [ER] <p><i>Short Paper Assigned</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Charles Mills, “Race in Rawls/Rawls on Race” in <i>Black Rights/White Wrongs</i> (2017), 139-160 [ER]

Sep 23	Libertarianism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>, 3-53, 88-119, 149-164, 167-182
Oct 7	Self-Ownership and Freedom: Marxian Response to Nozick <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nozick, 183-231 2. G.A. Cohen, <i>Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality</i>, 1-66 <i>Short Paper Due</i>
Oct 14	Luck Egalitarianism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. G.A. Cohen, <i>Self-Ownership</i>, 67-91 2. Ronald Dworkin, "Equality of Resources" in <i>Sovereign Virtue</i> (2000), 65-119 <u>Recommended</u>: Reeves, "Ronald Dworkin's Theory of Equality" [ER] 3. Philippe Van Parijs, "Why Surfers Should Be Fed: The Liberal Case for Unconditional Basic Income" <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 20 (1991), 101-131 [ER] <i>Short Paper Returned</i>
Oct 21	Relational Egalitarianism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" <i>Ethics</i> 109 (1999), 287-337 [ER] 2. Philip Pettit, <i>On the People's Terms</i>, 1-74
Oct 28	Republicanism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pettit, 75-238 <i>Short Paper Revision Due</i>
Nov 4	Public Justification I <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness</i>, 180-202 2. Kevin Vallier, <i>Must Politics be War?</i>, 1-123 <i>Proposal Due – Schedule Meeting</i>
Nov 11	Public Justification II <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vallier, 127-172 2. Kyla Ebels-Duggan, "The Beginning of Community: Politics in the Face of Disagreement" <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> 60, 50-71 [ER] 3. David Enoch, "Against Public Reason" in <i>Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy</i> 1 (2015), 112-144 [ER]
Nov 18	Perfectionism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joseph Raz, "Autonomy, Toleration, and the Harm Principle" (1988) [ER] 2. Martha Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism" <i>Political Theory</i> 20 (1992), 202-246 [ER] 3. Nussbaum, "Perfectionist Liberalism and Political Liberalism," <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> 39, 3-45 [ER]
Nov 25	Philosophical Anarchism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robert Paul Wolff, selections from <i>In Defense of Anarchism</i> [ER] 2. Joseph Raz, "Authority and Justification" <i>Philosophy & Public Affairs</i> (1985), 3-25 [ER] 3. A. John Simmons, "The Principle of Fair Play" from <i>Moral Principles and Political Obligations</i> (1979), 101-142 [ER] 4. Candice Delmas, "Fairness" in <i>A Duty to Resist</i> (2018), 108-135 [ER] <i>Long Paper Due</i>

Dec 2	State Authority: The Kantian Response 1. Anna Stilz, <i>Liberal Loyalty</i> , 3-109 <i>Long Paper Returned</i>
--------------	---

Final Paper Due December 17, by noon