

PHIL 122: Political Philosophy

SPRING 2012

Course Information

Class Meetings: TR 1:30-2:45pm, ARC 1007
Instructor: Prof. Christina Bellon
Office Hours: T 11:00-12:00 and W 12:00-1:00, MND 3030
Contact: MND 3030, 278-4759, www.csus.edu/indiv/b/bellonc. Please keep all course related communications within SacCT.

A Note on Availability: Other than during scheduled office hours, communication will be answered generally within one working day. After 5pm M-F or on the weekend, do not expect a response until the next business day.

Catalogue Description

A philosophical examination of the individual, the community, and rights; the conflict between individual rights and the common good; various conceptions of justice, equality, liberty and the public good; and the relationship of politics to ethics, economics, law; war and peace.

GE Area C4 Requirements

This course satisfies General Education Requirements of Area C4 and Upper Division GE, in the following ways:

1. By (i) exposing students to a variety of political theories, and their connections to religious, cultural, and community values, and by (ii) offering students an opportunity to discuss political issues as they arise in questions of the common good, governance, economic and moral foundations of politics, and in electoral debates, this course *fosters in students the development of an understanding of and an appreciation for the diversity of the human community and condition.*
2. As a course in Political Philosophy, the principal concern of which is to examine and reflect on diverse human practices and activities in order to discern the underlying norms, principles and reasoning, the course material will examine the implications of social, political and economic diversity, diversity of religious belief, and diversity of cultural and community practices. In this and other ways, this course also *presents the contributions and perspectives of women, persons from various ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups, gays and lesbians, and persons with disabilities.*

Required Texts

Zwolinski, *Arguing about Political Philosophy* (Routledge: 2009), \$55.25

ISBN: 9780415990790

Additional material available in SacCT.

Learning Outcomes

This course satisfies 3 units of upper division General Education Area C4. You must complete the course in all its requirements with a satisfactory grade of C- or better to ensure GE credit.

ASPIRATION/OBJECTIVE	PRACTICAL GOALS	ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Develop understanding of and competence applying philosophical methods to political concepts, theories and issues.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accurately describe and distinguish between a variety of political concepts, theories, positions; 2. Formulate and express own critical judgment; 3. Engage in cogent and respectful discussion of difficult and controversial political issues; 4. Analyze philosophical arguments for consistency and credibility (including one's own). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre- and post-course open-ended question/assessment. 2. Content in each of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. weekly in-class essays b. on-line discussion c. extended philosophical analyses (essays)
Develop written and oral communication skills, especially as those are associated with argumentative writing and public speaking, and to develop skills in critical reasoning, argumentation, and evaluation of basic concepts and theories.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing competently in concise, precise and logical style; 2. Expression of a point of view through the formulation of a coherent and consistent argument in response to a practical political problem or case; 3. Presentation of an argument in a coherent manner to an audience of peers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of the form (essay structure, logic) and mechanics (syntax, grammar) of each of each in-class assignment. 2. Substance, structure, and delivery of in-class and on-line discussions 3. Preparation of philosophical analyses.
Develop an appreciation of the diversity of the human condition, as this is reflected in political theories, formulated at different epochs, in diverse historical and social contexts and by a diversity of individuals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accurately describe and distinguish the central elements of each political tradition, against its historical and cultural context. 2. Accurately account for the diversity of plausible political positions while arguing in defence of one's own considered position. 	Evaluation of discussions of similarities and divergences between points of view expressed in different theories in student <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. written substantive essays b. on-line discussion c. in-class analytic exercises d. class participation
Apply these philosophical methods, political concepts and theories to better understand community and governance, personal and public good, and role and function of citizens toward good governance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop practical skills to assess relevance of concepts and theories to situations encountered in everyday life; 2. Apply concepts and theories to critically assess the role of citizen in political life; 3. Develop skills to resolve conflicts and problems that arise in the community, including those arising from demographic diversity, limited community resources, competition, and individual preferences. 	Evaluation of these practical skills through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. written substantive essays b. in-class analytic exercises c. semester-long online discussion of electoral politics.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated by several means. These will include a series of short in-class analytic essays, three philosophical analyses, and on-line discussions. The course is graded on the basis of 100pts (1pt = 1%).

ALL assignments and essays are administered within SacCT. Print or hand submitted copies will not be accepted, except for work completed in class. All assignments must be completed in the appropriate assignment or assessment area in SacCT.

GRADING SCALE

A Outstanding (96pts and above)	A- Very Good (90-95pts)
B Range Satisfactory (80-89pts)	C Range Minimally Satisfactory (70-79pts)
D Range Poor (60-69pts)	F Unacceptable (below 60pts)
This is based upon a 100 pt scale with 1pt = 1%	

Technology Component

Please note, this course includes a significant SacCT component. Essay assignments can be found there, as well as required group discussion, and general calendar and class notification options. You will need a saclink account to participate in this component of the course. Technical problems must be addressed to the SacLink Help Line @ 278-7337.

A Note on Participation

As this is an upper division class, it should be taken as an opportunity for you to enhance your communication skills. I strongly encourage you to come regularly, do the readings ahead of time, and participate in class discussions and activities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class.

Analytic Exercises (20pts)

You will keep an online journal in SacCT into which you will post your answers to a series of question prompts. At least ten times during the semester, you will be given a question a few days before class which will prompt you to reflect on some aspect of the assigned reading. You will be required to submit a one page (250 word) reflection by the indicated due date. If more than ten opportunities are provided, your grade for this component of the course will consist of your best ten scores.

These prompts and your answers to them will serve to focus discussion for the class period. The answer you write will be shown to the entire class during class period for criticism and commentary as we work together to learn the material. Those students whose answers are critiqued in class will have the opportunity to use class commentary and review to revise and resubmit their answer prior to grading. Students who are absent from class when we review their answers will not have the opportunity to revise.

These submissions will be graded as excellent (A: 2.0), good (B: 1.75), satisfactory (C: 1.5), unsatisfactory (D: 1.0) on a two-point scale. Failure to submit a response will result in a zero grade (F: 0). No make-ups, no late submissions.

Philosophical Analysis (3 x 20pts = 60pts)

You will be required to write and submit three formal philosophical analyses, each of which will consist of a 2000 word (double spaced, normal font & margins) explication and critique of the an assigned article from the textbook. *You must submit all three philosophical analyses for grading to complete the course. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F for the course.*

On-Line Discussion (20pts)

Every student will be required to contribute at least 12 times to the on-line discussion, including at least three times to each of the four discussion topics. Each student is also expected to read and follow the discussions of their class-mates. Contributions may consist of:

- (i) asking philosophical questions which probe the reading and engage in further explication and analysis of the text,
- (ii) responding thoughtfully to someone else's question,
- (iii) suggesting connections between this reading and other course material,
- (iv) bring current events and other empirical facts/evidence to bear on the reading.

All of this must be conducted in the effort to better understand the texts and to further our appreciation of the material's strengths and weaknesses. Polemics, ideological shortcuts, and other rather thoughtless and unscholarly contributions will not satisfy this requirement and should be resisted. Proper on-line etiquette is expected; violations will not be tolerated.

Each student must have made a total of 12 contributions to on-line discussion by the end of semester (with at least three postings to each of the four course sections). Further, *each student must have read at least ¾ (three-quarters) of the available contributions of their fellows to qualify for a satisfactory grade of C- or better (regardless of how many submissions they have made).*

Course Policies

EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected from all class participants. Disruptions, rudeness and private discussions, including cell phone disruptions, will not be tolerated. This means while in class, you should be focused on classroom activities and material. Sleeping, using a cell phone, reading a newspaper, doing assignments for other classes, or otherwise engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be met with a loss of ½pt (per incidence) from the final course grade. **All cellular devices and iPods/music players must be turned off during class unless being used explicitly for class activities.**

Diversity and Respect: CSUS attracts a diverse population of students, faculty and staff with a wide range of cultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs and backgrounds. Opinions may vary on many

issues, but students and faculty in this class will be expected to converse and debate in a respectful and tolerant manner.

This class will only be rich if everyone feels free to express her/his views and personal understanding of the course material. Because this is a philosophy class, and philosophy prompts us to think in ways that may be unfamiliar, let us all be mindful and respectful of each other's opinions. Everyone has a responsibility to make the classroom environment a place where we can respectfully agree to disagree, and perhaps even settle some long unsettled questions.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due at the date and time specified in the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per calendar day (not merely class period) beginning with the due date. After three late days, acceptance of the assignment is at the instructor's discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with the instructor before the assignment is due. ***When submitting any assignment in SacCT, ALWAYS check its status to ensure it was submitted. Do not merely hit "submit" and leave. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignment was submitted accurately and timely. Do not wait for the instructor to ask you about it or for a "0" to appear in your grade column!***

No extensions, no exceptions. It is your responsibility to know the due dates and to plan accordingly. Leaving an assignment until the day or two prior is risky and makes you more vulnerable than you already are to factors and events in the universe beyond your control!

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences which will not be tolerated in this class. Assignments in which plagiarism or other forms of cheating are found will at the least be graded at 0 (not just an F). ALL incidents of cheating and plagiarism will be reported both to the Department Chair and to the Judicial Officer in the Office of Student Affairs for possible further administrative sanction. ***It is your responsibility to know and comply with the University's Academic Honesty Policy*** <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/UMA00150.htm>.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, tests, attendance, note taking, etc., please see the instructor by the ***end of the third week of semester*** so that arrangements can be made. Failure to notify and consult with the instructor by this date may impede my ability to offer you the necessary accommodation and assistance in a timely fashion. Also be sure to consult with the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) to see what other campus services and accommodation options are available for you.

Students with other types of accommodation requirements, such as English as a second language, are invited to discuss them with the instructors to facilitate understanding and the best learning experience for all. All information will remain confidential.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Ja 24-26	Welcome & Introduction	Runciman, "Realistic Political Philosophy", PDF
Unit 1: Foundational Concepts: Political Authority, Rights, Justice		
Ja 31-Fe 2	What, No State?	Zwolinski, 1ai, Hobbes, Locke, Axelrod, Rothbard; pp 7-45.
Fe 7-9	Social Contract: Sign here, please	Zwolinski, 1aii, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Tilly; pp 46-79.
<i>Fe 14-16 No Classes – Work on alternative assignment, online.</i>		
Fe 21-23	Democracy: Power of the People	Zwolinski, 1aiii, Gutmann & Thompson, Gaus; pp 90-123..
Fe 28-Ma 1	Rights: Yours, Mine & Ours	Zwolinski, 1b, UN, Dworkin, Feinberg, Nozick; pp 127-165.
Ma 6-8	Justice: You owe me... Says who?	Zwolinski, 1c, Hume, Mill, Rawls , Sandel; pp 169-228. Philosophical Analysis #1 Due at noon on Monday, March 5. Discussion Topic "Foundational Concepts" closes.
Unit 2: Principles of Government, Economy, and Morality		
Ma 13-15	Political Economy: Markets Away	Zwolinski, 2a, Marx, Bastiat, Wolf, Mitchell & Simmons; pp 235-280
Ma 19-23 Spring Break – No classes		
Ma 27-29	Property: Not in my backyard!	Zwolinski, 2b, Locke, George, Schmidtz, Cohen; pp 285-338
Ap 3-5	Distributive Justice: What's yours is mine	Zwolinski, 2c, Ehrenreich, Nozick, Hayek, Ackerman, Nielsen; pp 343-394.
Ap 10-12	Freedom: Let My People Go	Zwolinski, 2d, Mill, Berlin, Roosevelt, Fitzhugh; pp 399-450.
Ap 17-19	Equality: We're all the same here	Zwolinski, 2e, Rousseau, Frankfurt, Vonnegut, Arneson, Schmidtz ; pp 455-514. Philosophical Analysis #2 Due at noon on Monday, April 16. Discussion Topic "Principles of Governance" closes.
Unit 3: Issues in Global Justice		
Ap 24-26	Immigration/Global Justice	Zwolinski, 3a, Kukathas, Miller; 3b, Singer, Pogge; pp 517-564.
May 1-3	Secession/War, Humanitarianism, Terror	Zwolinski, 3c, Spencer, Buchanan; 3d, Bourne, Teson , Luban; pp589-663.
May 8-10	Review	
May 15-17 Exam Week – No classes. Philosophical Analysis #3 Due at noon on Thursday, May 16, Time Certain. Discussion Topic "Global Issues" closes.		