

## PHIL 122 — Political Philosophy

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Spring 2009

### *Instructor*

Dr. Jeremy Garrett, Department of Philosophy

Office: Mendocino Hall #3012

Office Hours: TR 10:20 – 11:50

916.278.2474

Email: Students with questions or concerns about the course should pursue the following strategies (listed in order of priority):

- (1) For any questions that are not private or particularly urgent AND for which other students might either know the answer or likely be interested in knowing the answer, please post these under the first thread under SacCT “Discussions”. I will address the question or concern there within a reasonable amount of time for the benefit of all enrolled students.
- (2) For any questions that are private (i.e., concerning information that you do not wish to share with classmates), please contact me electronically through SacCT “Mail”.
- (3) If SacCT is down, or you have an emergency concern requiring an urgent reply, you can email me as a *last resort* at [garrettj@csus.edu](mailto:garrettj@csus.edu).

### *Class Meetings*

Sec 01: TR 9:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m. in Alpine #232

### *Catalog 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.”

Satisfies General Education Requirement Area C4: Further Studies in the Arts and Humanities. 3 units.

### *Course Overview*

Government has profound and far-reaching implications for human lives. From major concerns (e.g., the relative level of freedom and prosperity one enjoys) to more minor concerns (e.g., the maximum speed at which one is allowed to travel on a given road), the presence of government is imposing and ubiquitous. Adding to the significance of this fact is another – namely, the fact that governments almost always hold a monopoly on the force that stands behind their assorted policies, regulations, and laws. Those who do not obey or respect government dictates initially almost always do in the end.

Political philosophy is the branch of philosophy that investigates whether, on what grounds, and to what extent government can be justified. It is first and foremost, then, a *normative* discipline – that is, one concerned less with questions about how political life is or was (as with political science or political history) and more with how it should be. While there are many interesting and worthwhile ways that a course on political philosophy might be organized, ours will take the form of a broad survey of some of its most fundamental topics.

First, we will reflect on the question of *political authority* (whether and to what extent government can be justified in the first place). Here we will begin with an inquiry into what life might be like if there were no state before investigating in what the legitimate purposes and limits of government might consist. Secondly, we will consider the *nature of rule and decision-making* within government, with special emphasis on the limits and justification of democracy. Third, we will critically examine two important *moral/social ideals* underlying political life – namely, the ideals of *liberty* and *justice*. Here we will take up an extended study of economic justice and the distribution of property, including the fundamental question of how an economy should be organized. Finally, we will conclude by considering some substantial challenges for traditional political philosophy arising from the *feminist tradition*.

### ***Required Texts***

Wolff, Jonathan. (2006). *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. Revised Edition. Oxford University Press. (ISBN 019929609X) **[IPP on Calendar]**

Nathanson, Stephen. (1997). *Economic Justice*. Prentice Hall. (ISBN 0137418442). **[EJ on Calendar]**

### ***Additional Course Materials***

(1) A few of our readings will be available from the Internet: **[WEB on Calendar]**

(2) Others are available at the Book Reserve in the CSUS Library **[LBR on Calendar]**, including several from: Sher, George & Brody, Baruch. (1999). *Social and Political Philosophy: Contemporary Readings*. Harcourt Brace & Co. (ISBN 0155037463) **[S&PP on Calendar]**

### ***Course Technology Requirements***

This course will make significant use of SacCT. Among other things, course materials such as lecture notes, handouts, paper guidelines, announcements, quizzes, and a record of each student's grades will be posted on our course page. Additionally, some course activities, such as on-line discussions, will be conducted on-line there. *Students need to have a reliable way of accessing SacCT, either at home or somewhere on campus (or both). Students also need to check their SacCT and Saclink emails frequently. Students without reliable access to SacCT are advised to seriously consider enrolling in another class.*

For students new to SacCT, here are the instructions for getting to our course page:

- (1) Go to <http://online.csus.edu> and click on the login button. Enter your SacLink ID & password.
- (2) Click on the link to "PHIL 122 Political Philosophy".

### ***Course Goals***

This course emphasizes the core competencies of written and spoken discourse, argumentation, and critical thinking. Specifically, students will sharpen and improve their ability to engage in political philosophical reflection and reasoning by:

- Developing and refining a set of practical cognitive tools, including the abilities to clarify important terms, draw important distinctions, and think critically and consistently about political philosophical questions and issues.
- Identifying and distinguishing important political philosophical concepts, principles, and theories regarding political authority, democracy, liberty, justice and the distribution of property, and feminism.
- Applying these concepts, principles, and theories to debates within political philosophy.
- Carefully expressing and defending their own views in a variety of contexts, including in-class and on-line discussions and in two papers.

Additionally, students will be both prepared and motivated to engage in serious philosophical reflection beyond the subjects and themes of this course, including further coursework in philosophy.

### ***Students with Disabilities or Other Special Needs***

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me during my office hours early in the semester.

If you are a student athlete or participate in any other officially recognized student activity and need to miss a class or plan special arrangements in order to attend an event, please discuss your situation with me during my office hours early in the semester.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Academic honesty will be taken very seriously in this course. So that all students are on the same page, all acts of cheating, most notably plagiarism and/or collusion, will be treated as acts of academic dishonesty. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit, while *collusion* is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work for credit.

Possible punishments for academic dishonesty include a grade of '0' or 'F' on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the university. 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>.

### ***Attendance and Participation Policy***

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.

Cell phones should be turned off prior to class start. If you have an emergency purpose phone (parent/childcare, EMT) and require your phone to be on, please set it to vibrate and notify me that you must have it on during class period.

Additionally, no laptops may be open during class; despite their possible usefulness for some tasks, many of your classmates and I find them distracting and easily abused.

### ***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 my discretion. If you know you will not be able to meet a due date, it is your responsibility to consult with me before the assignment is due.

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!

### ***Course Requirements and Grading***

#### **Attendance/Participation (10%)**

Punctual attendance and regular participation is expected for every scheduled in-class meeting and on-line discussion. The success of this class depends significantly on students being in class (or on-line), on time, and prepared to discuss the day's material. The importance of this is reflected in the fact that 1/10 of your grade will be based on how well you do these things.

Each student will begin the class with the full 50 points for attendance/participation. Deductions will be assessed for four different reasons throughout the semester (up until a student has 0 points).

1. Unexcused Absences: absences where no documentation can be provided to indicate that a student is ill or participating in an officially recognized university activity. A roll sheet will be available at the beginning of every class session and each student will be responsible for signing his or her name. For every day that a student's name is missing from the roll sheet, a deduction of 2 points will be assessed to the attendance/participation grade.

**\*\*NOTE →** Any student signing in for one or more absent classmates will result in both or all students receiving 0 attendance/participation points for the course.

2. Tardies: arriving after class has begun at 9 a.m. Late arrivals are a significant distraction to your fellow students and to me. If a student arrives late to class, s/he will need to sign the roll sheet at the end of class. Tardies will result in a deduction of 1 point from the attendance/participation grade.

3. In-class Distractions: talking or whispering without permission and playing with cell phones, MP3 players, or other electronic gadgets. Students will be given a single warning, after which any further distractions will be assessed a deduction of 2 points (per incident) from the attendance/participation grade.

4. Missed On-line Discussions: every Monday for the 14 weeks that this course meets (not including the first week), there will be a discussion question posted on our SacCT page (under “Discussions”). Each student will be expected to submit an original contribution OR response to a classmate of not less than 200 words at some point prior to the following Sunday evening at 11:59 p.m. For each of the 14 discussions where a student does not contribute a response of at least 200 words by the weekly deadline, a deduction of 2 points will be assessed.

To contribute to a discussion in SacCT:

- (1) Go to <http://online.csus.edu> and log in using your SacLink ID & password.
- (2) Click on the link to “PHIL 122 Political Philosophy”.
- (3) Open “Discussions” (Under “Course Tools” on the left margin of the main page).
- (4) Open the correct discussion thread and read the discussion topic(s) and question(s).
- (5) Click on “Create message.” Then enter a title (the catchier the better) in the ‘subject field’ and write your response to the prompt within the ‘message’ field.
- (6) You can use the Post, Preview, Cancel, and Save as Draft buttons at the bottom. But once you post, you cannot change or delete your message. So carefully check your writing before posting a contribution.

### **Quizzes (20%)**

There will be *two* kinds of quizzes administered in the course.

First, for every reading assignment, there will be a four-question *on-line reading quiz* (worth 2 points each) on SacCT under “Assessments” on the left margin of the main page. There will be 27 opportunities to take a reading quiz, of which, the top 25 scores will be counted. These quizzes will be available on SacCT roughly 48 hours prior to each class meeting and cannot be taken after that class has met. Each reading quiz will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions based only on the material assigned for that class meeting.

Second, every two to three class meetings, there will be a ten-question *in-class group quiz* (worth 5 points each). Students will be divided roughly into groups of five and will submit a single group answer for each of the ten questions. There will be 10 five-point group quizzes, each of which will count toward student’s quiz scores.

On-line reading quizzes cannot be made up for any reason; again, there are 27 opportunities to record 25 quiz scores and these are available on-line for student convenience. In-class group quizzes can only be made up if a student has an excused absence, in which case the student will receive an essay question to answer in place of the original quiz.

### **Midterm Paper (15%)**

The midterm paper will be a 1000–1500 word (typed, double spaced) essay due on or before Friday, March 27. Papers will need to be e-mailed to me by 11:59 p.m. Guidelines for the paper, as well as specific topics, will be provided in class later in the semester.

**Final Paper (20%)**

The final paper will be 1500–2000 word (typed, double spaced) essay due on or before Sunday, May 17. Papers will need to be e-mailed to me by 11:59 p.m. Guidelines for the paper, as well as specific topics, will be provided in class later in the semester.

**Midterm Exam (15%)**

The midterm examination will cover all material through March 24 and consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. It will be given in-class on Tuesday, March 24 from 9-10:15 a.m.

**Final Exam (20%)**

The final examination will be comprehensive and consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. It will be given in-class on Tuesday, May 19 from 8-10 a.m.

***Course Grading System***

The total number of points for the course is 500, calculated by summing 6 course components:

Attendance and Participation	50
Quizzes	100
Midterm Paper	75
Final Paper	100
Midterm Exam	75
Final Exam	100

Final grades are determined by the total number of points earned on the following scale:

93% (465 pts)	A
90.0% (450 pts)	A-
87.0% (435 pts)	B+
83.0% (415 pts)	B
80.0% (400 pts)	B-
77.0% (385 pts)	C+
73.0% (365 pts)	C
70.0% (350 pts)	C-
67.0% (335 pts)	D+
63.0% (315 pts)	D
60.0% (300 points)	D-
59.9% or below (299 points or less)	F

## *Overview of Important Dates for Course*

Ongoing –	Attendance/Participation and Reading Quizzes
2/5 –	Group Quiz #1
2/17 –	Group Quiz #2
2/19 –	No Class
2/26 –	Group Quiz #3
3/5 –	Group Quiz #4
3/12 –	Group Quiz #5
3/19 –	Group Quiz #6
3/24 –	Midterm Exam → 9-10:15 a.m.
3/27 –	Midterm Papers Due via E-mail by 11:59 p.m.
3/31 –	Spring Break - No Class
4/2 –	Spring Break – No Class
4/9 –	Group Quiz #7
4/21 –	Group Quiz #8
4/30 –	Group Quiz #9
5/5 –	No In-Class Meeting (Meet On-line on SacCT “Discussions”)
5/7 –	No In-Class Meeting (Meet On-line on SacCT “Discussions”)
5/14 –	Group Quiz #10
5/17 –	Final Papers Due via E-mail by 11:59 p.m.
5/19 –	Final Exam → 8-10 a.m.

## *Course Calendar and Schedule of Readings*

**1/27 – Introduction to Course; Overview of Political Philosophy**

**1/29 – The State of Nature – Part 1 – Thomas Hobbes**

(Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chaps. 13-14, WEB – Available at: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/hobbes-lev13.html>; Wolff, IPP, pp. 1-17)

**2/3 – The State of Nature – Part 2 – John Locke**

(Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, Chaps. II-V, WEB – Available at: <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>; Wolff, IPP, pp. 17-23)

**2/5 – The State of Nature – Part 3 – Jean Jacques Rousseau**

(Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Part I, WEB – Available at: [http://www.constitution.org/jjr/ineq\\_03.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jjr/ineq_03.htm); Wolff, IPP, pp. 24-29)

**\*\*Group Quiz #1**

**2/10 – Justifying the State, Part 1 – Anarchism, Voluntarism, and the Social Contract**

(Wolff, IPP, pp. 29-48)

- 2/12 – **Justifying the State, Part 2 – Simmons’ Defense of Anarchism**  
 (Simmons, “Philosophical Anarchism”, S&PP, pp. 10-17; *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on “Political Obligation”, Section 3 only, WEB – Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/political-obligation/#AnaChaPolObl>)
- 2/17 – **Justifying the State, Part 3 – Utilitarianism and the Principle of Fair Play**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 48-61)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #2**
- 2/19 – **No Class**
- 2/24 – **Who Should Rule? – Part 1, Plato’s Critique of Democracy**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 62-77)
- 2/26 – **Who Should Rule? – Part 2, Rousseau and the General Will**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 77-93)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #3**
- 3/3 – **Who Should Rule? – Part 3, Representative Democracy**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 93-103; *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on “Democracy”, Section 4 only, WEB – Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/democracy/#LegRep>)
- 3/5 – **Who Should Rule? – Part 4, The Value(s) of Democracy**  
 (Swift, LBR, pp. 200-223)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #4**
- 3/10 – **The Place of Liberty, Part 1 – Two Concepts of Liberty? Berlin and His Critics**  
 (Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, S&PP, pp. 624-635; Swift, LBR, pp. 51-59)
- 3/12 – **The Place of Liberty, Part 2 – Mill & the Harm Principle**  
 (REQUIRED – Wolff, IPP, pp. 104-114; RECOMMENDED – Mill, “The Harm Principle”, S&PP, pp. 70-83)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #5**
- 3/17 – **The Place of Liberty, Part 3 – Mill & the Harm Principle – Defenses & Objections**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 114-132)
- 3/19 – **The Place of Liberty, Part 4 – The Paternalism Principle**  
 (Kleinig, “Two Arguments for State Paternalism”, S&PP, pp. 130-143)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #6**
- 3/24 – **Midterm Exam (No Reading Assignment)**
- 3/26 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 1, – Three Views about Economic Justice**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 133-137; Nathanson, EJ, Chaps. 1 & 2)
- 3/27 – **Midterm Papers Due via E-mail by 11:59 p.m.**

<b>SPRING BREAK – No Class on 3/31 or 4/2</b>
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- 4/7 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 2 – The Case for Libertarian Capitalism**  
 (REQUIRED – Wolff, IPP, pp. 138-148; Nathanson, EJ, Chap. 3; RECOMMENDED – Nozick, “The Entitlement Theory”, S&PP, pp. 503-516; Nozick, “The Importance of Liberty and Self-Ownership”, S&PP, pp. 670-676)
- 4/9 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 3 – Socialism and the Critique of Capitalism**  
 (Wolff, IPP, pp. 148-152; Nathanson, EJ, Chap. 4)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #7**
- 4/14 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 4 – Promoting Well-Being**  
 (Nathanson, EJ, Chap. 5)

- 4/16 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 5 – Rewarding the Deserving**  
(Nathanson, EJ, Chap. 6)
- 4/21 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 6 – Protecting Liberty**  
(Nathanson, EJ, Chap. 7)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #8**
- 4/23 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 7 – Rawls’ Defense of the Liberal Welfare State**  
(REQUIRED – Nathanson, EJ, Chap.8; Wolff, IPP, pp. 152-168; RECOMMENDED – Rawls, “Justice as Fairness”, S&PP, pp. 517-533)
- 4/28 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 8 – What Should Welfare States Provide?**  
(Nathanson, EJ, Chap. 9)
- 4/30 – **The Distribution of Property, Part 9 – The Comprehensive Welfare State – Objections & Replies**  
(Wolff, IPP, pp. 168-176; Nathanson, EJ, Chaps. 10 & 11)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #9**
- 5/5 – **Individualism, Justice, and Feminism, Part 1 – Mill on the Subjection of Women**  
(No In-Class Meeting; Meet On-line on SacCT; REQUIRED – Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Chap. 1, WEB – Available at: <http://www.constitution.org/jsm/women.htm>; RECOMMENDED – Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Chaps. 2-4)
- 5/7 – **Individualism, Justice, and Feminism, Part 2 – Okin on Justice and Gender**  
(No In-Class Meeting; Meet On-line on SacCT; Okin, “Justice and Gender”, LBR)
- 5/12 – **Individualism, Justice, and Feminism, Part 3 – In-Class Discussion of Mill, Okin, and Feminism**  
(*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on “Liberal Feminism”, WEB – Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-liberal/>; Review Readings from Last Week on Mill & Okin)
- 5/14 – **Individualism, Justice, and Feminism, Part 4 – Transcending Liberal Individualism?**  
(Wolff, IPP, pp. 177-199)  
**\*\*Group Quiz #10**
- 5/17 – **Final Papers Due via E-mail by 11:59 p.m.**
- 5/19 – **Final Exam – 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.**