

Syllabus: Phil 002

Introduction to Philosophy: Morals and Politics

De Anza College

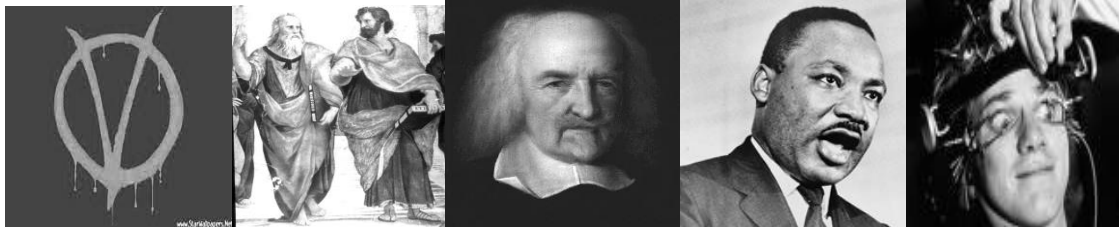
Spring Quarter, 2015

Instructor: Toño Ramirez

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Office Hours: Monday 8:20-10:20 T/Th 9:50-10:20 AM, 1:40-2:00 PM

Office Location: Forum Building, room 2D



Course Description

This course introduces students to the methods and practices of philosophy through a rigorous investigation of central topics pertaining to traditional themes in moral and political thought. Students will engage key readings and ideas from the history of philosophy, and will find that the themes encountered bear heavily on current issues, events and popular culture. The course will focus on three primary topics: The nature and moral obligation, the legitimacy of political authority, and the relationship between political freedom and responsibility.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully engage with the course and its content will be able to:

- Identify and analyze the philosophical problems pertaining to social and political philosophy
- Analyze and assess solutions to these problems from a variety of philosophical traditions
- Articulate and defend an original position on at least one issue in social and political philosophy
- Identify applications of philosophical tools to real-world actions and decisions

Course Expectations and Requirements

- Students who are considering dropping the course for personal reasons are encouraged to meet with me first—I'm happy to do what I can to help you succeed in this class! To this end, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of office hours.
- Reading assignments are *required* in this course. I understand that some of the reading will be challenging, and that it may not be fully understood without subsequent in-class explanation. Nevertheless, I expect that students will read the texts assigned.
- As a significant portion of the course will involve class discussion of texts, it is expected that students will have completed assigned readings *before* the corresponding class meeting.
- Participation in discussions will be evaluated according to the *quality* of student comments, and not quantity. Students who demonstrate excellence in discussions will attend closely to the comments of other students, and offer remarks that are of relevance to the discussion at hand. It is expected that students will engage one another's ideas in discussion, and that this will be done in a respectful manner. Neither disparaging remarks nor personal attacks will be tolerated in any way.
- Class discussions will frequently feature small-group work. It is expected that students will participate actively in these groups.
- Cell phones must be turned off during class. Students who need to leave a phone on for emergency purposes should let me know at the beginning of the class session. Text messaging is incompatible with active participation in class activities, and will not be permitted during class time.

Student Assessment:

- Essay assignments:
 - All students will submit one [short essay](#), and one [longer essay](#).
 - Essays will be evaluated according to standards provided with assignment prompts. Standards for each paper will also be addressed verbally in class at the time of assignment. It is expected that students who remain unclear as to the standards of excellent written work will meet with the instructor *before* the assignment is due. “Re-writes” are not accepted for paper assignments. I am happy to review advance drafts of papers with you **in person**, but not via email.
 - Academic honesty is imperative in written work. I will spend time in class discussing plagiarism, and will take measures to help students avoid accidental plagiarism. **Any** plagiarized assignment submitted to me will automatically result in a grade of “F” for the course with no opportunity for rewrite, and will be reported to the Dean of Academics. Students who are unsure about standards for academic honesty should [review this tutorial](#), and consult with me. In short, **any uncited material, presented as your own original work**, constitutes plagiarism. This includes uncited quotes from internet and print sources. **There will be no exceptions to this policy.**
 - Paper Assignments turned in on time will be graded and returned with comments within one week of the due date. Students may submit assignments up to one week after the due date at no penalty, but I make no guarantees for a prompt return. I will not accept any papers that are turned in after this time.
 - I practice blind grading to ensure impartiality in evaluating student work. Students **should not** write their names on the front of any paper assignment. Rather, the name should be written lightly in pencil on the back of the last page.
- Exams:
 - Three brief exams will be given throughout the quarter
 - The lowest of your three exam scores will be discarded, with the average score of the remaining two determining the relevant number of points allocated to your final grade (per the table below).
 - Exams **may not** be ‘made up’. In the event that you miss an exam, it will be discarded as your lowest exam score.
- Attendance buffer:
 - Students may miss a total of *four* class meetings without penalty during the term. A fifth absence will result in the loss of the “attendance buffer” (explained below) when final grades are calculated. A seventh absence will result in dismissal from the course.
 - Students are *not* required to provide the instructor with a reason for absence, nor are apologies necessary. I assume that absences will only occur under legitimate circumstances.
 - Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for obtaining any information or assignments they may have missed.

- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on a daily basis. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her name has been recorded accurately on daily attendance sheets.
 - Students are expected to come to class *on time*. Three late arrivals will be considered equivalent to one absence on the attendance record.
- [Argument Paper](#): 2 pts extra credit (OPTIONAL)
 - Students may earn up to 2 extra percentage points in the course by submitting an argument paper. Argument papers are described in detail on the "Assignments" page of the course website, and will be explained verbally in class. Only one argument paper may be submitted for the course.

Final grades will be awarded according to the following:

	With attendance buffer	Without attendance buffer
Short Essay	25	25
Longer Essay	35	35
Exams (Averaged)	30	40
Attendance Buffer	10	0

GRADE SCALE: A+ (100-97), A (96-93), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), D+

Course Reading Schedule

(n.b.: The schedule is subject to change at my discretion)

NOTE: Readings enclosed in parentheses are **not required**, but recommended. They are all found in the supplemental Rosen & Wolff book. **All other readings are required.**

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 4/6
 - Introduction to course
- 4/7
 -
- 4/8
 - Read Plato, *Apology* ([here](#), or [here](#))
- 4/9
 -

- 4/13
 - Read Rachels, “Cultural Relativism” ([here](#))
 - Read Plato, “The Myth of Gyges” ([here](#))
- 4/14
 -
- 4/15
 - Read Rachels, “Psychological Egoism” ([here](#))
 - Read Wolff, pgs. 1-17
 - (Hobbes, “The Misery of the Natural Condition of Mankind)
- 4/16
 -

- 4/20
 - Read Wolff, pgs. 17-23
 - (Locke, “The State of Nature and the State of War”)Read Wolff, pgs. 24-29
 - (Rousseau, “The Noble Savage”)
- 4/21
 -
- 4/22
 - Read Wolff, pgs. 29-33
 - Read Plato, “Crito” ([here](#))
- 4/23
 -

- 4/27
 - Begin in class film: *V for Vendetta*
- 4/28
 -
- 4/29
 - [First Exam](#)
 - Film cont.
 - **Argument Paper Date**

- 4/30
 -

- 5/4
 - Class discussion of film ([film journal due](#))
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 2 “Introduction” and “The social contract”

- 5/5
 -
- 5/6
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 2 “Utilitarianism”
 - **Argument Paper Date**
- 5/7
 -

- 5/11
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 2 “The principle of fairness” and “Conclusion”
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 3 “Introduction” and “Plato against democracy”
 - (Plato, “Ruling as a Skill”)
 - **FIRST ESSAY DUE**

- 5/12
 -
- 5/13
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 3 “Rousseau and the general will”

- (Rawls, “Majority Rule”)
 - Read Wolff, Ch 3 “Representative democracy”
 - Read Wolff, Ch 3 “Conclusion”
 - **Argument Paper Date**
 -
- 5/14
- 5/18
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 4 “Mill on Liberty”
 - (MacKinnon, “Only Words”)
- 5/19
- 5/20
 - **Second Exam**
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 4 “Justifying the Liberty Principle”
 - (Nozick, “Rights as Side Constraints”)
- 5/21
- 5/25
 - **NO CLASS MEETING (Memorial Day)**
- 5/26
- 5/27
 - Read Huemer, [“America’s Unjust Drug War”](#)
 - Read LaBossiere, [“The Incest Argument and Same-Sex Marriage”](#)
 - Read Singer, [“Virtual Vices”](#)
- 5/28
- 6/1
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 4 “Problems with liberalism” and “Conclusion”
 - (Marx, “The Rights of Egoistic Man”)
 - Begin in class film: *A Clockwork Orange*
- 6/2
- 6/3
 - Film cont.
- 6/4
- 6/8
 - Class discussion of film ([film journal due](#))
 - (Mill, “In Favour of Capital Punishment”)
 - (Hart, “Punishment and Responsibility”)
- 6/9
- 6/10
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 6 “Individualism and anti-individualism”
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 5 “Rawls’s theory of justice” and “Rawls and his critics”
 - (Rawls, “Two Principles of Justice”)
 - **Argument Paper Date**
- 6/11
- 6/15
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 5 “The problem of distributive justice” and “Property and markets”
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 6 “Rights for Women” and “Affirmative Action”
 - (Marx, “Money, the Universal Whore” and “The True Foundation of Private Property”)
- 6/16
- 6/17
 - Read Wolff, Ch. 6 “Transcending liberal individualism?” and “Final word”
- 6/18
- 6/22
 - **Third Exam**
 - **FINAL ESSAY due**
- 6/23
- 6/24
- 6/25
- 6/26

Texts

The majority of readings will come from the following book, which is available for purchase at the bookstore:

- Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Readings enclosed in parentheses can be found in the optional (but recommended) supplemental text:

- Rosen, Michael and Wolff, Jonathan. *Political Thought*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

Additional course readings will be distributed on the course website.

Course Website

Announcements, grade trackers, and electronic versions of most class materials will be available at <http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/ramireztono/phil-02>