Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy

Instructor: Asaf Bar-Tura
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Class hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 3:35-5:45
Office hours: Thursdays, 2:00-3:00pm (or by appointment)
Location: Room 369, Philosophy Department, Crown Center

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social and political philosophy examines questions related to the nature, purpose, and justification of human associations, and articulates various aspects of these associations, such as law, power, rights, and so on. This course will survey a variety of attempts to answer some of these questions, and will examine contemporary issues of public policy. The course is divided into four main sections.

SECTION I

The Purpose of Political Communities: Following a brief introduction to the course, the first section of the course will examine various answers to the question: what is the purpose of political communities? We will discuss three influential answers: freedom (Locke), utility (Mill), and human flourishing (Aristotle).

SECTION II

Economic Justice: We will begin with a documentary film that surveys the intellectual wars over economic theory that have framed the economic debates of the last century. We will then examine the writings of Karl Marx (who critiques capitalism), Milton Friedman (who defends capitalism), and John Rawls (who develops an original and influential theory of economic justice).

SECTION III

Global Poverty: We will ask: Do we have a responsibility towards the poor in distant countries? If so, what kind of responsibility is it, and what does it demand of us? To address these questions we will read select writings of Peter Singer, Thomas Pogge, David Schweickart, and Iris Marion Young.

SECTION IV

Immigration: Finally, when considering positions on immigration policy, we will ask questions such as: Does a group of people have a right to exclude others? If so, under what conditions? If not, why not? To address these questions we will read from Samuel Huntington, Michael Walzter, and Joseph Carens.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grade Components:

Class participation: 15%
Quizzes: 15%
First Review Paper: 15%
News Analysis: 20%
Reflection paper: 5%
Second Review Paper: 30% (in lieu of final exam)

* Limited opportunities for earning bonus points may be available, but not guaranteed, throughout the semester.

The total sum of all grade components is 100%. The student's final grade will be calculated according to the following grade scale:

A = 94 | A- = 90 | B+ = 87 | B = 84 | B- = 80 | C+ = 77 | C = 74
C- = 70 | D+ = 65 | D = 60 | F = Below 60

I. Quizzes

Throughout the course we will have 6 quizzes. These quizzes will be "pop quizzes" and as such will not be announced in advance. They will typically have True/False and multiple-choice questions. The aim of pop quizzes is to assess whether you have carefully read the text assigned for that day.

Only the 4 best quiz scores will count toward the student's final grade. There will be no make-up quizzes for those who are not present.

II. Papers

In this class we will have three different kinds of paper assignments:

- Two Review Papers (2-3 pages)
- News Analysis (2 pages)
- Reflection Paper (1 page)

Students will receive an assignment sheet for each paper. This sheet will clearly explain the specific assignment, expectations, and so on. The following are general guidelines that apply to all papers:

Papers will be graded based on accuracy in presenting the philosophers' views, and the extent to which their arguments are laid out clearly, succinctly and completely. Aside from assessing the content of the paper, grading will also consider form and style, including recurring typos, insufficient citations, exceeding page limits, and so on. More details about paper expectations will be discussed in class.

"Better Late than Never" Policy: Students who submit their papers late (up to 72 hours after initial deadline) will incur an automatic penalty for that assignment. Every 24-hour delay

will incur a one-grade penalty drop (for example, from B to B-). However, students who fail to submit after the 72-hour deadline will receive 0% for this assignment.

III. Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly, except in special circumstances. If a student is forced to miss a class, the student should let the instructor know in advance of the class, and explain the special circumstance. The participation grade component primarily includes active participation in class (paying close attention, raising good questions, contributing thoughtfully to discussion, and so on). Needless to say that distractions such as arriving late, side conversations or use of electronic devices for purposes other than class may take away from one's participation grade.

General Guidelines for Submitting Assignments:

- Assignments must be typed (double-space, 12-point font) and stapled.
- Assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Assignments submitted later will be considered late submissions and will incur the penalty.
- Students who do not attend a class in which a paper is due are expected to email their paper to the instructor BEFORE class begins.

Regarding Plagiarism and Cheating:

Taking the words of others or presenting the ideas of others as your own prohibits you from learning the skills of academic research and writing. It also violates Loyola's Principles and Policies for Academic Excellence, which state:

> Loyola University Chicago has strict policies on incidents of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and, in cases of the use of copyrighted material, a legal offense. Incidents of plagiarism are reported to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled and a note is placed in the student's file. The student receives an 'F' on the assignment and may receive an 'F' in the course. Serious or repeated incidents of plagiarism could result in permanent expulsion from the university.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating of any kind, misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.

Disability Accommodations:

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.

More information and support services are available at Loyola's office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). SSWD have offices both at Lakeshore Campus and at the Water Tower Campus. They can be reached at:

- Phone: 773-508-3700
- Email: SSWD@luc.edu
- For all information, visit: www.luc.edu/sswd

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

General Comments:

- All readings will be available on Sakai.
- Each student must have the readings available in class (either a printout of the text, or on a personal computer).
- An effort has been made to make the reading assignments manageable (for the most part 5-20 pages between classes). Students are expected to read the assigned texts for each class so that they can best understand the class discussion and contribute to it.
- The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this schedule as needed.

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1

5/21 Introduction to Class

5/22 On Bullshit

- READING: Frankfurt, "On Bullshit," pp. 1-8.

SECTION I: The Purpose of Political Communities

5/23 Purpose: Individual Freedom

- READING: Locke, "The Second Treatise of Government," pp. 450-456 (chapters I, II, III, IV).

WEEK 2

5/28 Purpose: Individual Freedom (continued)

- READING: Locke, "The Second Treatise of Government," pp. 456-463 (chapter V).

5/29 Purpose: Utility

- READING: Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Moral Legislation*, pp. 1-7.

5/30 Purpose: Utility (continued)

- READING: Mill, *On Liberty*, pp. 958-965.

WEEK 3

6/4 Purpose: Human Flourishing (fulfilling our nature)

- READING: Hinman, *Ethics*, pp. 259-260
  Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* Book 1: §§1, 7
- First Review Paper assignment handed out.

SECTION II: ECONOMIC JUSTICE

6/5 Movie: Commanding Heights

6/6 Capitalism as Exploitation
- READING: Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," pp. 862-869.

WEEK 4

6/11 Capitalism as Freedom
- READING: Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, pp. 1-17.
- First Review Paper Assignment due.

6/12 Justice as Fairness
- READING: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* pp. 3-17.

SECTION III: GLOBAL JUSTICE

6/13 The Duty to Aid the Global Poor
- READING: Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," pp. 229-243.

WEEK 5

6/18 The Duty to Stop Harming the Global Poor
- READING: Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, pp. 2-23.

6/19 Alternative Perspective on Global Poverty: Against Singer and Pogge
- READING: Schweickart, "Global Poverty: Alternative Perspectives on What We Should Do—and Why," pp. 471–488.

6/20 Social Responsibility in a Connected World
- READING: Young, *Global Challenges*, pp. 172-186.
- Reflection Paper assignment handed out.

SECTION IV: IMMIGRATION POLICY

WEEK 6

6/25 The Argument Against Immigration to America
- READING: Huntington, "The Hispanic Challenge."

6/26 The Right to Exclude Some and the Duty to Include Others
- READING: Walzer, "Membership," pp. 242-260.

6/27 The Argument for Open Borders
- READING: Carens, "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders," pp. 251-271.
- Reflection Paper assignment due.
- Second Review Paper handed out.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Carens, Joseph. "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders." *The Review of Politics,* Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1987), pp. 251-273.

Frankfurt, Harry. "On Bullshit." *Raritan Quarterly Review* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 1986), pp. 1-8.

Friedman, Milton. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

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Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring, 1972), pp. 229-243.

Walzer, Michael. *"Membership."* pp. 242-260.

Young, Iris Marion. *Global Challenges: War, Self-Determination and Responsibility for Justice*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007.