

**PHILOSOPHY 166 CLASSICS OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
INTRODUCTORY HANDOUT**

Fall, 2021

Professor Richard Arneson

Slightly revised over course of the term.

Class meets Tuesdays & Thursdays from 5:00 to 6:20 p.m. in RWAC #0426.

The final exam for this class will be a regular in-class final exam that will take place from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. on Friday, December 10, 2021. You should be sure that you can attend this final exam (i.e., that you do not have too many other finals on this same day) before you make a final decision as to whether to enroll—or stay enrolled—in this class.

Note Class meets in RWAC #0426 (the Philosophy Department large conference room). I recommend that you attend class in person if that's possible for you. Due to Covid uncertainty, students may also attend class via Zoom (link for this is in the Zoom folder of the Canvas course page). The Zoom recording of each class will be posted at the Canvas course page. Class will consist of a mix of lecture and discussion; a more complete version of the lecture will be posted at the Canvas course page as a Powerpoint presentation, for most classes.

For further information about the course, which will change throughout the quarter, consult the course Canvas course page.

This course is an introduction to the issue of political legitimacy: What is required in order that a government's coercion of its citizens to obey the law should count as morally legitimate or acceptable? Let's say a *legitimate* government is one that does not act morally wrongly in issuing commands to its subjects backed by force. Let's say a government has *authority* just when the fact that it issues coercive commands in itself brings it about those commanded have some moral reason to comply. More broadly, we explore the question, what are the legitimate functions of the state?

In tandem with the issue of political legitimacy runs another issue: What sort of political society and social community should we aspire to build? As the 20th-century philosopher John Rawls once noted, "the social system shapes the wants and aspirations that its citizens come to have. . . . Thus an economic system is not only an institutional device for satisfying existing wants and needs but a way of creating and fashioning wants in the future. How men [and women] work together now to satisfy their present wants affects the desires they will have later and the kind of persons they will be." Also, for better or worse, what we do and don't do today to build a better life for those who comes after us affects the conditions of life for future persons—our children and their children and their children's children and so on.

We explore these questions by studying some classic texts of political theory. The authors of these texts radically disagree in their answers. Our working assumption is that these differences are instructive, partly because in modern societies today these questions remain unsettled. Also, taken together, the course authors give us a wealth of ideas to stimulate our thinking---food for thought.

The goals of the course are to improve our understanding of these core texts in political theory, to assess their arguments, and to reflect on our own political values. We will get practice in reading hard texts and developing arguments to support our own moral and political convictions.

Course Texts: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, short excerpt; John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (both of these Rousseau texts are in Susan Dunn (ed.), *The Social Contract & The First and Second Discourses*); Karl Marx, excerpts from David McClellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: selected Writings*; John Stuart Mill, excerpts from *Utilitarianism*, *Principles of Political Economy*, *Considerations on Representative Government*, *On Liberty*, & *The Subjection of Women*. Paired with texts of each of the four authors we study are a select few required or recommended essays by more recent authors approaching the issues

from diverse perspectives. **The “recommended” readings are MERELY recommended, strictly optional.** Course readings are available on-line by link or at the Canvas course page.

Course Requirements: There is a class participation course requirement (described in the next paragraph). The other course requirements are a takehome midterm exam, an analytical writing assignment (about five to seven pages in length), and a regular final exam. The writing assignment will not require extra reading, but will ask you to interpret and assess some course texts. On the writing assignment you will have a choice among topics assigned in class. The writing assignment has two components: (1) write a draft or outline of your paper and discuss it with me and (2) complete and turn in a final draft of your paper. The final exam will comprehend all course materials (required readings, lectures, and handouts). The final exam will consist of one and a half hours of essay questions (these will be drawn from a set passed out in advance and will somewhat emphasize material covered after the midterm) and one and a half hours of short “paragraph essay” questions testing comprehension of all course readings, handouts, lectures and so on. Note: **Only** required readings (so, **no** recommended readings) will be covered on the final exam.

This class is text-centered; our emphasis throughout is on figuring out what the authors of course readings are saying and on assessing their arguments and claims. There is a fair amount of reading—more than is usual, I believe, for philosophy upper-division courses. Your success in the class will depend on your keeping up with the readings class by class and week by week.

To encourage keeping up with the readings class by class and week by week, there will be a class participation component of your grade. On all class days, there will be class discussion for about half of the class, usually on questions posed in advance of class (and relating to the readings assigned for that class). During the lecture portion of any class, you are encouraged to interject questions and comment. I will take notes after every class on the class discussion, and the quality and frequency of your contributions to discussion will be the basis of your class participation grade. For any class, there is an alternative way to do class participation without contributing to in-class discussion. You may also participate in class discussion by sending me via email (rarneson@ucsd.edu) an analytical comment before class regarding some significant aspect of the assigned reading for that day. Think of this comment as a paragraph-length essay on some aspect of the reading. It might include questions you pose regarding the day’s reading. I will keep a file of these email messages for each student. (Each day of class counts the same toward your class participation grade, except for the first class, which is just for practice. So, there are in total 18 equal components of your class participation grade. I will assume everyone sometimes has reasons to skip class, and I am not able to evaluate particular reasons for your missing class on any occasion, so I will not entertain requests to adjust your class participation grade in light of what might be regarded as excused absences.

Grading: Class participation counts for 20 per cent of your final grade, the midterm exam for 15 per cent of your final grade, the writing assignment for 30 per cent, and the final exam counts for 35 per cent.

Course grading for those enrolled on a Pass/Not Pass basis: If you are taking the course on a Pass/Not Pass basis, and you have an A- average or better on all class work up to the final, you will be excused from the final exam.

Academic Honesty. Students are expected to understand and follow the University policy on academic honesty (Integrity of Scholarship). You can read this at <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>

Integrity of scholarship--the basic idea is simple: be honest. Don’t cheat.

SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED READINGS AND LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS

Week 0. September 20-26. Slightly revised over the course of the term.

Fall qtr officially starts September 20.

THUR: Thomas Hobbes on human life in the absence of a state and the foundation of a state.

Reading: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, chapter XIII, "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery"; also Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II, Chap. XVII, "Of the Causes, Generation, and Definition of a Common-Wealth." Available at Canvas course page.

Merely recommended reading: Gregory Kavka, "Hobbes's War of All Against All"; also available at Canvas course page.

Week 1. September 27-October 3.

TUES: Locke on natural rights; the state of nature, the right to property. Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters 1-5.

THUR: Locke on property continued, plus Locke on the family, and on tacit consent. Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters 5-8. plus Robert Nozick, "Locke's Theory of Acquisition" and "The Proviso" excerpts (pages 70-76, sections 6 & 7) from his essay "Distributive Justice." (available at Canvas course page).

Merely recommended reading: John Simmons, "Tacit Consent and Political Obligation."

Week 2. October 4-10.

TUES: Limited government. Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters 9-14.

THUR: Tyranny and the right of revolution. Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapters 15-19.

Week 3. October 11-17.

TUES: Natural man. Reading: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, First Part, pp. 82-113, in Susan Dunn ed. *Rousseau: The Social Contract and First and Second Discourses*; also Second Part, pp. 113-138, plus Rousseau's notes, in Susan Dunn (ed.).

Merely recommended reading: Philip Pettit: *Just Freedom: A Moral Compass for a Complex World*, "Prologue" and chapters 2.

THUR: The founding of civil society. Reading: Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Second Part, pp. 113-138 in Susan Dunn ed., plus Rousseau's notes to Second Part. Also: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I, pp. 155-170 in Susan Dunn ed.

Week 4. October 18-24.

TUES: The Social Contract. Reading: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Books I and II, pp. 155-192 in Susan Dunn ed.; also Joshua Cohen, *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*, chapters 1 & 2. (available at Canvas course page).

THUR: The general will; government and direct democracy. Reading: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book III, pp. 193-226 in Susan Dunn ed. Also Rousseau: liberal, radical democrat, or totalitarian? Reading: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book IV, pp. 227-254 in Susan Dunn ed.

Merely recommended reading: Frederick Neuhouser, "Freedom, Dependence, and the General Will."

Takehome midterm due tomorrow. The midterm will be posted at the Canvas course page Assignments folder and is to be submitted there.

Week 5. October 25-31.

TUES: Karl Marx on alienated labor.; Marx versus money and exchange. Reading: Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," sections on "Alienated Labour" (pp. 85-95) "Private Property and Communism" (pp.95-104), and "On Money" (pp. 118-120), all in McLellan; also Marx, "On James Mill," (pp. 124-133). also in McLellan. Also: Jan Kandiyali, "The Importance of Others: Marx, Unalienated Production, and Meaningful Work."

Merely recommended reading: Michael Walzer, "Money and Commodities" (pp. 95-105) from his *Spheres of Justice*.

Week 5 continued.

THUR: Historical materialism. Reading: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," in McLellan; also Marx, "Preface" to the *Critique of Political Economy*, handout passed out in class and available at Canvas course page.

Week 6. November 1-7.

TUES: Marx's amorality. Reading: same as for Monday, "The Communist Manifesto"; also handout excerpt from "Preface" to the *Critique of Political Economy*; plus Allen Wood, "The Marxian Critique of Justice," available at Canvas course page.

THUR: Exploitation; communist revolution; the stages of communism. Reading: Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program" (pp. 610-617), in McLellan; also G. A. Cohen, "Why Not Socialism?"; also Nicholas Vrousalis, "Exploitation, Vulnerability, and Social Domination"; both available at Canvas course page.

Week 7. November 8-14.

TUES: Communism and democracy; communism and liberalism. Reading: Introduction and Part III of "The Civil War in France" (pp. 584-596), in McLellan. Also: Mill on democracy. Reading: Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, chapter 8.

Available at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5669/5669-h/5669-h.htm>

Available at <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/mill-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-xix-essays-on-politics-and-society-part-2>

Merely recommended reading: Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, chapter 4.

THUR: NO CLASS. VETERANS DAY OBSERVED.

Week 8. November 15-21.

TUES: J. S. Mill on utilitarianism and justice. Reading: Mill's Utilitarianism, chapters 2 and 5.

Available at <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/11224/pg11224-images.html>

Also available at <https://www.utilitarianism.com/ol/one.html>

THUR: Mill on the liberty principle and freedom of expression. Reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chapters 1 & 2.

Available at <https://www.utilitarianism.com/ol/one.html>

Also available at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm>

Also available at https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/mill-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-x-essays-on-ethics-religion-and-society#lf0223-10_head_045

Merely recommended reading: David Lewis, "Mill and Milquetoast."

Week 9. November 22-28.

TUES: Mill versus paternalism; Mill on individuality, limits of liberty. Reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chapters 3-4. (See week 8 listing for *On Liberty* text availability); also Gerald Dworkin, "Paternalism."

Merely recommended reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chapter 5

TUES: Writing assignment due today before midnight. The writing assignment is to be submitted via the Assignments folder at Canvas course page.

THUR: NO CLASS. Thanksgiving holiday.

Week 10. November 29-December 5.

TUES: Mill and women's rights & women's liberation. Reading: Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, chapters 1-3. Merely recommended reading: Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, chapter 4; Also merely recommended: Sally Haslanger, "The Sex/Gender Distinction and the Social Construction of Reality," available at Canvas course page..

The Subjection of Women available at

<https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/mill-on-liberty-and-the-subjection-of-women-1879-ed>

Also available at <https://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/jsmill/cos/cos.c04.html>

Also available at: https://www.econlib.org/library/Mill/mlP.html?chapter_num=65#book-reader

Week 10 continued.

THUR: Mill on socialism and capitalism and producer cooperatives. Mill, "On the Possible Futurity of the Laboring Classes," in his *Principles of Political Economy*, Book IV, ch. 5, (pp. 597-618), sections 1-6 (but skip all of the details Mill reports about contemporary coops in sections 5 and 6).

Available at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/30107/30107-pdf.pdf>

Also read: Mill, Chapters on Socialism, chapter 4, "The Difficulties of Socialism," pp. 1-9—stop at the subheading, "The Idea of Private Property not Fixed but Variable." This is available at Canvas course page.

Arneson's office hours: Tuesdays 11-12 and Wednesdays 3-4 in RWAC #4089, starting in week 1.

Arneson's email: rarneson@ucsd.edu