

PHIL 0030 - INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Catalog Description

Advisory: Eligibility for ENGL 1A

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Major philosophical issues surrounding the nature of society and justifications for the authority of the state. Focuses on how the concepts of the common good, individual rights, liberty, equality, and democracy relate to notions of justice, private property and the legitimate use of state power. (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Identify and describe major philosophical positions concerning the relationship between the individual and society.
- CSLO #2: Compare and contrast philosophical theories on the concept of justice.
- CSLO #3: Evaluate major social and political philosophies.
- CSLO #4: Communicate effectively orally or in writing on a topic in social-political philosophy.

Effective Term

Fall 2022

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Explain in written and oral activities the concepts of: the common good, individual human rights, freedom, justice, equality, liberalism, totalitarianism, libertarianism and communitarianism.
2. Construct a visual representation of the role that the common good, individual rights, liberty and equality relate to the ideal of justice in each theory.
3. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the conceptions of justice offered by each theory.
4. Describe and evaluate Kant's contribution to liberalism.
5. Evaluate the tension between the concepts of the common good and individual rights.
6. Assess the forcefulness of the challenge that each view poses to the others, and for our own culture.
7. Evaluate the differences between the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rawls.

8. Evaluate a criticism of liberalism, such as Marx, Communitarians, and/or Feminists.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Literature & Language
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSUGE - C2 Humanities
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 3B Humanities

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: In an instructor led discussion students will be prompted to identify the challenge Glaucon poses to Socrates through the myth of the Ring of Gyges. Students will be prompted to identify the difference between Socrates' claim about the nature of justice and Glaucon's skepticism about the nature of justice via the myth.
- Essay Examinations
 - Example: Select one of the following questions (a, b, or c) and write a three page, typed, double spaced, size 12 font essay thoroughly responding to your chosen question. (a) Explain how Rawls' Original Position is an alternative to Mill's utilitarianism as it relates to a theory of justice. (b) Nozick's libertarianism depends on his theory of rights. Scheffler, however, argues that it does not. Evaluate whether Scheffler's argument succeeds in showing that Nozick's theory of rights does not lead to libertarian conclusions. (c) Compare and contrast Nozick's theory of rights with Mill's utilitarianism. Student essays will be assessed based upon a rubric that includes criteria such as correctness of response, thoroughness of explanation, relevance of quotes provided, and demonstration of "justification" by way of quote selection.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Students will take a multiple-choice examination on their ability to describe and analyze major philosophical traditions concerning the relationship between the individual and society. Example: Rawls' main criticism of utilitarianism as a theory of distributive justice is: A. It is difficult to qualitatively assess different pleasures. B. Utilitarianism requires lesser life prospects for some groups of people. C. Utilitarianism weighs the interests on some individuals over the interests of others. D. All of the above
- Projects
 - Example: Working in pairs, students will write a conversational dialogue based on Hobbes' and Rousseau's state of nature for humankind. In conversational language compare and contrast Hobbes and Rousseau on their positions concerning human nature in social dynamics.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will lead students in a classroom discussion on the apparent tension between the concepts of the common good and individual rights. Students will be prompted to come up with contemporary examples in order to evaluate the nature of the tension.
2. Instructor will lead students in a classroom discussion on Plato's Republic, Book I and II, then students will work in small groups and (a) summarize Glaucon's challenge to Socrates that justice is not practiced for its own sake, but out of fear of punishment, and (b) formulate a reply to Glaucon's challenge.

Distance Learning

1. Following an instructor lecture the concepts of the common good and individual rights, students will watch the documentary, "Hunger Games" and explain in writing how the themes in the film relate to the concepts of the common good, individual human rights, freedom, and justice.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Plato's The Republic, Book I, and come to class able to summarize Thracymachus's response to the Socrates on the nature of justice.
2. Read Hobbes's, Leviathan, ch. 13, and come to able to summarize his position on the 'natural condition'.
3. Read Locke's, Second Treatise of Government, ch. 1-4, and come to class being able to summarize Locke's justification of punishment.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Formal Paper: write a 3 page minimum essay answering all parts of the question prompt that is typed, double-spaced, size 12 font paper. Plato worried that the superficial answers given by respectable citizens, such as Cephalus and Polemarchus, led to doubts about the possibility of justice, such as those presented by Glaucon. What is Glaucon's challenge and what must be shown about justice in order to satisfy Glaucon's challenge?
2. Formal Paper: write a 3 page minimum essay answering all parts of the question prompt that is typed, double-spaced, size 12 font paper. Nozick maintains that principles of justice fall into three broad categories. What are the three categories, and why does Nozick think that any principles of justice that go beyond these (such as the utilitarian principle, Rawls's "principle of fair equality of opportunity", or Rawls's "difference principle") are objectionable?

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

1. Keep a journal in which you identify examples of Platonic/Aristotelian, social contract and libertarian concepts that you find in the contemporary culture.

Required Materials

- The Republic
 - Author: Plato
 - Publisher: Hackett

- Publication Date: 2004
- Text Edition: 3rd
- Classic Textbook?:
- OER Link:
- OER:

- Political Philosophy: The Essential texts
 - Author: Steven M. Cahn
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition: 3rd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

- Classics of Political & Moral Philosophy
 - Author: Steven M. Cahn
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2011
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

- Social and Political Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction
 - Author: John Christmas
 - Publisher: Routledge
 - Publication Date: 2017
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.