

PHIL/PSCI 3016: POLITICAL THEORY TR 12:30-1:45, MCB 209

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Major Williams Hall 210 – office hours: every day by app't

OVERVIEW

This class analyzes the theoretical, philosophical, and moral underpinnings of the major sociopolitical ideologies and movements from the 18th to the 21st century, emphasizing the Western scholarly traditions of the latest 50 years.

Political ideologies are models of how society should be structured and governed, by whom, in what ways, why, etc. They do not exist in a vacuum, but are motivated by assumptions about culture, morality, economics, sociology, religion, psychology, statistics, and other fields from both the sciences and the humanities. Thus, to understand political ideologies we must also analyze the theoretical influence of other disciplines, so this course adopts a distinctly interdisciplinary approach that favors breadth over depth.

The ultimate goal of PHIL/PSCI 3016 is to lay down the foundations for a more comprehensive and specialized study of political philosophy and theory in the future. At the end of this class you will:

- Learn which political ideologies are most preeminent in Western and especially American political life.
- Refine your conceptual grasp of the ideas of society, power, sovereignty, freedom, democracy, and rights.
- Decipher social and public discourses in political terms; i.e., “(almost) everything is political.”
- Understand how historical power relations—especially concerning race, sex, and class—still determine the power structures of contemporary public life.
- Develop important research skills that will be useful later in your studies or in the workplace, including how to outline, develop, write, document, and revise a professional research paper.

ASSIGNMENTS



Research paper – An argumentative essay on a preapproved topic related to the course. Approximately 2500-3000 words. **20%**

Outline – A summary of your intended paper argument. You will receive feedback on it 2-3 weeks before the paper is due. **10%**

Bibliography – A briefly annotated list of all the sources used in your research paper. Due with the paper. **5%**

Study guide – Brief summaries of the class readings. The first four are due and the rest are optional for your own use. **10%**

Midterm – Take-home and due on Scholar. Multiple choice and short essay. Use your study guide summaries to prepare. **20%**

Group lecture – On the *Cosmopolitanism* book. Groups of 3-4 students. 2-3 book chapters per group. About 15 minutes. **20%**

Participation – Both frequency and quality count. Attendance is factored in as well. Come to class, listen, and speak up. **15%**

FORMAT

All class periods contain both lecture and discussion, though often more of the latter. I lecture in a Socratic way, meaning that I frequently ask you to interject and you are responsible for supplying the material as I explain it.

We read one or two papers, essays, or articles for each class period. Each day I call upon two students to briefly summarize the day's readings. These summaries contribute positively or negatively to your participation grade.

The reading load averages 30-40 pages per class period. Most papers are technical and take 1-2 hours to read, depending on your prior philosophical reading experience. Thursday readings are not much shorter than Tuesday readings, so allow time on Wednesdays and/or read ahead.

In addition to weekly papers, we also read a book-length essay—Kwame Anthony Appiah’s *Cosmopolitanism*—on which you will lecture in groups in November. Occasionally we also watch movie clips and short documentaries.

POLICIES

Laptops and tablets are permitted; phones are not. Use common sense and do not bother yourself or others. If I notice that some people are abusing their privileges, electronics will be banned for everyone.

Arriving past 12:45 p.m. is considered an unexcused absence. If I fail to arrive by 12:45 p.m., you may leave.

Attendance and participation are graded subjectively. The more you talk, the more quickly I learn your name.

Late assignments incur a 10% penalty (one letter grade) for each day, unless I have granted an extension.

Extensions, grade disputes, and requests for incomplete grades will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

E-mail is my preferred method of communication. I reply within 48 hours. If I do not, e-mail me again.

The First Rule of Good Discussion: “Keep an open mind, but not so open that your brain falls out.”

ACCOMMODATION

Please inform me **by 8/30** of your health concerns or documented physical, mental, or learning disabilities, so that we may work together to help you succeed according to your abilities.

HONESTY

I take the Virginia Tech Honor Code very seriously. Suspected violations will be reported to the Honor Court and pursued. You are bound at all times by the Honor System Constitution: <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

SCHEDULE

All readings are on Scholar or on the Internet and must be completed by class time. You must buy the Appiah book (*Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, ISBN 978-0393329339, \$10-15).

PART ONE: SYSTEMS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT			
	<i>Course presentation</i>		T 8/26
<i>Weeks 1-2 Ideologies</i>	Ball, Dagger: “Ideology and ideologies”	1-17	R 8/28
	Hospers: “What libertarianism is”	349-356	T 9/2
	Nielsen: “A moral case for socialism”	356-364	
	Scruton: “Why I became a conservative”	4-12	R 9/4
Goldman: “ Anarchism: what it really stands for ”  (click link)			
<i>Assignment</i>	Due in class: study guide entries from Hospers, Nielsen, Scruton, and Goldman.		T 9/9
<i>Weeks 3-4 Social contract</i>	Hobbes: <i>Leviathan</i>	XIII XVII	T 9/9
	Locke: <i>Two Treatises of Government</i>	2.IX-XI (pp. 159-167)	
	Rousseau: <i>Of the Social Contract</i>	1.1 1.5-6 3.4-5 3.16-17	R 9/11
	Rawls: <i>Justice as Fairness: A Restatement</i>	§2	
	Rawls: <i>Justice as Fairness: A Restatement</i>	§3-7 §12-13	T 9/16
	Sandel: <i>Liberalism and the Limits of Justice</i>	TBA	R 9/18
	Nussbaum: “Capabilities and human rights”	273-300	

Weeks 5-7 Oppression and liberation	Ball, Dagger: “Liberation ideologies and the politics of identity”	207-234	T 9/23
	Mills: <i>The Racial Contract</i>	9-40	R 9/25
	Pateman: <i>The Sexual Contract</i>	219-234	T 9/30
	MacKinnon: <i>Toward a Feminist Theory of the State</i>	157-170	
	Fausto-Sterling: “The five sexes” and “The five sexes, revisited”	20-25, 18-23	R 10/2
Fanon: <i>Wretched of the Earth</i>	35-43, 92-95	T 10/7	
Torres: “Crossroads of the Church” and “Message to Colombians”	313-330, 401-403		
Assignment	Midterm exam. Bring your study guide if you have one (turn it in with the exam).		R 10/9

PART TWO: CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Weeks 8-9 Globalization, neoliberalism, and poverty	Griswold: “Trading tyranny for freedom”	1-12	T 10/14
	Herman: “Free trade: the sophistry of imperialism”	1-8	
	González: “The Metalclad case and NAFTA’s Chapter 11”	17-35	R 10/16
	Greenhouse: “Factory defies sweatshop label, but can it thrive?”	1-4	
	Marcos: “Our word is our weapon”	258-261	T 10/21
Dunaway: “Women’s labor and nature”	183-198		
Assignment	Nagel: “Poverty and food: why charity is not enough”	49-58	R 10/23
	Pogge: “Assisting the global poor”	531-554	
Assignment	Paper outline due on Scholar by midnight.		S 10/26
Weeks 10-13 Global society and its critics	Walzer: <i>Thick and Thin</i>	1-19	T 10/28
	MacIntyre: “Is patriotism a virtue?”	3-20	R 10/30
	Beitz: “Cosmopolitan ideals and national sentiment”	591-600	
	Held: “Principles of cosmopolitan order”	67-92	T 11/4
	Taylor: “Conditions of an unforced consensus on human rights”	1-4	R 11/6
	The United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights	1-11	
	Jaggard: “Global justice for women and intercultural dialogue”	55-75	T 11/11
	Barber: “Jihad vs. McWorld”  (click link)		R 11/13
Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers</i>	GROUP LECTURES 1-2	T 11/18	
Appiah: <i>Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers</i>	GROUP LECTURES 3-4	R 11/20	
Assignment	Paper and bibliography due on Scholar by midnight.		S 11/23

WEEK 14: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Weeks 15-16 The future	Quiggin: “ <u>The golden age: prospects of a Keynesian utopia</u> ”  (click link)		T 12/2
	Clarke: <i>Childhood’s End</i>	62-68	
	Robinson: <i>The Martians</i>	265-280	R 12/4
Assignment	Vaccarezza: “The great anthill”		T 12/9
	Zeitgeist: <i>Addendum</i>  (click link and watch from 1:05:48 to 1:32:40)		
Assignment	Rorty: “Who are we?”	5-15	T 12/9
	Le Guin: “The ones who walk away from Omelas”	189-194	
Assignment	FINAL DISCUSSION. Replaces a final exam. Attendance is mandatory.		F 12/12

LINKS

Political Organizations

- African Union (AU) <http://africa-union.org>
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) <http://aseansec.org>
- European Union (EU) <http://ec.europa.eu>
- League of Arab States (LAS) <http://arableagueonline.org>
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) <http://nato.int>
- United Nations (UN) <http://un.org>

Socioeconomic and Financial Organizations

- International Labour Organization (ILO) <http://ilo.org>
- International Monetary Fund (IMF) <http://imf.org>
- World Bank (WB) <http://worldbank.org>
- World Trade Organization (WTO) <http://wto.org>

Popular, Grassroots, and Activist Organizations

- American Red Cross <http://redcross.org>
- Amnesty International <http://amnestyusa.org>
- Doctors Without Borders <http://doctorswithoutborders.org>
- Emergency USA <http://emergencyusa.org>
- Gapminder World <http://gapminder.org>
- Hands Off Cain <http://handsoffcain.info>
- National Organization for Women <http://now.org>
- National Organization for Men Against Sexism <http://nomas.org>
- UNICEF <http://unicef.org>
- World Fair Trade Organization <http://wfto.org>

Professional and Academic Journals

- American Journal of Political Science <http://ajps.org>
- American Political Science Review <http://journals.cambridge.org/psr>
- Ethics <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/journals/journal/et.html>
- History of Political Thought <http://imprint.co.uk/hpt.html>
- Journal of Political Philosophy <http://wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0963-8016>
- Journal of Theoretical Politics <http://jtp.sagepub.com>
- Philosophy and Public Affairs <http://wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0048-3915>
- Political Theory <http://ptx.sagepub.com>
- Review of Politics <http://reviewofpolitics.nd.edu>
- Social Philosophy and Policy http://journals.cambridge.org/jid_SOY

Media and News

- Al-Jazeera English <http://aljazeera.com>
- BBC News <http://bbc.com/news>
- Democracy Now! <http://democracynow.org>
- Mother Jones <http://motherjones.com>
- National Public Radio <http://npr.org>
- The Atlantic <http://theatlantic.com>
- The Raw Story <http://rawstory.com>