

Political and Social Thought

Georgetown University, Summer 2022, Second Main Session

Instructor: Dominick Cooper

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Class info: MTWR, 1:10-3:40, White-Gravenor 405

Office Hours: TBA

1. Course Summary

This course is designed as an undergraduate introduction to western political and social philosophy. This course focuses in particular on the theme of liberalism through reading some classic authors of the PST curricula, in early modern political philosophy in the works of John Locke, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, and Adam Smith, and in the critics of liberalism, in the work of Karl Marx, Carole Pateman, and Charles Mills, as well as contemporary political philosophy that draws from this tradition (as well as from its critics), in the work of Elizabeth Anderson.

2. Course Requirements

The overall aim of the course is to explore the course material in a way that maximizes student participation in critically reading, discussing, and writing about the philosophers we will read. The overall grading breakdown will be as follows:

Class participation:	25 %
Reading Responses:	45 %
Final Essay:	30 %

2.1 Class Participation

Class participation is 25% of the final grade and consists in two parts. Active participation in class amounts to 10% of the grade, and an in-class presentation on the reading for the day (each student will do only one) amounts to 15% of the grade.

2.2 Reading Responses

Three reading responses (15% each) will be assigned intermittently throughout the class. Reading responses will vary to some degree but will all be short writing responses that involve close reading and analysis of the reading for a particular class day.

2.3 Final Essay

The final essay will involve (1) a preliminary short assignment, which requires the student to formulate a thesis topic, a thesis, and some exposition of material they will use in the full paper. This is a P/F assignment, which is required for the final paper to be graded. The final essay will be a philosophical paper, orientated around establishing and then clearly arguing for a central claim, using the texts from the course, although the texts can be used or applied in a wide variety of ways that suit the goals and intellectual interests of the student. The paper will be no more than 3,000 words.

3. Class Conduct

3.1 The Honor Code

The Georgetown University Honor pledge requires you to be honest in your academic endeavors and to hold yourself to the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life. I expect you to be familiar with the letter and the spirit of this pledge; and, I will enforce the Honor Code by reporting any and all suspected cases of academic dishonesty.

3.2 Conduct in Class

In this class I hope we can come to respect two things: the truth, and each other. There's a connection between these: we all know things, and so we all have things to learn from each other. But we can only acquire and build on each other's knowledge collaboratively – saying what we think others want to hear is not genuine contribution to discussion, and neither is the lack of voiced dissent equivalent to genuine consensus. Respect for each other, for knowledge, and for learning requires that we articulate our own views, opinions, misgivings, and questions with courage and respect, and that we act in ways that create and sustain the possibility for others to do the same.

4. Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Liberalism, Part One: Liberty and Toleration

- M/T: selections from John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*
- W: selections from John Stuart Mill (and Harriet Taylor), *On the Subjugation of Women*
- R: John Locke, “A Letter Concerning Toleration”

Week 2: Liberalism, Part Two: Free Markets and the Social Contract Tradition

- M/T: selections from John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*
- W/R: selections from Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and *The Wealth of Nations*

Week 3: Critics of Liberalism, Part One: Marx's critique of Liberalism

- M/T: selections from Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*
- W/R: selections from Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume One*

Week 4: Critics of Liberalism, Part Two: Pateman and Mills on Social Contract Theory

- M: selections from Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*
- T: selections from Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*
- W/R: selections from Mills and Pateman, *Contract and Domination*

Week 5: Contemporary Applications of Weeks 1-4: Elizabeth Anderson's political philosophy

- M: Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?"
- T/W/R: selections from Anderson, *Private Government*

5. Resources

Accessibility and Diversity

I sincerely think that every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating classroom experience! Disabled students and students on record with the university as requiring particular accommodations, please let me know that this is the case, in confidence, during the first few weeks of the semester and please take advantage of services provided by the university. Finally, please let me know if you learn during the semester that something would make the classroom accessible.

Sexual Misconduct

University policy requires all faculty members to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. But Georgetown also has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include: Jen Schweer (202.687.0323) Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention; Erica Shirley (202.687.6985) Trauma

Specialist (CAPS). More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at <http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.