

# SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

PHI 2400-002

SPRING 2012

INSTRUCTOR: GABRIEL ROCKHILL

**Time:** TR 4-5:15 p.m.

**Location:** Vasey Hall 201A

**Office Hours:** TBA (St. Augustine Center, office 171)

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## OVERVIEW

This course explores the historical evolution of “political cultures,” understood as the practical modes of intelligibility that dictate the very nature of politics by determining who qualifies as a political subject, what is visible as a political action, and how the spatio-temporal framework of politics is structured.

The first section of the course is dedicated to analyzing the historical emergence and evolution of three major political configurations that have marked the history of the Euro-American world: cosmological political culture, ecclesiastical political culture, and contractual political culture. This macroscopic overview of the history of political cultures will allow us to highlight the specificity of the contractual political culture within which we are still living. We will focus most notably on the links between a series of unique characteristics of modern politics: the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere, the appearance of modern democracy and social contract theory, the “birth” of public opinion, the development of the nation-state, the transformation of the notion of revolution, the gradual displacement of the limits of political visibility (which opened up to workers, women, foreigners, and other minorities), and the emergence of a battery of new concepts for thinking politics, including the modern concepts of race, culture, civilization, revolution, ideology, popular sovereignty, and terrorism.

The second section of the class will adopt a microscopic perspective in concentrating on the specificity of our own contemporary socio-political ethos and how it may or may not distinguish itself from modern contractual political culture. We will examine most notably changes in the *what* (redistributive justice versus cultural justice), the *when* (revolutionary versus post-revolutionary politics), and the *where* (the nation-state versus globalization) of politics. This will allow us to investigate some of the underlying themes in contemporary debates regarding political liberalism, pragmatism, communitarianism, multiculturalism, radical democracy, minority rights, gender and race inequality, postmodernism, and globalization.

Students should come away from this course with a general understanding of the history of social and political philosophy as well as with a solid grasp of contemporary debates in this area. They will be provided with philosophical tools that will allow them to critically assess

the current socio-political conjuncture.

### REQUIRED MATERIAL

1. John Locke. *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
3. John Grafton, Ed. *The Declaration of Independence and Other Great Documents of American History 1775-1865*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2000.
4. *Optional*: Vaughn, Lewis. *Writing Philosophy: A Student's Guide to Writing Philosophy Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
5. Essays and articles will be made available to you electronically and placed on reserve in the library. **It is required that you print or photocopy them so that you can bring them to every class.** It is highly recommended that you collect them all together in a binder so that you have all of the course readings in one place.
6. It is highly recommended that the students keep abreast of current events through the course of the semester by consulting and comparing various media sources (conservative and progressive, American and foreign, etc.). In addition to well-known sources of news (NY Times, Washington Post, major network news, BBC, etc.), it is recommended that you look at alternative sources like [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org), [www.english.aljazeera.net](http://www.english.aljazeera.net), [www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com), [www.fair.org](http://www.fair.org) and [www.informationclearinghouse.info](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info).

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation – 15%.** The class will be conducted as a seminar so it will be very important for you to come to class having engaged with the required material. This means taking notes on the readings, preparing informed questions and comments, and re-reading the material after class discussion. A cursory, passive overview of the material will prove insufficient. In addition, you should make sure that you organize your time wisely since some sessions will require more out-of-class work than others.
2. **Mid-Term Paper – 25%.** You will be expected to write a 2-page double-spaced mid-term paper that critically responds to and engages with one of the readings in the first half of the semester. You will need to carefully review the material you choose and consult other relevant sources. The aim of this exercise is to have you succinctly present a core theme or issue and carefully work through its implications via rigorous philosophical argumentation and precise textual analysis. You can choose any of the required material from the first half of the semester.
3. **Debate – 25%.** You will be expected to participate in one of the debates at the end of the semester. Guidelines for the debates will be provided.
4. **Final Exam – 35%.** A **comprehensive** final oral exam will be scheduled at the end of the semester. I will provide you with guidelines and study hints in advance of the exam. The best way to ensure a solid performance on your final exam is to take detailed notes on the lectures and readings. With the exception of students with disabilities that require alternative test-taking arrangements or other university approved exceptions, all tests must be taken in class at the day and time listed on the syllabus. No other make-up tests will be administered.

### **POLICY ON E-MAILS AND COMPUTER USE**

1. I will try to respond to all e-mails in a reasonable time frame. As a general rule of thumb, this means that you will get a response within 24 to 48 hours. If you send an email over the weekend or late at night, do not expect to receive a response back immediately, even if you deem it to be an emergency.
2. I will **not grant extensions via e-mail**. If you have a last-second problem printing your response paper, print it after class and drop it in my box before 7 p.m. that day (see "Policy on Grade Changes" below).
3. In general, I will not provide my lecture notes or other material that you could have obtained in class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain this material.
4. I will not provide information already available in the syllabus via e-mail.
5. Please do not take offense to laconic e-mails since I find it preferable to respond to as many e-mails as possible within the shortest amount of time.
6. **No computers** will be allowed in the classroom unless you obtain explicit consent from me.

### **POLICY ON GRADE CHANGES, LATE WORK AND ABSENCES**

1. I will not change grades based on oral negotiation. If you feel that I have overlooked something in my grading policy, please submit a detailed written explanation of what has been overlooked along with the graded copy of your work.
2. **No late work will be accepted**. Rather than looking behind in class, you should plan on looking ahead and catching up on future assignments any points you may have lost on past assignments. You will only be able to make up for late work in the most extreme cases, and preferably when you have let me know ahead of time that you have a serious extra-curricular problem.

### **POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND RESEARCH RESOURCES**

Any form of plagiarism is unacceptable. This includes, but is not limited to, referencing or paraphrasing someone else's ideas without proper citation as well as handing in someone else's work as your own. This also includes using any part of an Internet resource without proper citation. Any assignment that is at all plagiarized will automatically receive an F and, depending on the circumstances, may constitute grounds for failing the course. Moreover, every incident will be reported to the university and could constitute grounds for expulsion. For a good list of resources on what counts as plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarizing see <http://directory.google.com/Top/Reference/Education/Educators/Plagiarism/Prevention>

You should be aware of the fact that not all of the information on the Internet is equally accurate. This is why I strongly encourage library research over Internet research and require that you do most of your work in the library. Of course, you should also be wary of the quality of published sources and try to get a feel for what is reliable (based on the author's name, the publisher, journals' reputations, etc.). If you have any questions regarding the quality of Internet or published resources, please contact me.

PROGRAM (subject to change)

## INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

January 17 **Introduction to the History of Political Cultures**

January 19 **On the Nature of Political Philosophy**  
Leo Strauss. "What Is Political Philosophy."

## SECTION I: HISTORY OF POLITICAL CULTURES

### PART 1: COSMOLOGICAL POLITICAL CULTURE

January 24 **Politics in the Abstract: Plato and the Greek World**

Plato. *The Republic* (Book III).

January 26 **The Divorce between *Poēsis* and *Politeia***

Plato. *The Republic* (Book X).

January 31 **The Nature of the *Polis* and the Status of Slavery**

Aristotle. *Politics* (Book I)

### PART 2: ECCLESIASTICAL POLITICAL CULTURE

February 2 ***Civitas***

Augustine. *The City of God* (selection of Book VIII on Plato and Book XI)

February 7 **New Worlds: Barbarians and Pagans**

Anthony Pagden. "The Image of the Barbarian" in *The Fall of Natural Man*.

### PART 3: CONTRACTUAL POLITICAL CULTURE

February 9 **Politics as Contract**

John Locke. *The Second Treatise of Government* (Chapters I-VII)

February 14 **Commonwealth, *Civitas*, *Polis***

John Locke. *The Second Treatise of Government* (Chapters VIII-X, XVI-XIX)

February 16 **Commonwealth, *Civitas*, *Polis***

John Locke. *The Second Treatise of Government* (Chapters XVI-XIX).

February 21 **Public Sphere**

Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Chapter 2).

February 23 **Public Sphere**

Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Chapter 2).

February 28 **Culture and Civilization**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract* (Book I).

March 1 **Social Contract**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract* (Book II).

March 5-9 ***Semester Recess***

March 13 **Social Contract**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract* (Book III).

March 15 **The American "Founding Fathers"**

- “The Declaration of Independence” and “The Constitution of the United States.”  
*The Federalist Papers* nos. 9 and 10.
- March 20**                    **The Time of Revolution**  
 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. “Manifesto of the Communist Party.”
- March 22**                    **Modern Anarchism**  
 Peter Kropotkin, “The Spirit of Revolt.”  
 Emma Goldman, “Anarchism:- What It Really Stands for Anarchy.”

## SECTION II: CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ETHOS

### PART 1: THE *WHAT* OF POLITICS

- March 27**                    **Liberalism**  
 John Rawls. *A Theory of Justice* (selection).
- March 29**                    **Communitarianism and Multiculturalism**  
 Charles Taylor. *Multiculturalism* (selection).
- April 3**                    **Environmental Politics**  
 Murray Bookchin. “Ecology and Revolutionary Thought.”
- April 5-9*                    **Easter Recess**
- April 10**                    **Cultural Recognition**  
 Nancy Fraser. “From Redistribution to Recognition?” in *Justice Interruptus*.

#### *Optional Material to Be Used in Debates:*

Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*.  
 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*.  
 Gabriel Rockhill and Gomez-Muller (Eds.), *Politics of Culture and the Spirit of Critique: Dialogues*.  
 Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*.  
 Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture*.  
 Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism*.  
 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History*.

#### **Debate 1: Cultural Politics**

*Position Defended by Group 1 (the “realists”): Fundamental cultural differences exist, and they inevitably lead to political conflicts.*

*Position Defended by Group 2 (the “multiculturalists”): Fundamental cultural differences exist, and they can and should be recognized in order to avoid oppressive social relations.*

- April 12**                    **Terrorism and the Politics of Fear**  
 Adam Curtis, *The Power of Nightmares* (a film in 3 parts):  
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=2798679275960015727>

#### *Optional Material to Be Used in Debates:*

Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear*.  
 Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*.

Charles Kurzman, *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists*.  
*The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.

**Debate 2: Terrorism**

*Position Defended by Group 1: Terrorism is a very real threat to American security.*

*Position Defended by Group 2: Terrorism has come to function as a foil for Western 'democracies,' and its dangers have been exaggerated for ideological purposes.*

April 17

**PART 2: THE WHEN OF POLITICS**

**Are We Living in a Post-Revolutionary Era?**

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History* (selection).

*Optional Material to Be Used in Debates:*

Perry Anderson, "On the Concatenation in the Arab World."

Seyla Benhabib, "The Power and Paradox of Revolutions" (<http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000021780>).

Jürgen Habermas, "The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies."

Daniel Singer, *Whose Millennium?*

Seyla Benhabib, "Public Sphere Forum" and "The Power and Paradox of Revolutions"

(<http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000021780>)

Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Fantastic Success of Occupy Wall Street" (<http://www.iwallerstein.com/fantastic-success-occupy-wall-street/>)

**Debate 3: Post-Revolutionary Era**

*Position Defended by Group 1: History has come to an end, and we are living in a post-revolutionary era.*

*Position Defended by Group 2: History has not come to an end, and we are not living in a post-revolutionary era.*

April 19

**PART 3: THE WHERE OF POLITICS**

**Globalization Debate**

David Held and Anthony McGrew. "The Great Globalization Debate: An Introduction" in *The Global Transformations Reader*.

*Optional Material to Be Used in Debates:*

Immanuel Wallerstein, "After Developmentalism and Globalization, What?," *Social Forces*, vol. 83, n° 3, mars 2005, p. 1263-1278.

Pierre Bourdieu. "The Myth of 'Globalization' and the European Social State."

Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*.

Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, “NewLiberalSpeak: Notes on the New Planetary Vulgate.”

David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism*

Nancy Fraser, *Scales of Justice*

***Debate 4: Globalization***

*Position Defended by Group 1: The phenomenon known as globalization has generally been a positive force in the world.*

*Position Defended by Group 2: The phenomenon known as globalization—whose very existence is debatable—has generally been a negative force in the world.*

**April 24**

**Where Does the Media Look?**

Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. “A Propaganda Model” in *Manufacturing Consent*.

*Optional Material to Be Used in Debates:*

The PIPA/Knowledge Networks Poll, “Misperceptions, the Media and the Iraq War” (October 2, 3003)

Robert Greenwald, *Outfoxed – Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism* (2004)

*Outlawed* (available at [www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org))

John Pilger, *Breaking The Silence - Truth and Lies in the War on Terror* (available at [www.video.google.co.uk](http://www.video.google.co.uk)).

<http://wikileaks.org/>

<http://www.collateralmurder.com/>

Glenn Greenwald, “Attempts to Prosecute WikiLeaks Endanger Press Freedoms”:

[http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn\\_greenwald/2010/12/14/wikileaks/index.html](http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/2010/12/14/wikileaks/index.html)

John Pilger, *The War You Don’t See*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egcTynu6sBk>

*WikiRebels Documentary*:

<http://www.zcommunications.org/wikirebels-documentary-by-wikileaks-wl>

***Debate 5: Media (with reference to the WikiLeaks affair)***

*Position Defended by Group 1: The media is objective and aims at presenting a non-normative account of events.*

*Position Defended by Group 2: The media is grounded in a series of interests and always presents tendentious accounts based on interest groups.*

**April 26**

***Review for the Final Exam***

**May 1**

***No class: Friday schedule***

**May 3**

***Final Exam (Round 1)***

*May 8*

**FINAL EXAM (ROUND 2)**  
*8:30-11*