

# PHL 223: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

## FALL 2020

INSTRUCTOR: A. Peterman

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION: TBA

TEXTS: Plato: *The Republic*  
*Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*  
Course pack (CP)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will study some classics of political philosophy, as well as a few more recent works. We'll think critically about the nature of political rights, equality, and citizenship, and the ground of the state and legitimate political authority.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Please complete the reading each week, compose any response paper due on time, and complete the final paper.

### CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

These are adjusted for remote learning. Here are some guidelines for participating in class discussion and for reading; for now, they are guidelines for reading philosophy. My role is to help you get the most out of the course as possible, and I will do that by telling you what I know, helping each of you to work through the texts and your thoughts about them, and helping you learn from each other as a group by productively structuring class discussion and your reading.

1. Read or listen carefully to what a philosopher (someone we read, or me, or your classmate) says, and try to understand precisely what they mean.
2. If you do not understand what they mean right away, try again by re-reading or re-thinking.
3. If you still do not understand what they mean, ask them a follow-up question to help clarify it.
4. Once you understand what they are claiming, identify their reasons for claiming it. This may be written in the text, or your classmate may say it. In other words, what is their argument or evidence that what they claim is true?

5. Try to understand their argument, reasons, or evidence as well as you can. Listen and read charitably. That means, attribute to them the strongest version of their argument that is possible.
6. Ask yourself whether the argument is good. This means evaluating two things: whether the premises are true and whether the conclusion follows from the premises.
7. Think about what you think about the claim. Is it true? False? What are your reasons for thinking that?

## ASSESSMENT

### RESPONSE PAPERS (60%):

Almost each week (which weeks are indicated in the reading schedule), you should compose a short writing assignment that responds to one of the readings assigned for that week. There are 8 in total, worth 5% each. I will provide a rubric that I use for grading these, and you'll receive an individual grade on each element.

At the top of the response paper, you should write one sentence which is either a question about the reading (more substantive than "What does Smith mean by X?") or a criticism in the form of a sentence like "Smith's claim that X is wrong/unjustified because...". If it is a question, spend the rest of the response paper explaining what caused you to ask it and attempting to answer it as best you can. If it is a criticism, defend it. This should be an argument that a specific premise is incorrect or unsupported or that the argument's premises do not support the conclusion. You should come to class prepared to discuss your response paper.

### FINAL PAPER (40%):

You should compose a final paper that extends and refines your thoughts in one of your response papers.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The readings listed for each day are to be read *before* the lecture on that day.

Week 1:

- \* Plato: *Republic*, selections (will be indicated in course material for the week)

Week 2:

- \* Plato: *Republic*, selections (will be indicated in course material for the week)
- \* **RP 1 due**

Week 3:

- \* Plato: *Republic*, selections (will be indicated in course material for the week)

Week 4:

- \* Hobbes: selections
- \* Locke: *Second Treatise of Government*, selections

Week 5:

- \* Rousseau: *Of the Social Contract*, selections
- \* **RP 2 due**

Week 6:

- \* Alexander Hamilton and James Madison: *The Federalist Papers*
- \* **RP 3 due**

Week 9:

- \* Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*, selections
- \* *Declaration of the Rights of Man*
- \* Olympe De Gouges: *Declaration of the Rights of Woman*
- \* *Declaration of Independence*
- \* Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et.al.: *Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls*
- \* **RP 4 due**

Week 7:

- \* Frederick Douglass: "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"
- \* W.E.B. DuBois: "Of the Ruling of Men"
- \* **RP 5 due**

Week 8:

- \* Mill: *On Liberty*, selections
- \* **RP 6 due**

Week 10:

- \* Marx: *The Communist Manifesto*, selections
- \* **RP 7 due**

Week 11:

- \* Marx: *The Communist Manifesto*, selections
- \* Anderson: “How bosses are (literally) like dictators”

Week 12:

- \* Hayek: “The use of knowledge in society”
- \* Nozick: The Wilt Chamberlain example
- \* Cohen: “Self-Ownership, freedom, and equality”, selections
- \* **RP 8 due**

Week 13:

- \* Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*, selections
- \* Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Week 14:

- \* Berlin: “Two Concepts of Liberty”

Week 15:

- \* Iris Marion Young: “Five Faces of Oppression”
- \* Foucault: *Power/Knowledge*, selections