Phil 3341: Political Philosophy
Fall 2013, University of Texas, El Paso
Class Meets: M, W 1:30—2:50 p.m., Old Main 214

Contact Information

Professor Marc A. Moffett
Phone: 915.747.5804
Email: mamoffett@utep.edu

Office: Worrell 202
Office Hrs: T, R 2:00-3:00 p.m., W 10:00-11:00 a.m., & by appointment.

Free and open discussion is the life-blood of philosophy. Consequently, no student shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, disability, place of national origin, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, political affiliation or any other similar factor. I expect all members of the class to be equally tolerant of differing perspectives and ideologies. Critique, evaluate and analyze the ideas put forward by me and others; do not demean or belittle them.

Course Description

Political philosophy begins with a simple question: What is the normative relationship between an individual and the state (to which that individual belongs)? (“Normative” here contrasts with “descriptive”. We are not interested in what, as a matter of fact, the relationship is; but what it ought to be.) Put slightly differently, we could ask: What is the legitimate purpose of a state? Answering these questions (or trying to!) will help us to understand not only what governmental authority is good for, but also its scope and limits. This latter question can be understood as a question of justice: What is a just (or good) society?

In this course, we will focus on contemporary political philosophy and, in particular, on the question of justice. We will begin by exploring a broad range of political theories that ultimately center around John Rawls’ theory of justice. Most of contemporary philosophy can be understood as a response to, or criticism of, this work. (Though we will begin slightly earlier, with utilitarian political theory, to which Rawls was responding.) Once we have a broad understanding of intellectual terrain, we will focus on the issue of minority rights as a kind of case study which helps “tie together” many of the issues which will arise in our more general discussion.

Required Materials

Required Texts


Course Objectives

• To develop a critical understanding of the nature and limits of political authority.
• To develop an ability to clearly express and defend not only your own opinions on these matters, but also the views and arguments of others, particularly those with whom you disagree.
Requirements and Expectations

This course is an upper division philosophy course. Students will be expected to have academic skills commensurate with its level including: the ability to read complex primary source material, the ability to write clear, well-constructed critical essays, and the ability to engage in articulate and respectful discourse. In addition, I expect all students to be prepared and attentive in class. This means coming to class having done reading assignments and having thought about their significance, and while in class being an active listener and contributor. Although I will not take attendance, I do expect you to attend every class meeting. You are responsible for all material and announcements made in class, whether you are present or not. No late assignments will be allowed without a University excuse.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have or suspect you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services located in the Union Bldg East, room 106 (747-5148).

Evaluation:

- **Weekly Quizes (25% of total grade):** Very short quizzes based on the week’s readings. Graded pass/fail.
- **Two Critical Essays (22.5% of total grade):** Short (5-10 pp.) critical essays.
- **Final exam (25% of total grade):** In class cumulative exam.
- **Class Participation (5% of total grade):**

The grading scale for this class is given below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;89.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&gt;79.5%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>&gt;59.5%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>≤59.5%</td>
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Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a concern for everyone. By joining the UTEP community every student agrees to abide by the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable to another person.

**Cheating**
- Copying form the test paper of another student
- Communicating with another student during a test
- Giving or seeking aid from another student during a test
- Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during tests (i.e. Crib notes, class notes, books, etc)
- Substituting for another person to take a test
- Falsifying research data, reports, academic work offered for credit

**Plagiarism**
- Using someone’s work in your assignments without the proper citations
- Submitting the same paper or assignment from a different course, without direct permission of instructors

**Collusion**
- Unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments
Class Schedule: The following is a detailed schedule of classes. The schedule, however, is flexible. I will freely amend it as time, interest and comprehension dictate.

CPP = Contemporary Political Philosophy  
MC = Multicultural Citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jan. 27</td>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
<td>CPP, Ch. 2 pp. 10-32</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 2 pp. 32-48</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Feb. 03</td>
<td>Liberal Equality</td>
<td>CPP, Ch. 3 pp. 53-75</td>
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<td>Feb. 05</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 3 pp. 75-87</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Feb. 10</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 3 pp. 88-96</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>Libertarianism</td>
<td>CPP, Ch. 4 pp. 102-127</td>
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<td>Feb. 17</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 4 pp. 128-138</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 4 pp. 138-159</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Feb. 24</td>
<td>Marxism</td>
<td>CPP, Ch. 5 pp. 166-195</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 5 pp. 195-201</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Mar. 03</td>
<td>Communitarianism</td>
<td>CPP, Ch. 6 pp. 208-228</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 6 pp. 228-261</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Mar. 17</td>
<td>Communitarianism (Cont’d)</td>
<td>CPP, Ch. 6 pp. 261-273</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td>Feminism</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>Mar. 26</td>
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<td>CPP, Ch. 9 pp. 377-398</td>
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M  Mar. 24
  •  CPP, Ch. 9 pp. 398-420
W  Mar. 26  Citizenship Theory
  •  CPP, Ch. 7 pp. 284-299
M  Mar. 31  Cesar Chavez Day: No Classes
W  Apr. 02  Citizenship Theory (Cont’d)
  •  CPP, Ch. 7 pp. 299-319
M  Apr. 07  Multicultural Citizenship
  •  MC, Ch. 2: The Politics of Multiculturalism
  •  Optional, CPP, Ch. 8
W  Apr. 09
  •  MC, Ch. 3: Individual Rights and Collective Rights
M  Apr. 14
  •  MC, Ch. 4: Rethinking the Liberal Tradition
W  Apr. 16
  •  MC, Ch. 5: Freedom and Culture
M  Apr. 21
  •  MC, Ch. 6: Justice and Minority Rights
W  Apr. 23
  •  MC, Ch. 8: Toleration and its Limits
M  Apr. 28
  •  MC, Ch. 9: The Ties that Bind
W  Apr. 30  TBD
M  May 05  TBD
W  May 07  TBD

W  May 14  Final Exam – 4:00-6:45 p.m.