

PHIL 3110 – Political Philosophy

4010 Brown Hall

Tues. and Thurs. 2:00-3:15

Instructor: james.v.martin@wmich.edu (3011 Moore Hall, by appointment)

Required Texts: *The Prince* (Machiavelli)

Who Killed My Father (Louis)

All other readings can be found online through Elearning.

Course Description: This course is an introduction to some of the key ideas and problems of political philosophy. After thinking about what role political philosophy might play in our political and social lives, we'll go on to consider justifications for a state; arguments for and against democracy; the extent to which a government should be allowed to influence its citizens's lives; some contemporary conceptions of justice (including global and social justice); the relationships between politics and both morality and the economy; the grounding of rights, desert, and power; and the influence of ideology on our political thought. Throughout, we'll be guided by some of the classic texts of the subject, but we'll always also have one eye towards applying the concepts and arguments these texts provide us to issues we still face today.

Schedule and Readings:

Week 1	INTRODUCTION
Sept. 3	David Miller, <i>Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction</i> , Ch. 1 Raymond Geuss, <i>Philosophy and Real Politics</i> (excerpt)
Week 2	IDEAS ABOUT PRE-POLITICAL LIVING
Sept. 7 ^{*1}	Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Chs. XIII, XIV, XVII
Sept. 9	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>The Second Discourse</i> (excerpt)
Week 3	JUSTIFYING THE STATE
Sept. 14*	John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§3-5 John Stuart Mill, <i>Considerations on Representative Government</i> , Ch. II
Sept. 16	Robert Paul Wolff, <i>In Defense of Anarchism</i> , Ch. 1
Week 4	WHO SHOULD RULE? FOR DEMOCRACY
Sept. 21*	Robert Dahl, <i>On Democracy</i> , Ch. 5
Sept. 23	Amartya Sen, <i>Development as Freedom</i> , Ch. 6

(FIRST PAPER DUE)

¹A star next to a date indicates that there is a reading quiz due. The quiz will be available from the day prior until a half an hour before the beginning of class.

Week 5	WHO SHOULD RULE? AGAINST DEMOCRACY	
Sept. 28*	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Book VI to 506d	
	Edmund Burke, Speech to the Electors at Bristol at the Conclusion of the Poll (excerpt)	
Sept. 30	Christopher Achen & Larry Bartels, <i>Democracy for Realists</i> , Ch. 2	
Week 6	LIBERALISM AND TOLERATION	
Oct. 5*	John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> (excerpt)	
Oct. 7	Raymond Geuss, <i>Public Goods, Private Goods</i> , Ch. V	
Week 7	POLITICAL ECONOMY AND MARX	
Oct. 12	Allen Wood, <i>Karl Marx</i> , Ch. 1	(SECOND PAPER DUE)
Oct. 14	Karl Marx, <i>Value, Price, and Profit</i> , Ch. VI to the end	
Week 8	RIGHTS, EXPLOITATION, AND DESERT	
Oct. 19	Jeremy Bentham, <i>Anarchical Fallacies</i> , Article II (optional) George Sher, <i>Desert</i> (excerpt)	
Oct. 21	Fall break: No class	
Week 9	MORALITY AND “REAL POLITICS”	
Oct. 26*	Niccolò Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> , Dedication and Chs. VI-VIII, XV-XIX, XXIV-XXVI	
Oct. 28	Max Weber, <i>The Vocation Lectures</i> , Politics as Vocation	
Week 10	ON JUSTICE: JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS	
Nov. 2	John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§1-4, 8, 11	
Nov. 4*	John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , §§12-17	
Week 11	ON JUSTICE: A LIBERTARIAN VIEW AND CRITIQUE OF RAWLS	
Nov. 9*	Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> , Ch. 7, § I	
Nov. 11	Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> , Ch. 7, § II	
Week 12	IDEOLOGY AND POWER	
Nov. 16*	Karl Marx, <i>The German Ideology</i> (excerpt) Karl Mannheim, <i>Ideology and Utopia</i> , Ch. II.1-4	
Nov. 18	Terry Eagleton, <i>Ideology: An Introduction</i> , Ch. 2 (excerpts)	(THIRD PAPER DUE)
Week 13	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Nov. 23	No class	
Nov. 25	No class	

Week 14	GLOBAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	
Nov. 30	Branko Milanovic, <i>Worlds Apart</i> , Chs.1 & 12 (excerpts) Peter Singer, <i>One World</i> , Ch. 6	
Dec. 2*	Martha Nussbaum, <i>Frontiers of Justice</i> , Ch. 1.ii, ix	
Week 15	RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MODERN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE	
Dec. 7	Angela Davis, <i>Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex</i>	
Dec. 9	Édouard Louis, <i>Who Killed My Father</i>	<u>(FINAL PAPER DUE)</u>

Assignments:

Paper 1	10%	Short expository paper	Due: Sept. 23
Paper 2	15%	Short critical paper	Due: Oct. 12
Paper 3	25%	Medium length paper evaluating an argument or position	Due: Nov. 18
Paper 4	30%	Final paper for the course	Due: Dec. 9
Participation	20%	This is necessary for a philosophy course. Reading quizzes will be included in this portion of the grade.	

Grading: The grading for this course will be based on the following scale.

A	[92.5, 100]
BA	[87.5, 92.5)
B	[82.5, 87.5)
CB	[77.5, 82.5)
C	[72.5, 77.5)
DC	[67.5, 72.5)
D	[60, 67.5)
E	[0, 60)

Resources: If this is your first philosophy course, you may want to consult the following resources containing suggestions about how to read and write philosophy papers.

jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html

jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

Accommodations: Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact me and the appropriate Disability Services office at the beginning of the semester. The two disability service offices on campus are: Disabled Student Resources and Services (269) 387-2116 and the Office of Services for Students with Learning Disabilities (269) 387-4411.

Academic Honesty: You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the university's [policies and procedures](#) that pertain to Academic Honesty. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

University COVID Policies: Safety requirements are in place to minimize exposure to the Western Michigan University community. These guidelines apply to all in-person and hybrid classes held inside a WMU building to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, and staff during the pandemic. Noncompliance is a violation of the class requirements and the [Student Code](#).

Facial coverings (masks), over both the nose and mouth, are required for all students while in- class, no matter the size of the space. Following this recommendation can minimize the transmission of the virus, which is spread between people interacting in close proximity through speaking, coughing, or sneezing. During specified classes in which facial coverings (masks) would prevent required class elements, students may remove facial coverings (masks) with instructor permission, in accordance with the exceptions in the [Facial Covering \(mask\) Policy](#) (“such as playing an instrument, acting, singing, etc.”).

Facial coverings (masks) must remain in place throughout the class. Any student who removes the mandatory facial covering (mask) during class will be required to leave the classroom immediately. Students who are unable to wear a facial covering (mask) for medical/disability reasons must contact [Disability Services for Students](#) before they attend class.