

POLS 5206, Foundations of Political Philosophy
Spring 2020
Political Science
Instructor: Chris Barker
Course time: Sunday, 5:00pm-7:40pm
Course Location: WALEED CP60
Instructor email and phone: chris.barker@aucegypt.edu ; ext. 4203
Office hours: Sunday 4:00-5:00pm or by appointment
Office location: HUSS, Room 2015
<p>Course Catalog Description</p> <p>This course surveys the main thinkers and themes of political philosophy. Students will concentrate on a particular theme to organize their readings in a given year. Possible themes include power, history, liberty, equality, identity, and justice. Students will critically assess their own opinions in the light of the theories examined in the course, and address issues of contemporary importance in theoretical context where appropriate.</p> <p>Course Overview: Global Justice</p> <p>This course surveys the main thinkers and themes of political philosophy from the perspective of global justice. Students will concentrate on a particular theme to organize their readings in a given year. This year's theme is social and distributive justice, and our main concern is to think about the connection (and tension) between equality and liberty. Students will survey the main thinkers and themes of justice, including property rights, income distribution and wealth disparities, religious liberty, equality in the household, voting rights, workplace democracy, and military intervention. Students will also critically assess their own opinions in the light of the theories examined in the course. Throughout the course, students will also be invited to address issues of contemporary importance through presentations, debates, and writing responses on current events.</p>
<p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and explain the main approaches to the analysis of a central theme of modern political thought, such as power, history, liberty, equality, identity, and justice. - Locate their subfield within a more coherent and comprehensive theoretical framework provided by political philosophy. - Be able to identify political philosophy's continuing contribution to the discipline of political science. - Engage in persuasive analytical writing, as assessed through a midterm paper and a final seminar paper. - Share their knowledge with their peers and aid each other in the development of a

shared foundation of knowledge.

Course Goals

POLS 5206 develops research skills; oral and written communication skills; integrated reading and thinking skills; interpersonal exchange and reflective listening; and (in some cases) civic engagement.

Grading

Participation in classroom discussions: 20%, including occasional inverted classroom assignments. (A rough participation grade will be posted to Blackboard prior to the midterm. The *final* participation grade may improve or decrease depending on student performance in the second half of the course.)

Literature response papers (4 papers): 20% (4 x 5%) (At least one must come before the midterm)

Midterm paper: 20% in Week Seven (March 15)

End-of-semester paper: 20% in Week 14 (May 3)

Seminar leadership (20-30 minute presentations/discussion leadership on assigned readings; one before and one after midterm): 20% (= average of three presentation grades)

Grading:

94%-100%-	A	"A" grades confirm exceptional, extraordinary effort and results
90%-93%-	A-	
87%-89%-	B+	"B" grades confirm effort exceeding average and high quality work.
84%-86%-	B	
80%-83%-	B-	
77%-79%-	C+	"C" grades confirm average and satisfactory work.
74%-76%-	C	
70%-73%-	C-	
65%-69%	D+	"D" grades confirm less than satisfactory effort and less than adequate work.
55%-65%	D	
55% and below	F	"F" grades confirm far less than sufficient effort and results or may be given in response to a violation of academic integrity.

Schedule of topics and readings

Class sessions will include a brief overview provided by the instructor, either before the student presentation or (as I prefer it) as a supplement to it. This section of the class will introduce the main topics and themes of the week's readings. Student presenters will then begin a discussion of the assigned readings, focusing on identifying the important points.

After a ten-fifteen minute break mid-way through the class, the second portion of the class will be structured around an in-depth, class-wide discussion of the practical applications of the readings in the present-day world. This portion of the class will also be student-led and the presenter is encouraged to bring the class discussion in whatever direction/emphasis she prefers.

The required theory readings are listed below. All students are required to do all of the readings in theory. Readings identified as “discussion” topics are also required, and students should be prepared to discuss them within the normative frameworks of the current (and prior weeks’) required readings. Readings and links listed under “**applications**” are additions suggested by the instructor. Students should familiarize themselves with the normative implications of these examples, but it will be up to the student presenter to orient the discussion using their own emphases and any applications they find useful. Thus, a student may choose a different set of applications, or emphasize only some members of the given set.

Literature Review Papers

The aim of these papers is to practice the type of analytical writing students produce in their post-graduate careers. Students will write a short (2-3 page) analytical paper on the week’s substantive readings. Students will state in one sentence the topic of the reading, explain in one or two sentences the methodological approach of the author, and then summarize the main point(s) in one paragraph. This should be done for each reading, and then the two (or more) readings should be compared and contrasted in the remaining part of the paper. In this analysis and comparison, students are welcome to introduce their own opinions and normative challenges, subject to the usual rules of persuasive writing.

Presentations (Seminar Leadership)

Each student will act as classroom discussion leader for the week’s readings three times during the semester. Students will take the opportunity to introduce their understanding of the theoretical topic and also to guide the class towards specific applications of theories to contemporary practice. Students are encouraged to use current events and other multimedia sources to bring the discussion towards topics that they consider to be important and interesting. One of the presentations must come before the midterm.

Midterm Paper

Students will submit a polished argumentative paper on an assigned topic (2,000 words in length) in Week Seven (March 15). A properly written political philosophy paper is the subject of a long process that involves framing the research topic question; brainstorming theses; choosing a concrete, definable answer to the topic question (the thesis); providing adequate evidence to support the chosen thesis; and anticipating and answering counter-arguments. The instructor will provide a topic question (or, hopefully, two) and the students will practice crafting their own thesis and organizing their supporting evidence.

Final Seminar Paper

The final paper for this class (2,500-3,000 words in length) will consist of a completed draft of a paper on an assigned topic pertaining to the seminar's special topic, global justice. Students will be able to choose their preferred substantive focus (economic or social justice), so long as the paper frames its question with reference to the world.

Schedule of topics and readings

The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule of topics and readings if necessary

1. Introduction:

Week 1 (Feb. 2) What is Political Philosophy?

Discussion of current events (e.g., coronavirus, Brexit, right populism) and overview of the syllabus

Recommended reading: John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig, and Anne Phillips, "Overview of Political Theory," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, 1-35.

2. Distributive Justice

Week 2 (Feb. 9) Max U!

Utilitarianism (Greatest Happiness Principle, Felicific Calculus) in theory (Sandel, Chapter 2, 9-47)

Discussion: *The Queen v. Dudley and Stephens* (1884); *US v. Holmes* (1842)

Thought experiments: Philippa Foot's Trolley Problem and JJ Thomson's variant Applications:

- Peter Singer, "The Drowning Child and the Expanding Circle," *New Internationalist* (1997): <http://www.utilitarian.net/singer/by/199704--.htm>

Week 3 (Feb. 16) Lockean liberalism and modern libertarianism

Locke and property rights in theory (Sandel, Chapter 4, 83-126)

Discussion: Maspero development/evictions and the power of eminent domain:

<https://timep.org/commentary/analysis/from-community-participation-to-forced- eviction-in-the-maspero-triangle/>

Applications:

- self-enslavement and freedom of contract: <http://bleedingheartlibertarians.com/2012/04/can-you-sell-your-future-self-into-slavery/>

Libertarianism in theory (Sandel, Chapter 3, 49-82) and in practice

Discussion: Coronavirus, the WHO response, the CDC, and the closing of borders and quarantining of persons, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/01/31/asia-pacific/social-issues-asia-pacific/declares-global-emergency-virus-china/#.XjaoJ2gzbD4>, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/01/china-quarantine-coronavirus/605455/>, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/12/cdc-quarantine-rule-violate-civil-liberties/511823/>.

Application: Price-gouging

- The ice entrepreneurs and Hurricane Fran, http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2007/01/munger_on_price_1.html
- surge pricing at Uber: <http://www.theverge.com/2013/12/18/5221428/uber-surge->

[pricing-vs-price-gouging-law](#))

Week 4 (Feb. 23) Rawlsian egalitarianism

Rawls: Justice as Fairness in theory (Sandel, Chapter 7-8, 203-221, 223-235) and in practice; Richard Arneson, article TBD

Simulation: dividing the pizza. A way to understand the original position and the maximin.

Discussion: Bracketing our comprehensive views in a sphere of public reason: Quebec secularism and Rawlsian public reason

https://www.jstor.org/stable/23279928?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Applications: Examples from Egypt and abroad as chosen by the student presenter.

3. Social Justice

Week 5 (Mar. 1) Kantian autonomy

Kant, Freedom as autonomy (Sandel, Chapter 6, 157-198) and in practice (Sandel, 199-201 for Kant's "On the Supposed Right to Lie"; Kant on the death penalty (*Metaphysics of Morals*, excerpt)

Discussion: *US v. Alvarez* (2012) on the legality of the Stolen Valor Act (a right to lie?)

Discussion: Retributivist theories of punishment.

Application:

- The Whole Pie (<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2019.html>).

Week 6 (Mar. 8) Communitarianism

Justice, Community, and Membership in theory (Sandel, Chapter 12, 315-342) and Michael Sandel, "The Procedural Republic"

Short video and discussion: Should Germans today be held responsible for the sins and errors of Nazi-era Germany?

Application:

- Who is an Egyptian, and who owns Egypt's cultural heritage? John Merryman, John Henry Merryman, *Two Ways of Thinking About Cultural Property*, 80 AM. J. INT'L. L. (1986), 831-845; Salima Ikram, Collecting and Repatriating Egypt's Past: Toward a New Nationalism, *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, And Exclusion In A Global World*, ed H. Silverman (2011); Law No. 117 of 1983.

Classroom viewing: Slides of cultural heritage destruction.

Application:

- *Walker v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Inc.* (2015); flying the confederate flag after the Charleston shooting (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-poll-charleston-shooting-and-the-confederate-flag/>)

Week 7 (Mar. 15) Historicism

Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, excerpts; Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, 1-23.

Discussion: Paul Gulian Cobben, "The Citizen of the European Union from a Hegelian Perspective"

Application:

- Refugees: Humanity Uprooted, special issue of *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*

Week 8 (Mar. 22) Gender and the Household

Aristotle: the city, natural slavery, and household economy in theory (Book I, *Politics*; Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, Chapter 1; Dale Miller, “Mill on the Family,” *A Companion to Mill*; Nancy Hirschmann, “Mill, Political Economy, and Women’s Work,” *APSR*, 199-213; short excerpt, Susan Moller Okin, “‘Forty Acres and a Mule’ for Women: Rawls and Feminism,” *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* 4 (2005): 233–48); Discussion: Men and women and household work:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/12/yes-men-should-do-more-housework/282165/>

Application:

- *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs* Spring 2018 issue on gender (e.g., interview with Nawal El Saadawi; Ghada Barsoum, “Educated, But Will She Work?”)

Week 9 (Mar. 29) Disability, Affirmative Action, and Same-Sex Marriage

Affirmative Action in theory (Sandel, Chapter 9, 237-262)

Same Sex Marriage in theory (Sandel, 383-410); *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), excerpts.

Group listening to oral argument of *Obergefell*

Discussion: What is the harm in same-sex marriage?

Application: Egyptian or global examples as chosen by students.

Week 10 (Apr. 5) Affect, Intervention, Race, and Memory

Rahel Jaeggi, *Critique of Forms of Life*, excerpt; Martin Luther King, “I have a Dream,”

Lincoln Memorial, August 28, 1963; Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963;

Frederick Douglass’s speech of 1865: <http://rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/2946>; Ta-Nehisi

Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Discussion: Should there be reparations paid to black Americans in the present day for injustices done to black Americans in the past? Has the shift from “status” to “contract” described in Henry Maine’s *Ancient Law* been accomplished?

Application:

- #Blacklivesmatter and protests in Ferguson, MO, website (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/global-actions/>)

Week 11 (Apr. 12) Holiday*

Week 12 (Apr. 19) Holiday

Week 13 (Apr. 26) Representation

JS Mill: Representative Democracy and aristocracy in theory (Secret ballot, Pledges,

Plural voting, Presidential elections in JS Mill’s *Considerations on Representative*

Government); Dale Miller, “The Place of Plural Voting in Mill’s Conception of

Representative Government,” *Review of Politics*, 77, no. 3 (2015): 399–423.

Discussion: Jason Brennan, “The Ethics of Voting”: <http://www.artoftheory.com/the-ethics-of-voting/>). Should we vote? Why vote, if our vote won’t make any difference?

Applications:

- “Getting Majoritarianism Right” and “Getting Elections Wrong,” *Current Debates in Comparative Politics*, 100-107.

Week 14 (May 3) Imperialism and Post-Colonialism

Jennifer Pitts, “Political Theory of Empire and Imperialism,” *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 13

(2010): 211–35; Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of*

Liberalism Imperialism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1-20.

Application:

- Mark P. Denbeaux, *How America Tortures* (excerpts).
- Reflections on present-day imperialism as chosen by students.

7. Conclusion

Week 15 (May 10): Current events in Egypt and in Global context

Nadia Urbinati, "Political Theory of Populism," *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (2019): 111–127.

Other readings and applications to be determined on the basis of student interest after the midterm.

*We may require a makeup class to account for holidays scheduled for this semester.

Required books (for purchase by students):

All required texts for this course will be posted to Blackboard under the appropriate week. It is recommended that students purchase the handy reader from which several readings are sourced: *Justice: A Reader*, ed. Michael Sandel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Electronic devices and Classroom Demeanor:

The use of electronic devices such as cellphones and laptop computers is prohibited. There is a reason for this. (See Mueller and Oppenheimer, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science* 25 (2014): 1159–1168.) In a nutshell, laptop note-takers "performed significantly worse on the conceptual questions" and wrote notes that had "more verbatim overlap with the lecture." And, as a practical rule, the use of cellphones or laptops in class, or distracting or egregiously discourteous behavior, including arriving late, may result in a mark of absent for that class.

Attendance

Attendance may be taken each class. If you have more than three weeks of unexcused absences (3 classes), you have not completed the course and will receive a failing grade. Students will be informed of this pending status by email after the third week of absences. Written work that is due in class, or tests that are taken in class, cannot be made up or taken at a later date in the case of unexcused absences. Please see the AUC attendance policy (<http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1333>).

Policy on Academic integrity

Academic integrity includes a commitment neither to engage in nor tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Prohibited acts include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another person's work as one's own, using Internet or

other sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.

Plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the assignment in question. Cheating during an examination will result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, may also be implemented.

You should be aware that all written work might be submitted to “Turnitin.com”, the detection prevention software.

The University's statement on academic integrity, from which the above statement is drawn, is available online at:

<http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity/Pages/default.aspx>

Services for Students with Disabilities

AUC seeks to maintain a supportive academic environment for students with disabilities. To ensure their equal access to all educational programs, activities and services, students with disabilities should notify the university, provide documentation, and request reasonable accommodations. If a student has a documented disability and wants to request special accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at extension 3918 or sds@aucegypt.edu (located in the Office of Wellbeing/Dean of Students). See: <http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/disability-services>

To be accepted, accommodation letters should be presented to the instructor in advance of any assignment or exam, preferably at the beginning of the semester. AUC complies with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and offers numerous facilities available to help you with your educational endeavors.