

Suffolk County Community College, Selden, New York 11784

PHL 214 - 002: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (HONORS)

Instructor: Dr. Gertrude POSTL
Spring 2021, Section 35105
Modality: Combined Online (COMBINEONL)
Meeting Times (Zoom): M 9:30-10:45 p.m.

Office: Southampton Building 120
Tel. 451-4513 (Dept. Office: 451-4093)
postlg@sunysuffolk.edu
Zoom Office Hours: M/T/W/R 11:00 -12:00

OBJECTIVES:

This course will enable students to:

- Identify and accurately use basic concepts of social and political theory, such as justice, liberty, equality, rights, the common good, power, and oppression.
- Relate basic concepts of social and political theory to different models for governing, such as oligarchy, aristocracy, absolutism, social contract theory, democracy, liberalism, and communism, and explain them within their respective historical context.
- Apply the conceptual insights of this course to contemporary political issues and problems, such as cultural diversity, nationalism, globalization, race and gender relations, and politically motivated violence.
- Develop skills of critical analysis in speaking and writing.

Procedures for accomplishing these objectives: Lectures, class discussion, written assignments.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Steven M. Cahn, ed., *Political Philosophy. The Essential Texts*, Third ed., New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015.
- pdf files and online links

REQUIREMENTS:

1) ONE MIDTERM AND ONE FINAL EXAM (due 3/19 and 5/10)

Exams will consist of brief essay questions on the readings and the course material in general. They are open book format and will be posted on Blackboard. Completed exams have to be submitted on Blackboard.

2) TWO PAPERS (due 3/26, 4/26)

Papers have to be three to four pages long. They ask for a close reading and evaluation of two or three texts we discussed in class and for arguing one's own position in response. No additional research is required, and no outside sources shall be used. Rather, the focus shall be on the texts in question and the material presented in class. Topics and detailed instructions will be provided under "Assignments" on Blackboard.

3) PARTICIPATION, READING ASSIGNMENTS

Participation means to participate in discussions during real time class meetings on Zoom and an active presence on the Blackboard Discussion Board. The Discussion Board shall serve to encourage the expression of any responses to the course material as well as the free exchange of ideas among students. There will be only occasional interventions by the instructor.

4) ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance during real time class meetings on Zoom every Monday is part of the requirements for this course. More than two absences will negatively affect the grade.

W GRADE

Students can withdraw before the official withdraw date (4/2) without faculty approval. After this date faculty approval is required. The last possible date for submitting a withdrawal form with faculty approval is the last day of the semester (5/11).

GRADING:

<u>Two Exams:</u>	40% of the final grade
<u>Two Papers:</u>	45% of the final grade
<u>Class Participation:</u>	15% of the final grade

ATTENDANCE ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

As provided for in New York State Education Law §224-a, student absences from class necessitated by religious observance will be deemed an excused absence, with no academic consequences. Students must notify their professor in advance of their religious observance, via their College email accounts or otherwise in writing, of their intention to be absent from a particular class due to a religious observance; notification should occur at least one week prior to the religious observance. Observing students shall be granted reasonable arrangements and/or be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up missed quizzes, tests, assignments, and activities covered in their absence. Please refer to the College's [Religious Observance Policy](#), which is available on the Office of Legal Affairs' website, for additional information.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Suffolk County Community College provides reasonable accommodations to registered students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the Office of Disability Services. Once approved for reasonable accommodations, such students will be provided with a laminated letter, describing the specific accommodations. Students must present this laminated letter to each of their professors before accommodations can be provided. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential consultation.

Disability Services Contact Information:**Ammerman Campus**

Call the Disability Services Office at 631-451-4045, email the Office at disabilityserv-ammr@sunysuffolk.edu or stop by to make an appointment at Room 202 in the Ammerman Building.

Eastern Campus

Call the Disability Services Office at 631-548-2527, email the Office at disabilityserv-east@sunysuffolk.edu or stop by to make an appointment at the Student Success Center in the Peconic Building, Room 122.

Michael J. Grant Campus

Call the Disability Services Office at 631-851-6355, email the office at disabilityserv-west@sunysuffolk.edu or stop by to make an appointment in Caumsett Hall, Lower Level 20.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY -- PLAGIARISM

Suffolk County Community College provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge by submitting coursework that is uniquely theirs and giving proper attribution to the work of others. Participating honestly in the SCCC academic community ensures that students can take pride in their education and their contributions to scholarship. Without academic integrity, students gain unfair advantage over others and prevent their own intellectual progress. As a student in this class, you are expected to uphold the SCCC core value of Integrity and understand the Special Procedures for Academic Dishonesty in the relevant sections of the [SCCC Student Code of Conduct](#).

The Code prohibits academic misconduct, which includes any action that results in students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, or receiving credit for work that is not their own. Academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors: **cheating** on exams; **plagiarizing** - using another person's work or ideas without crediting them; **complicity** - helping a student, or being helped, to engage in academic misconduct; **multiple submissions** - submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without the instructor's permission; **falsification and forgery** - inventing information or falsifying the identity of a student.

Information about the Student Code of Conduct, plagiarism and the citation process is in the [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Guide](#).

Plagiarism:

“Students should realize that presenting the words and ideas of others as their own is dishonest. In writing, students must fully credit the source of any quoted, paraphrased, or summarized passages and any ideas which they have borrowed. Failure to conform to these academic standards is plagiarism and may result in a failing grade for the course and/or serious disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Conduct (SCCC College Catalogue, Section on “Academic Integrity”).

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In alignment with our institutional mission and strong support of diversity, equity and inclusion, Suffolk County Community College reaffirms its commitment to providing access to higher education and a welcome environment to **all** students. No matter your age, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, family status, U.S. citizenship status, religion, socio-economic status, political ideology, military-connected status, or intellectual or physical ability - you belong here. Therefore, in this class, we will maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect, civil discourse and cross-cultural communication.

SCHEDULE:

M 1/25: Introduction: What is Political Philosophy?

CLASSICAL BEGINNINGS

M 2/1: **Lecture:** Plato’s notion of justice
Reading: Plato, *Republic*, from Book IV (pp. 70-79) and Book V (pp. 79-90)

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

M 2/8: **Lecture:** Social Contract Theory
Readings: Thomas Hobbes, from *Leviathan*, Chapters 13, 14, 15 (pp.319- 325); John Locke, from *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, Chapters II, III, VIII, IX (pp.365-370, 376-379)

M 2/15: No Class – Presidents’ Day

M 2/22: **Lecture:** Critique of Social Contract
Readings: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, from *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, Second Part (pp.428-437); Virginia Held, *Non-Contractual Society. A Feminist View* (pp.1010-1016)

PROPERTY AND ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION

M 3/1: **Lecture:** Liberal Theory, Property, Division of Labor
Readings: John Locke, from *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, Chapter V: Of Property (pp.370-374); &&25-38); Adam Smith, from *The Wealth of Nations*, Book 1, Chapters I, II, VIII (pp. 492-501)

- M 3/8: **Lecture:** Critique of Capitalism – Marxism
Reading: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, from *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (pp. 714-725)
- M 3/15: **Lecture:** Justice of Distribution
Readings: Robert Nozick, from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Entitlement Theory of Justice (pp. 957-964); Thomas Pogge, from *World Poverty and Human Rights*, online link:
https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/journal/19_1/symposium/5109
- R 3/18: **MIDTERM EXAM POSTED**
F 3/19: **MIDTERM EXAM DUE**

JUSTICE AND LIBERTY

- M 3/22: **Lecture:** Introduction to Justice and Liberty
Reading: John Rawls, from *A Theory of Justice*, (pp.917-924)
- F 3/26: **FIRST PAPER DUE**
- M 3/29: **Lecture:** The Concept of Liberty
Reading: John Stuart Mill, from *On Liberty*, Chapter 1 (pp. 748-755)
- F 4/2: **LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES WITH GUARANTEED “W”!**
- M 4/5: **Lecture:** Positive and Negative Liberty
Readings: Isiah Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty (pp. 875-881); Charles Taylor, What’s Wrong with Negative Liberty? (pp. 899-904)

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES: DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS?

- M 4/12: **Lecture:** History of Democracy
Read: Alexis de Tocqueville, from *Democracy in America*, Part Two, Chapter 6 (pp.649-658); John Dewey, Democracy (pp.1109-1113)
- M 4/19: **Lecture:** Democracy in Crisis and New Populism
Readings: Michael J. Sandel, Populism, Liberalism, and Democracy (pdf); Jacques Derrida, from *Rogue* (pdf)

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES: RACIAL INJUSTICE

- M 4/26: **Lecture:** History of Race and Racism
Read: W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks*, Chapter I: “Of our Spiritual Strivings”:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm>
Frantz Fanon, from *Black Skin, White Mask*, Chapter 5:
https://monoskop.org/images/a/a5/Fanon_Frantz_Black_Skin_White_Masks_1986.pdf

SECOND PAPER DUE

M 5/3: **Lecture:** Civil Rights Movement and Contemporary Situation
Watch: Movie: *I am Not Your Negro* (2016, dir. Raoul Peck), documentary on James Baldwin, available through SCCC library
Reading: Ta-Nahisi Coates, from *Between the World and Me* (pdf)

M 5/10: **FINAL EXAM POSTED AND DUE AT MIDNIGHT**