

Bergen Community College
Division of Arts & Humanities
Department of Philosophy & Religion

Course Syllabus

PHR-111 Social and Political Philosophy

Basic Information about Course and Instructor

Semester and year:
Course and Section Number:
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:
Office Location:
Phone:
Departmental Secretary: [optional]
Office Hours:
Email Address:

Course Description

PHR-111 Social and Political Philosophy is a general introduction to the broad themes of political philosophy and social theory: How human life is and should be organized into societies; the nature of political systems and different forms of government; the relationship between the individual and the state; the nature of justice; the influence of economy on society; how human nature influences social nature; and the meaning of freedom and democracy.

3 lectures, 3 credits

General Education Course – Humanities Elective

Student Learning Objectives:

As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the major issues of social and political philosophy.
2. Identify the major philosophers who have contributed to a discussion of the problems of social and political philosophy and their proposed solutions to these problems.
3. Interpret, summarize, and paraphrase, both orally and in writing, the views of these philosophers as expressed in the philosophical texts they have written.
4. Use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which these philosophers have attempted to solve the problems of social and political philosophy.
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing their own views on issues in social and political philosophy; and
7. participate actively in discussions of issues in social and political philosophy (re: SLOs 1-4).

In pursuit of the above objectives, the course is based upon the reading of original sources (not secondary material, which, however, may be used in a supporting role) in the field of social and political philosophy; principles of logical analysis and critical reasoning are reviewed; techniques of philosophical

research and writing are introduced; students are given the opportunity to participate actively in class discussions; students are required to do a substantive amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

Learning Assessment

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through various means of assessment, such as the "Suggested Means of Assessment" listed below.

Student Learning Objective	Suggested Means of Assessment
1. Identify the major issues of social and political philosophy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments
2. Identify the major philosophers who have contributed to a discussion of the problems of social and political philosophy and their proposed solutions to these problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments • Graded class presentations
3. Interpret, summarize, and paraphrase, both orally and in writing, the views of these philosophers as expressed in the philosophical texts they have written.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments • Graded class presentations
4. Use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which these philosophers have attempted to solve the problems of social and political philosophy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Quizzes and objective tests • Writing assignments • Graded class presentations
5. locate, evaluate, and use effectively information from a variety of relevant sources;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing assignments* • Graded class presentations
6. state and support in clear, logical, and concise writing their own views on issues in social and political philosophy; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay examinations • Writing assignments
7. participate actively in discussions of issues in social and political philosophy (re: SLOs 1-4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded class discussions

*Writing assignments for the purpose of assessing student success on SLO 5 will include research and writing projects, possibly including term papers, in which a student identifies an information need, accesses and evaluates appropriate resources, and uses the information effectively and ethically for a specific purpose.

Course Content

A variety of approaches may be used to satisfy the above course description. One may adopt an 'issues-oriented' approach, in which topics are arranged (for example, social contract theory, the nature of justice, the relationship between the state and the individual, etc.) for discussion and relevant readings are selected towards that end. The course may also be done from an 'historical' perspective, studying relevant philosophical texts chronologically. Towards this end, original source material by political and social philosophers, both classical and contemporary, can be read, including figures such as (but not limited to): Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hume, Smith, Hamilton and Madison, Wollstonecraft, Paine, Burke, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Mill, Rawls, Nozick, and Habermas. Additionally, contemporary material about the twentieth-century breakup of colonial empires and its theorization, the impact of globalization, and current relevance to political theory of major current worldwide political issues may be covered at the instructor's discretion.

Whichever approach is taken, however, the course must cover (using original source material): 1) either Plato's *Republic* or Aristotle's *Politics*; 2) Augustine's *City of God* or selections from Aquinas's *Summa*; and 3) at least three of the following: Hobbes *Leviathan*; Locke's *Second Treatise*; Rousseau's *Social Contract*; *The Federalist Papers*; selections from the works of Marx/Engels; Mill's *On Liberty*; Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*; Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.

Special features of the course may be designated by individual instructors; these may include the incorporation of power-point presentations, film, works of politically themed literature, etc.

Course Text and/or Other Study Materials

Approved Course Text: *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*, ed. Cahn (Oxford, 2d ed., 2011), ISBN 978-0195396614.

Individual paperback editions of works studied (Penguin editions, for example) may be substituted for the course text, as the instructor desires.

Note: The overwhelming majority of the primary source writings in the above texts and individual paperbacks are available for free in various editions on the Internet. Even with respect to modern texts still under copyright, one can access, for example, the first four chapters of Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* on line for free through Google Books, and Rawls's essay, "Justice as Fairness," a paper-length forerunner of *A Theory of Justice*, is available on line for free. Instructors therefore may make use of the extensively available Internet sources for this material in lieu of ordering texts, which can reduce the cost of student instructional materials. However, the approved course text above sells for approximately \$40.00 and is not at this writing prohibitively expensive.]

Writing and Critical Thinking Requirements:

Because PHR-111 is a General Education course (status pending), it requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.) Students should be especially encouraged (even required, at the discretion of the instructor) to read some book not officially part of the course syllabus but relevant to a course topic chosen by the student as an individual project (to encourage book reading among students). Tests and examinations containing essay components may also be used, and instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

Grading Policy

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than twenty percent (20%) of the final grade. A student's research and writing work will count at least fifty percent (50%) of the final grade.

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified in the course syllabus.

Attendance Policy in this Course:

[To be designated by the instructor]

Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]

Examples:
 Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty.
 ADA statement.
 Sexual Harassment statement.
 Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology.
 Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.

Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

Student and Faculty Support Services

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 psimms@bergen.edu
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/4787.aspx
The Tutoring Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/pages/2192.aspx
The Writing Center	Room L-125	201-447-7908 http://www.bergen.edu/pages1/Pages/1795.aspx
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-131	201-612-5270 http://www.bergen.edu/oss
BCC Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

Special Note on the Tutoring Center

The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center encompasses the Tutoring Center, the English Language Resource Center, and the Writing Center. The website of the Learning Assistance Center is located at www.bergen.edu/pages/2192.asp. Tutoring services are available for this course in the Tutoring Center. I strongly recommend that you make use of those services as we progress through the course. As listed above, the Tutoring Center is located in Room L-125, and its phone number is 201-447-7908.

Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club

Logos – The BCC Philosophy & Religion Club

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, but sometimes also on different days and at different times. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the Philosophy & Religion club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Professor Jennifer Lyden (L-326, 201-493-3540, jlyden@bergen.edu). (LOGOS does not hold regular meetings during the summer.)

Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topics & Assignments	Learning Objectives
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

Departmental Policy Syllabus

Revised, 8/28/09; revised, 11/22/13; updated, 1/18/14, 2/13/14

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See the Sample Course Outline and Calendar below.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topics & Assignments	Learning Objectives
1	Jan 21-26	Getting off to a Good Start –Startup Activities	
2	Jan 27- Feb 2	Topic: What is social and political philosophy? Assignments: Reading - Instructor Notes with Self-Test Questions; Wiki activity, What is philosophy?; Forum Activity (writing and discussion assignment) - Identify a philosophical question about social and political philosophy; and weekly quiz.	1, 7
3	Feb 3-9	Topic: Plato on Citizenship: The Apology, Part I Assignments: Research assignment on Plato and related Wiki activity; Readings, Plato's <i>Apology</i> , Cahn, pp. 5 – 22, and Instructor Notes with Self-Test Questions; Forum Activity (writing and discussion assignment) – On Flag Burning; and weekly quiz.	2-7
4	Feb 10-16	Topic: Plato and Citizenship, The Apology, Part II Assignments: Readings - Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions and Martin Luther King Jr's "I Dream a Dream Speech"; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – Homer and Plato Discuss King's speech; and weekly quiz.	1-7
5	Feb 17-23	Topic: Plato's <i>Crito</i> – Citizenship and the Obligation to Obey Assignments: Readings - Plato's <i>Crito</i> , Cahn, pp. 22 – 30, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Wiki activity, Identify Socrates' Arguments; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) - Political Authority and Punishment – The Snowden Affair; and weekly quiz.	1-7
6	Feb 24- Mar 2	Topic: Plato's <i>Republic</i> , What is justice? Assignments: Readings - Plato's <i>Republic</i> , Books I and II, Cahn text, especially pp. 31- 34 and 51 – 55, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – Glaucon's Challenge to Socrates; and weekly quiz.	1-7
7	Mar 3-9	Midterm examination	1-4, 6
8	Mar 10-16	Topic: St. Augustine – A Citizen of Two Worlds Assignments: Research assignment on Augustine and related Wiki activity; Readings - Augustine's <i>The City of God</i> , Cahn, pp. 229 – 236, Instructor Notes and Self Test Questions, and Henry David Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience"; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – Believers' Obligation to Political Authority: Thoreau and Augustine; and weekly quiz.	1-7
9	Mar 24-30	Topic: Machiavelli, The Politics of Power Assignments: Research assignment on Machiavelli and related Wiki activity; Readings - Masters, Introductory Essay, Niccolo Machiavelli, Cahn, pp. 253 – 256, <i>The Prince</i> , Cahn, pp. 256 – 262, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – What are wise political leaders like?; and weekly quiz.	1-7

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topics & Assignments	Learning Objectives
10	Mar 31- Apr 6	Topic: Thomas Hobbes – The Social Contract, Part I Assignments: Research assignment and related Wiki activity; Readings - Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Cahn, pp. 285 – 310, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – Video clip, Golding’s The Lord of the Flies: what would a state of nature be like?; and weekly quiz.	1-7
11	Apr 7-13	Topic: John Locke – The Social Contract, Part II Assignments: Research assignment and related Wiki activity; Readings – John Simmonds, Introduction, John Locke, Cahn text, pp. 311 – 315, Locke’s <i>Second Treatise</i> , Cahn, pp. 315 – 342, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – Your favorite quotation from Locke; and weekly quiz.	1-7
12	Apr 14-20	Topic: John Locke, religious Tolerance Assignments: Readings – Locke’s <i>A Letter Concerning Tolerance</i> , Cahn, pp. 345 – 350, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) – A Case Study: Sherbert v Verner (1962) Supreme Court decision; and weekly quiz.	1-7
13	Apr 21-27	Topic: J. S. Mill, Something Is Still Missing Assignments: Research assignment and related Wiki activity; Readings – Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Cahn, pp. 633 – 637, and Instructor Notes with Self Test Questions; Forum activity (writing and discussion assignment) - Same-sex marriage; and weekly quiz.	1-7
14	Apr 28- May 4	Final Examinations	1-4, 6
15	May 5-11	Topic: Course Retrospective Assignments: Course Survey and Reflection assignment	1-4, 7

All reading and study assignments are in the following sources:

Cahn text - **Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts**, edited by Steven M. Cahn, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Instructor Notes with Self-Test Questions – a secondary source text and study guide for the course written by the Professor.