PHILOSOPHY 1312

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Course Description and Prerequisites: ***Note that at the bottom of each page is a link for a video/youtube walkthrough of the syllabus.*** This course will explore some of our greatest social problems—racism, sexism, and classism. It will consider some of our most perennial human problems: What is happiness? What is the good life? Then we will explore which political philosophers have the greatest potential for delivering us from our problems and helping us to attain a happy and good life. A student need not have any prior knowledge of philosophy or these subjects to take this course.

Two of the central questions of this course will be: What is the place of politics in society? And, who should be a political leader, if anyone?

CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO WALKTHROUGH OF THE SYLLABUS
Some of the political philosophies and figures we will cover include:

- Aristotle (aristocracy)
- Plato (aristocracy)
- Locke (liberalism)
- Mill (libertarianism)
- Marx (communism)
- Pettit (republicanism)
- Anzaldúa (El Mundo Zurdo)

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
When you are finished with this course, you should be able to:

1. Define racism, classism, and sexism and their systematic nature in the United States.
2. Identify and explain the basic tenets of: aristocracy, liberalism, libertarianism, republicanism, and communism.
3. Identify the political philosophies guiding different popular politicians and individuals in the mass media.
4. State the reasons why you prefer a particular political philosophy over others.
5. Explain the virtues of different political philosophies in their ability to deal with the problems of racism, sexism, and classism.
6. Be able to translate a political philosophy into concrete action.

**Assignments and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):**

Students have five assignments (A-E) to help them meet the six Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs 1-6).

- **A.** The weekly reading quizzes will test students’ comprehension of the reading and key concepts. (SLOs 1, 2, 3)
- **B.** The weekly lecture quizzes will be based on the week’s video and in class learning. It will ask more more reflective questions than assignment A, some focusing on current issues. (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
- **C.** A controversy is much like a debate. The controversy essay will ask you to take three positions: pro, con, and what you think is true on an issue that dealing with politics, race, class, and gender. (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

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“The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”

—KARL MARX

**CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO WALKTHROUGH OF THE SYLLABUS**
D. The service learning project and presentation apply what you have learned to improve your community. *(SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)*

E. The final essay will focus on using the course materials to argue for your preference of one political philosophy over others to ameliorate the social problems of racism, sexism, or classism. *(SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)*

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**Grading Policies**

Grades will be assigned as follows: A 100-90, B 89.99-80, C 79.99-70, D 69.99-60, F 59.99-0.

The following items will make up the final grade:

- Weekly Reading Quizzes: 20%
- Weekly Lecture Quizzes: 20%
- Controversy Essay: 20%
- Service Learning Project Presentation: 20%
- Final Essay: 20%

**Textbook and/or Resource Material:**

All readings and assignments will be available online.

**Office Hours**

Office hours will be held in person and online. Normal in person office hours will be held Thursdays 12:15–1:30pm. Tuesdays, I will be available ONLINE from 12:00-1:30pm. You can click on the link on your Blackboard course page, ‘Blackboard Collaborate Ultra’ for text/voice chat/video chat based help during this time. Further instruction will be given in class.

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**Attendance**

Students are allowed three absences. Each absence beyond three will result in the loss of 10% of the final grade. Tardiness, at the instructor’s judgement, can be counted as absences. Normally, the only absences that will be excused are these: officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence for approval. Students should contact the professor if they believe their case merits special consideration (e.g. long-term hospitalization). Otherwise, students should plan wisely with the three absences they are granted for sickness, family emergencies, and car problems.

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**Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices will be permitted in this class. This includes not only the use of electronic devices but also the visible, audible, or implied existence of them. Any evidence (including audible or visible) of electronic devices will result in a marked absence from the course. Remember that each absence over 3 will result in the loss of 10% of the final grade.

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*A society that puts equality before freedom will get neither. A society that puts freedom before equality will get a high degree of both.* —Milton Friedman

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CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO WALKTHROUGH OF THE SYLLABUS
Calendar of Activities
The UTRGV academic calendar can be found at https://my.utrgv.edu/home at the bottom of the screen, prior to login.

Unit 1: Introduction & Aristotle
Jan 18
Form Groups, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Unit 2: Aristotle
Jan 25
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics & Politics*

Unit 3: Plato
Feb 1
Plato, *Republic*

Unit 4: Liberalism
Feb 8
Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*

Unit 5: Libertarianism
Feb 15
Mill, *On Liberty; Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom*

Midterm
Feb 22
In-Class Controversy

Unit 6: Marx & Class
Mar 1
Friedrich Engels, *The Principles of Communism*; Engels & Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

Unit 7: Marxism Today
Mar 8
Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*, Ch. 1

SPRING BREAK
Mar 15
No Classes University Wide

Unit 8: Republicanism
Mar 22
Philip Pettit, *On The People’s Terms*, Ch. 1

CLASS CANCELLED
Mar 29
Professor at North Texas Philosophical Society

Unit 9: Feminism
Apr 5
Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Unit 10: Race & Racism
Apr 12
Barbara Fields, *Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America*

Unit 11: Anzaldúa
Apr 19
Gloria Anzaldúa, *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*; Douglas Massey, *Immigration Enforcement as a Race-Making Institution*

Final Presentations
Apr 26
Presentations

Final Presentations
May 1
**ONLY TUESDAY CLASS!** Presentations

**UNIVERSITY STUDY DAY**
May 3
No Classes University Wide

Final Essay Due
May 7
By 5:00pm online

CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO WALKTHROUGH OF THE SYLLABUS
SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:
Spring 2018 Module 1 February 14 – February 20
Spring 2018 Module 2 April 11 – April 17
Spring 2018 (full semester) April 11 – May 2

CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO WALKTHROUGH OF THE SYLLABUS