

PHIL 2020 Practical Philosophy: The Social Contract

Monday/Wednesday 2:35-3:55 CB 2104

Vida Panitch vida.panitch@carleton.ca

Office: Paterson 3A55 Mondays 1-2:30

*minor changes to this syllabus might be made before January 5, 2015

Course Description:

Social Contract Theory addresses itself to a key question of practical philosophy, namely, what is the source of the state's legitimacy, and thus the source of our duty to obey it. According to SCT, the legitimate authority of government is grounded in the hypothetical consent of the governed, where the form and content of this consent derives from the idea of contract or mutual agreement. Proponents of the theory have provided diverse and conflicting accounts of the nature of consent and the conditions under which it should be given, as well as diverse conceptions of what it means for a legitimate state to treat all those on whom it depends for its authority with an equal concern and respect. This course will track the development of social contract theory from the ancient period to the present, while exploring some of its moral and political limitations. SCT is central to the broad terrain of practical philosophy as it connects abstract conceptual ideas to ultimate matters of practical concern.

Course Assignments:

There will be 3 brief essay assignments for this course, 1 group presentation, a midterm and a final take-home exam. The essays will be 3 pages in length and in them students will be asked to reconstruct, in logical form, a key argument from course materials, and to raise a brief criticism of the argument. The purpose of these assignments is to accustom new philosophers to the basic structure of analytic philosophical writing. For their presentations students will work in groups and present on a topic/issue of ongoing practical concern to which they will apply the philosophical view under consideration. More information on both the essay format and the presentation is available below the course schedule. The in-class midterm and the final take home exam will be essay-based and will require that students explain and engage critically with the course materials.

Essays 1: 10% Due February 9

Essay 2: 12% Due March 9

Essay 3: 15% Due April 1

Presentation = 10%

Attendance on presentations days = 8%

Mid-term = 15 % February 23

Take-home exam = 30% Due last day of April exam period

Course Readings:

The readings are all available online, either linked from the outline below, or in the library's e-journals. The Rawls reading will be made available on the course website.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

January 7: introduction to the class

Week 2

January 12: Plato, *Crito* <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html>

January 14: Seminar on how to write a Philosophy Paper

Week 3

January 19: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I chapters 13-15,

January 21: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part II chapters 17-21, 28-29

<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>

Week 4

January 26: Hobbes Presentations

January 28: John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, chapters 1-8

<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>

Week 5

February 2: John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, chapters 10-19

<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>

February 4: Locke Presentations

Week 6

February 9: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I, chapters 1-9

First paper due today

February 11: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book II, chapters 1-4, 7;

Book IV, chapters 1-2, 7- 8 <http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>

Week 7: Reading Break

Week 8

February 23: In Class Midterm Test

February 25: Rousseau Presentations

Week 9

March 2: David Hume, *Of the Original Contract*

<http://www.constitution.org/dh/origcont.htm>

March 4: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice, revised edition* pp 3-19

Week 10:

March 9: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice, revised edition* pp. 47-81

Second Paper Due Today

March 11: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice, revised edition*, pp. 102-135

Week 11:

March 16: Rawls Presentations

March 18: Ronald Dworkin, "Equality of Resources" s. I-III only, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10(4) 1981.

Week 12:

March 23: Susan Okin, "Justice and Gender," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 16 (1): 42-72

March 25: Anita Silvers, "Justice Through Trust: Disability and the Outlier Problem in Social Contract Theory," *Ethics* 116 (1): 40-77

Week 13:

March 30: Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal,"

<http://www.animal-rights-library.com/texts-m/singer02.pdf>

April 1: Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, "A Political Theory of Animal Rights"

https://www.academia.edu/2392907/Sue_Donaldson_and_Will_Kymlicka_Do_We_Need_a_Political_Theory_of_Animal_Rights_2012

Third Paper Due Today

Week 14

April 6: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(1) 1972: 229-243

April 8: Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 33(2) 2005: 113-147

Essays:

There are three essays for this course. They will be 3 pages in length, and are weighted, such that the third essay is worth more than the second, which is worth more than the first. This is so that we can accord greater reward in your final mark to the work that will have shown the most progress throughout the term. The more closely you pay attention to comments you receive on earlier papers the more it will pay off as you write later ones. We will spend time as a class discussing the requirements of philosophical writing. Your TA will also hold office hours throughout the term to discuss the expectations of philosophical writing further.

In your essays you will be asked to 1) schematize, 2) exposit and 3) evaluate a text, or portion thereof. To **schematize** means to reproduce an argument in its logical form: identifying its ultimate conclusion and supporting premises. You should use as few premises as possible and organize them in the most logical order possible. To **exposit** means to explain, using your own words, the author's argument. You can elaborate here on the schema's structure, explain the author's intentions and identify any missing premises (ones the author may need or assume but not actually include). And finally, to **evaluate** means to critically engage with the argument. Is it valid (if the premises are true, does the conclusion follow)? Is it sound (are the premises and conclusion both true)? What challenges can you raise against one of the argument's premises, or its conclusion, and what implications does this challenge have for the argument as a whole?

Presentations:

Students will work in groups of 3 and give presentations of 25 minutes, including time for discussion on one of the designated presentation days. Students must **sign-up on CU Learn by January 19** for their preferred presentation date, **and must contact me regarding the practical topic of the their presentation no later than one week before their presentation** date. When your group selects a topic (and those on the list below are merely suggested) let me know right away and I will mark it as having been reserved and not available to the other groups on your day. Note that any of the topics suggested for one author could just as easily be considered from the perspective of any of the others. In your presentation you should: 1) **explain** the nature of the practical dilemma and the moral issues it raises, 2) **exposit** the author's relevant views, 3) **apply** the author's views to the dilemma, 4) **evaluate** the appropriateness and validity of the author's views as applied to the dilemma.

Hobbes' Leviathan

The Death Penalty (is it right to kill as punishment for killing?)

Just War and Terrorism (if war is the state of nature, can we do anything to our enemies in wartime?)

The Free Rider Problem (how do we resolve the prisoners' dilemmas and other puzzles of cooperation where self-interest makes each party worse off?)

Locke's Treatise on Government

Global poverty (should we share with those who failed to appropriate, especially if their natural resource share was less than ours?)

Environmentalism (does private property protect or threaten the environment?)

Revolution (do citizens have a right/obligation to revolt against unjust regimes?)

Rousseau's Social Contract

Inheritance and Inequality (should the rich be allowed to inherit /bequeath?)

Gender Inequality (how does it originate and what should be done about it?)

Censorship (can/should the state censor views that don't support civic values?)

Voting and Electoral Practices (does campaign financing undermine democracy?)

Separation of Church and State (should there be a state religion?)

Rawls' Theory of Justice

Multiculturalism (do we protect freedom of religion when it threatens equality?)

Public Education (can we really achieve equal opportunity through education?)

Public/Private Health Care (does justice demand equal health care?)

The Occupy Movement (why should the government help the 99%?)

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2014-15)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX. You may send them by courier, if necessary.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam

requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 4	Classes start (after Orientation events).
Sept. 17	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 13	Thanksgiving Day – university closed.
Oct. 27-31	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 9	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 10-21	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses.
Dec. 21	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 16	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 16-20	Winter Break, classes suspended.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 8	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 11-23	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735