

PHIL 2020 Practical Philosophy: The Social Contract

Winter 2020 Monday/Wednesday 11:35-12:55 ME3356

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Office hours: Paterson 3A55 by appointment

Official Calendar Description:

PHIL 2020 [0.5 credit]

Issues in Practical Philosophy

Issues drawn from ethics, social and political philosophy, and related fields will be examined through careful study of significant philosophical texts after 1900, along with some ensuing debates.

Prerequisite(s): enrolment in Honours or Combined Honours Philosophy programs, or in philosophy, Ethics, and Public Affairs, or permission of the Department.

Lectures and discussion three hours a week.

Course Overview:

Social Contract Theory (SCT) 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.

Course Assignments:

There will be three short essay assignments for this course, one group presentation, a midterm, and a final take-home exam. The essays will be 3-4 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 case study presentations students will work in small groups and present on an issue of ongoing practical concern to which they will apply the philosophical view under consideration. They will thereby gain the experience of applying philosophical learning to case studies of practical import. More information on both the essay format and the presentation is available below the course schedule. The midterm and final take-home exam will be essay based and will require students to explain and engage critically with course materials.

Grade Breakdown:

- **Essay 1: 12% Due February 3**
- **Essay 2: 12% Due March 4**
- **Essay 3: 12% Due April 1**
- **Case Study Presentation: 10% Sign up on CU Learn by January 15**
- **Attendance on Presentations Days: 4%**
- **Midterm Exam in Class February 24: 15%**
- **Take-Home Exam: 35% Posted on April 6, due April 25**

Course Readings: most readings are linked below, if no link is provided for a reading that means it is available as a PDF on CU Learn.

Course Schedule:

Jan 6: Introduction to the course

Jan 8: Plato, *Crito* <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html>

Jan 13: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I ch. 13-15

Jan 15: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I ch. 16-21; 28-29

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hobbes/thomas/h68l/contents.html>

Jan 20: John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, ch. 1-8

Jan 22: John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, ch. 9-19

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/locke/john/l81s/contents.html>

Jan 27: Hobbes Presentations

Jan 29: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book I ch. 1-9

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/r/rousseau/jean_jacques/r864s/contents.html

Feb 3: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book II ch. 1-8 ***1st Essay Due**

Feb 5: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book IV ch. 1-8,

Feb 10: Locke Presentations

Feb 12: Rousseau Presentations

Feb 24: Midterm Exam in Class

Feb 26: Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: This may be True in Theory but Does Not Apply in Practice" Part II pp. 290-304

Mar 2: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-19

Mar 4: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 47-81 ***2nd Essay Due**

Mar 9: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 102-135

Mar 11: Rawls Presentations

Mar 16: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 3-25

Mar 18: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 108-119; 149-164

Mar 23: Ronald Dworkin, "Equality of Resources" pp. 284-304

Mar 25: Philippe Van Parijs, "Why Surfers Should be Fed," pp.101-125

Mar 30: Charles Beitz, "Justice and International Relations," pp. 360-383

Apr 1: Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Global Justice," pp. 113-134 ***3rd Essay due**

April 6: Exam Review and Discussion

Essays:

There are three essays for this course. They will be 3-4 pages in length, and due on the dates identified in the course schedule.

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 (that 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 all 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?

Case Study Presentations:

Students will work in groups of 2 or 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 Jan 15** for their preferred presentation date and must contact the instructor regarding the practical topic of their presentation no later than one week before their presentation date. When your group selects a topic it will be marked as having been reserved and not available to the other groups on your day. Note that the topics recommended below are merely suggestions, and also that each topic could work for one author as easily as for any of the others.

The purpose of your case study presentation is to identify the practical relevance of philosophical ideas, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of employing philosophical methodology to addressing intractable social problems. Through the application of philosophical ideas and methodology to social and political problems, we are best able

to appreciate the essential role they can play in practical problem-solving across a diversity of professional fields.

In your presentation you should: 1) **explain** the nature of the practical dilemma and the moral, social, political, and/or legal issues it raises; 2) **exposit** the relevant author's views; 3) **apply** the author's views to the dilemma, and suggest how the author's views might help resolve the dilemma in questions; 4) **evaluate** the appropriateness and validity of the author's views as applied to the dilemma.

Suggested Case Study Presentation Topics:

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, is there such thing as a just war?

The Free Rider Problem: how to resolve collective action problems (eg the prisoner's dilemma) where self-interest makes parties worse off than they would be if they cooperated?

Locke's *Treatise on Government*

Global Poverty: should we share resources with those who have none? What if we failed to leave enough and as good?

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 state values?

Voting and Electoral Practices: does campaign financing undermine democracy?

Separation of Church and State: should the state support one religion?

Rawls' *Theory of Justice*

Multiculturalism: should we protect religious freedom when it threatens equality?

Public Education: can we really achieve equal opportunity through education?

Public/Private Health Care: does justice demand public health care?

Black Lives Matter: where is race in the social contract?

The Welfare State: can the state force the 1% to help the 99%?

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2019-20)

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 on the first page: student name and number; course name and number; instructor's name.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates below.
- 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.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

If you miss a final examination (formally scheduled or take-home) because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral. You must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of your formally scheduled exam or within 3 working days after the due date of a take-home exam. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.5>

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. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Academic Accommodation:

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

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

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/>

Survivors of Sexual Violence: as a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

Important Dates:

Sept. 4	Classes start.
Sept. 17	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 14	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 21-25	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 22	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 6	Last day of fall term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. 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 a fall term course.
Dec. 9-21	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 21	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Classes begin.
Jan. 17	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 17	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 17-21	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 7	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 10	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 13-25	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 25	All take-home examinations are due on this day.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/academicadvising 520-7850
Writing Services:	4 th Floor, Library http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/ 520-3822
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735