

## **PHIL 2020 Practical Philosophy: The Social Contract**

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### **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 source 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 this agreement 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 political limitations.

### **Course Format:**

Lectures will be posted every Monday at the start of our regular class time of 11:35. They will typically consist of 3 videos of 20-25 minutes in length. We will meet virtually as a class on Wednesdays during the class time of 11:35 -12:55. Zoom links will be provided on CuLearn. Our Wednesday meetings will involve discussing the weekly readings and lectures as a class as well as in smaller breakout groups. Discussion questions will be assigned to breakout groups and answers will be presented back to the class, as well as submitted in written form at the end of each week's discussion.

### **Course Assignments:**

There will be 3 essay assignments for this course, weekly discussion questions, 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 criticism of the argument. Essay topics will be posted 2 weeks ahead of each due date. More information on the essay format is available below the course schedule. The final take-home exam will be essay based and will require that students explain and engage critically with course materials. We will discuss all assignments during our first virtual meeting on January 13, and we will discuss the final exam in further detail on the last day of class, April 12.

**Grade Breakdown:**

- Essay 1: 15% Due February 10
- Essay 2: 15% Due March 10
- Essay 3: 15% Due April 12
- Discussion Group Answers: 15%
- Take-home exam: 40% Posted on April 7 and Due April 27

**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1:** Introduction to the Course and Course Syllabus

Jan 11: *No Posted Lecture*

Jan 13: Live Discussion

**Week 2:** Plato's *Crito*

- <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/crito.html>

Jan 18: Posted Lecture

Jan 20: Live Discussion

**Week 3:** Hobbes, *Leviathan* Part 1 chs. 13-15, Part 2, chs. 17-21

- <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hobbes1651part1.pdf>

- <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hobbes1651part2.pdf>

Jan 25: Posted Lecture

Jan 27: Live Discussion

**Week 4:** John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 1-9, 11, 18-19

- <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf>

Feb 1: Posted Lecture

Feb 3: Live Discussion

**Week 5:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, Book I chs. 1-9, Book II chs. 1-8

- <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/rousseau1762.pdf>

Feb 8: Posted Lecture

Feb 10: Live Discussion

**Week 6:** Reading Break

**Week 7:** Immanuel Kant, "Theory and Practice" Part II

- <https://hesperusisbosphorus.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/theory-and-practice.pdf>

Mar 1: Posted Lecture

Mar 3: Live Discussion

**Week 8:** John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 3-19, 47-81

- PDF on CuLearn

March 8: Posted Lecture

March 10: Live Discussion

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

- PDF on CuLearn

Mar 15: Posted Lecture

Mar 17: Live Discussion

**Week 10: Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 13-25, 149-164**

- PDF on CuLearn

Mar 22: Posted Lecture

Mar 24: Live Discussion

**Week 11: Challenges to the Contract I - Ableism and Speciesism**

- Anita Silvers and Leslie Francis, "Justice Through Trust: Disability and the Outlier Problem in Social Contract Theory" PDF on CuLearn
- Mark Rowlands, "Contractarianism and Animal Rights" PDF on CuLearn

March 29: Posted Lecture

March 31: Live Discussion

**Week 12: Challenges to the Contract II - Racial and Global Injustice**

- Charles Mills, "Racial Liberalism" PDF on CuLearn
- Thomas Pogge, "Eradicating Systemic Poverty: Brief for a Global Resources Dividend" PDF on CuLearn

Apr 5: Posted Lecture

Apr 7: Live Discussion

**Week 13: Exam Review**

April 12: Take Home Exam Discussion Live - Optional

**Essays:**

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

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2020-21)

### **Assignments:**

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

### **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 Term Work:**

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

### **Deferrals for Final Exams:**

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further 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. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or 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 [EDC](#) website.
- *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](mailto: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 test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *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 where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *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.

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 9	Classes start.
Sept. 23	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. 12	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 27	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. 11	Last day of fall term classes. <b><i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i></b> 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. 12-23	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. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 11	Classes begin.
Jan. 25	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. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 31	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. 2	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 14	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. <b><i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i></b>
Apr. 15	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 16-27	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 27	All take-home examinations are due.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:  
[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)  
520-2110

Registrar's Office:  
[www.carleton.ca/registrar](http://www.carleton.ca/registrar)  
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:  
[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)  
520-7850

Writing Services:  
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>  
520-3822

MacOdrum Library  
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>  
520-2735