

# PHIL 240

## Introduction in Political Philosophy

Course Outline Fall 2013

### Instructor:

Jurgen De Wispelaere, Institute for Health and Social Policy, Charles Meredith House, 1130 Pine Avenue West, Room 206 ([jurgen.dewispelaere@mcgill.ca](mailto:jurgen.dewispelaere@mcgill.ca)).

### Office Hours:

Monday 1130am - 1.00pm (or by appointment)

### Teaching Assistant:

Alexander Anderson, Department of Philosophy ([alexander.anderson2@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:alexander.anderson2@mail.mcgill.ca)).

### Course Objectives

The objective of the course will be to familiarize students with some of the main debates in contemporary political philosophy. The course is organized around three topics that are central in contemporary debate amongst political philosophers as well as political discourse more generally: freedom, equality and democracy. In each case we pay attention to the political concepts (philosophical distinctions within each concept), to various key political theories based on these concepts, and to their application to real-world problems. The main aim of this course is to allow students to develop rigorous philosophical argumentation in relation to genuine political problems present in the society in which they live today.

### Course Format

The course is divided in three equal parts, each covering one of the main political concepts (freedom, equality and democracy). Each week will cover a different aspect of the topic under discussion. Each class will feature a lecture part but will also allow for debate and discussion of students.

### Course Requirements

Students should come prepared to each class ready to discuss the topic of the week. This means, at a minimum, **students should have read the required readings of the week**. In addition, it would be a good idea to prepare weekly notes with observations, criticisms or questions to put forward in the discussion part of the class. Participation in the lectures is mandatory but no attendance will be taken.

Students are required to write **three essays of approximately 2000-2500 words**. Each essay progressively contributes more to the final grade (25%, 35% and 40%, respectively). Students will be graded on 1) accurate representation of concepts or arguments; 2) correct and relevant application of arguments, and 3) ability to defend a particular view in light of

objections. Essay questions will be distributed a week in advance of the due date. (Your will receive your grades two weeks after the due date).

Each essay is due at the last class of the topic (for precise due dates, see syllabus below) and essay need to be handed in print (not email) in class. **Late submissions incur a grade penalty.** Essays turned in late without an extension will be penalized at the rate of 1/3 of a grade (e.g., from a B to a B-) per calendar day of lateness. Extensions will not be given except as required by the Office of Students with Disabilities and in the case of exceptional medical emergencies. Requests for extensions must be directed to your instructor (not the TA) and supported by appropriate medical documentation.

### Course Materials

The syllabus below lists required readings for each week. All readings are available for downloading through the McGill library website or deposited in MyCourses. A good deal of these readings are also collected in the volume *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, edited by Robert Goodin and Philip Pettit (Blackwell, 2005), marked with CPP below. This volume is available in the library and can be purchased at any good bookstore.

Additional good introductions worth consulting include:

- Adam Swift (2006) *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Polity Press.
- Jonathan Wolff (2006) *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. Rev. ed. Oxford University Press.
- Will Kymlicka (2002) *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press.
- Robert Goodin & Philip Pettit (eds.) (1993) *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Blackwell (new expanded edition 2007).

### Policy on Use of Electronics in Class

Unless the instructor expressly grants you an accommodation for a valid academic or medical reason, the use of electronic devices is forbidden in class. These include: computers, mobile phones, headphones or earbuds. Students using or holding such devices in class in violation of course policy may be told to exit the classroom. Mobiles must remain switched off during class.

### Statement on Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

*L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles*

actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)).

### Statement on Language

In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. (approved by Senate on 21 January)

*Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).*

### Equal Access:

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities ([www.mcgill.ca/osd](http://www.mcgill.ca/osd)) at 514-398-6009 before you do this.

### Courtesy in Class

Because this is a very large class, please be respectful of your classmates and the instructor by arriving on time and not holding conversations during lectures. Harassment of fellow students in any form will not be tolerated.

## Tentative Syllabus

Classes take place weekly on Monday and Wednesdays, 10.05am - 11.25am. We start the class in Ballroom B, New Residence Hall, 3625 Avenue du Parc. Rooms will be rescheduled later in the year; please check Minerva.

### Week 1 (Wed 4/9): Introduction (**no readings!**)

### Week 2 (Mon 9/9 & Wed 11/9): The Concept of Freedom

- Isaiah Berlin (1969) "Two Concepts of Liberty", in *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (in CPP)
- Gerald MacCallum (1967) "Negative and Positive Liberty", *The Philosophical Review* 76 (3), pp. 312-334.
- Charles Taylor (1985) "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?", in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge University Press (in CPP)
- G.A. Cohen (1983) "The Structure of Proletarian Unfreedom", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, pp. 3-33 (in CPP)

### Week 3 (Mon 16/9 & Wed 18/9): Autonomy and Paternalism

- Nils Holtug (2002) "The Harm Principle", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5(4), pp. 357-389
- Gerald Dworkin (1972) "Paternalism", *The Monist* 56(1), pp. 64-84.
- Gerald Dworkin (2005) "Moral Paternalism", *Law and Philosophy* 24, pp. 305-319.

- Cass R. Sunstein and Richard H. Thaler (2003) “Libertarian Paternalism Is Not an Oxymoron”, *The University of Chicago Law Review* 70(4), pp. 1159-1202.

Week 4 (Mon 23/9 & 25/9): Libertarianism, Right and Left

- Robert Nozick (1974) “Distributive Justice”, in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Basic Books (in CPP).
- Thomas Nagel (1975) “Libertarianism Without Foundations”, *The Yale Law Journal* 85 (1), pp. 136-149
- Barbara H. Fried (2004) “Left-Libertarianism: A Review Essay”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 32(1), pp. 66-92.
- Peter Vallentyne, Hillel Steiner and Michael Otsuka (2005) “Why Left-Libertarianism Is Not Incoherent, Indeterminate, or Irrelevant: A Reply to Fried”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 3(2), pp. 201-215.

Week 5 (Mon 30/9 & Wed 2/10): Republicanism (ESSAY 1 DUE!)

- Philip Pettit (1996) “Freedom as Antipower”, *Ethics* 106, pp. 576–604.
- Philip Pettit (2011) “The Instability of Freedom as Noninterference: The Case of Isaiah Berlin”, *Ethics* 121(4), pp. 693-716
- Matthew Kramer (2008) “Liberty and Domination”, in Laborde and Maynor (eds.) *Republicanism and Political Theory*. Blackwell.
- Christopher McMahon (2005) “The Indeterminacy of Republican Policy”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33(1), pp. 67-93.
- Philip Pettit (2006) “The Determinacy of Republican Policy: A Reply to McMahon”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 34(3), pp. 275-283.

Week 6 (Mon 7/10 & Wed 9/10): Equality, Sufficiency and Priority

- Harry Frankfurt (1987) “Equality as a Moral Ideal”, *Ethics* 98, pp. 21-42.
- Paula Casal (2007) “Why Sufficiency is Not Enough” *Ethics* 117, pp. 296-326.
- Derek Parfit (1997) “Equality and Priority”, *Ratio* 10, pp. 202-221.
- Roger Crisp. (2003) “Equality, Priority, and Compassion”, *Ethics* 113(4), pp. 745–763.

Week 7 (Mon 14/10 & Wed 16/10): Rawlsian Contractualism

- *Readings TBA*

Week 8 (Mon 21/10 & Wed 23/10): Taking Responsibility Seriously?

- Ronald Dworkin (2000) “Equality of Resources”, in *Sovereign Virtue*. Harvard University Press.
- Jerry Cohen (1989) “On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice”, *Ethics* 99(4), pp. 906-944.
- Elizabeth Anderson (1999), “What Is the Point of Equality?”, *Ethics* 109, pp. 287-337.
- Samuel Scheffler (2003) “What Is Egalitarianism?”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 31(1), pp. 5-39.
- Jonathan Wolff (1998) “Fairness, Respect and the Egalitarian Ethos”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 27 (2), pp. 97-122.

Week 9 (Mon 28/10 & 30/10): Legitimate Inequalities? (ESSAY 2 DUE!)

- *Readings TBA*

Week 10 (Mon 4/11 & Wed 6/11): Is Democracy Special?

- Brian Barry (1991) "Is Democracy Special?", in *Democracy and Power*. Oxford University Press.
- Robert A. Dahl, "Procedural Democracy", in Laslett & Fishkin (eds.) *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Blackwell (in CPP)
- Adam Przeworski (1999), "Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense", in Shapiro & Hacker-Cordon (eds.) *Democracy's Value*. Cambridge University Press.
- John Dryzek (2001) "Minimal Democracy? The Social Choice Critique" in *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*. Oxford University Press.

Week 11 (Mon 11/11 & Wed 13/11): Representative Democracy

- Jane Mansbridge (2003) "Rethinking Representation", *American Political Science Review* 97(4), pp. 515-528.
- Andrew Rehfeld (2009) "Representation Rethought: On Trustees, Delegates, and Gyroscopes in the Study of Political Representation and Democracy", *American Political Science Review* 103(2), pp. 214-230.
- Philip Pettit (2000) "Democracy, Electoral and Contestatory", *Nomos* 42, pp.105-44.
- Anne Phillips (1995) "From a Politics of Ideas to a Politics of Presence" in *The Politics of Presence*. Clarendon Press.

Week 12 (Mon 18/11 & Wed 20/11): Deliberative Democracy

- Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy", in Bohman and Rehg (eds.) *Deliberative Democracy*. MIT Press (in CPP).
- Amy Gutman and Dennis Thomson (2002) "Deliberative Democracy Beyond Process," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10(2), pp. 153-174.
- Cass Sunstein (2002) "The Law of Group Polarization," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10(2), pp 175-195.
- Robert Goodin (2000) "Democratic Deliberation Within," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 29(1), pp. 79-107.

Week 13 (Mon 25/11 & Wed 27/11): Constitutional Democracy

- Ronald Dworkin (1978) "Constitutional Cases" in *Taking Rights Seriously*.
- Jeremy Waldron (2006) "The Core of the Case against Judicial Review," *Yale Law Journal* 115, pp. 1346
- Alon Harel (2003) "Rights-Based Judicial Review: A Democratic Justification", *Law and Philosophy* 22(3/4), pp. 247-276.

Week 14 (Tue 03/12): Revision (**ESSAY 3 DUE!**)

- *No readings!*