PHIL 240
Introduction in Political Philosophy

Course Outline Fall 2013

Instructor:
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Office Hours:
Monday 1130am - 1.00pm (or by appointment)

Teaching Assistant:
Alexander Anderson, Department of Philosophy (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:


**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/).

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) 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

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

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

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

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

Week 7 (Mon 14/10 & Wed 16/10): Rawlsian Contractualism
• *Readings TBA*

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


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


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


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

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

- No readings!