



## **Social and Political Philosophy (BA Minor)**

Winter 2014/2015 (Semester Ib)

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculty of Philosophy

### INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 12-13, Philosophy Building, Room 1.21 (*please e-mail me in advance as I might sometimes be away because of other commitments; we can also make an appointment at a different time if required*)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social and political philosophy is concerned with asking philosophical questions about the different ways in which human beings live together. In particular, it focuses on the role which political institutions play in our societies. Political philosophers ask questions such as: What is the ultimate end of politics? How should we decide between different forms of government? Is there one single end that all governments should pursue - such as justice or equality - or should governments be only concerned with protecting the freedom of everyone to live as they please? To what extent may society limit the freedom of individuals? Is it ever justified to resist the state?

In the course, we will focus on the different answers these questions have received throughout the history of philosophy and on how they inform contemporary debates about political issues.

### COURSE GOALS

In this course, you will acquire

- the ability to reason philosophically about fundamental questions in regard to politics and society
- basic knowledge about the major paradigms of social and political thought in the Western tradition
- the ability to examine and evaluate arguments in political theory
- the ability to relate contemporary political issues to larger disputes in philosophy
- the ability to autonomously formulate arguments for and against specific positions in political thought

## COURSE FORMAT AND GENERAL RULES

This course is an introductory course for students with some general philosophy knowledge. One of the core ideas which will be discussed in this course is that relations of mutual respect entail obligations on both sides of a social relationship. In this spirit, I accept the obligation that I will come to each session prepared and on time, that I will try to design the course material and my contributions in a way which leads to all students' learning as much as possible, that I will be approachable for all questions of an academic or administrative nature in person and (to a reasonable extent) via e-mail. I will communicate expectations clearly and evaluate you fairly. My goal is to enable all students to finish the course with an excellent result.

In return, I expect from you to regularly attend all sessions, to excuse yourself in person or via email when you cannot come to a session, to arrive on time, to read all the required material, to come prepared with relevant questions and objections to what I say and to participate in the discussion with your fellow students. I also expect you to refrain from any kind of academic dishonesty and from any behavior which makes it for fellow students more difficult to learn or which makes them uncomfortable.

I am aware that persons learn in different ways and face different challenges and that the rules of this course might not be best designed to ensure everyone's success, depending on their specific abilities or modes of learning. If you think you might have reason to ask for a modification of the rules for your case, please do not hesitate to talk to me in private.

## EXAMINATION

There will be a written exam on January 27 2015. You will have all three hours usually reserved for the lecture to answer questions. The questions for the exam will cover both the readings you have done for the course and the arguments we have discussed during the lectures; you will need to review all readings, slides and your own notes from the lecture to do well on the exam; the exam will also contain a few questions which will ask you to apply political theories to contemporary problems in society. All facts, arguments or definitions asked for in the exam will be somewhere in the written material provided by me or in the readings.

## GENERAL READINGS

For this course, you should acquire

- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge 2002.

I also recommend the following introductions into political philosophy.

- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Oxford University Press 2002. (Chapters 2-6 and 9 cover topics from our course)
- John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, Harvard University Press 2007 (A good introduction to the thought of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill and Marx)

All required readings for the course and some recommended readings are available online on Nestor.

## SYLLABUS

### Session 1: What is Political Philosophy? What is Politics? (11-11-2014)

Required reading: Handout with quotes

Recommended Reading:

- John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, pp. 1-11.
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp. 22-58, 175-212 (=§§4-6, 24-29).

Further Watching:

- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F>), lecture 1.

### Session 2: Happiness, Virtue and the Political: Plato and Aristotle (18-11-2014)

Required Reading:

- Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. B. Jowett, available online at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html> (read: Book One, Part I-VII; Book Four, Parts IX-XIII)
- Martha Nussbaum, “Nature, Function, and Capability”, *WIDER Working Papers*, available online at [http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/previous/en\\_GB/wp-31/](http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/previous/en_GB/wp-31/) (read only pp. 7-14 and 20-36).

Recommended Reading:

- Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett, 2004, pp. 46-56, 238-269 (parts of book 2, and book 8).
- Aristotle, *Politics*, Book Three and book Seven, Parts I and II.
- Richard Arneson, “Perfectionism and Politics”, *Ethics* 111(1), 2000, 37-63.

Further Reading:

- Eric Brown, “Plato's Ethics and Politics in The Republic”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-ethics-politics/>.
- Fred Miller, “Aristotle's Political Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-politics/>.
- Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Clarendon Press, 1981
- Ryan K. Balot, *Greek Political Thought*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.
- Richard, Kraut, *Aristotle. Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed., University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, chapter 12.

Further Watching:

- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F>), lectures 2-9.
- Michael Sandel, “Justice” (<http://www.justiceharvard.org/watch/>), lecture 10.

### Session 3: The Social Contract and Political Authority (25-11-2014)

#### Required Reading:

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, available online at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm> (read chapters XIII, XVII, XVIII and XXI).
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract”, available online at [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/46333/46333-h/46333-h.htm#BOOK\\_I](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/46333/46333-h/46333-h.htm#BOOK_I) (read only Book 1)
- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 25-41 and 48-59.

#### Recommended Reading:

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract”, in *Discourse on Political Economy and The Social Contract*, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 63-79.
- John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, pp. 23-102 (on Hobbes) and 191-250 (on Rousseau).

#### Further Reading:

- Sharon A. Lloyd, “Hobbes's Moral and Political Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/>.
- Christopher Bertram, “Jean Jacques Rousseau”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rousseau/>.
- Steven Kuhn, “Prisoner's Dilemma”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/prisoner-dilemma/>.
- Richard Dagger/David Lefkowitz, “Political Obligation”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/political-obligation/>.
- Deborah Baumgold, *Hobbes' Political Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Christopher Bertram, *Routledge Guidebook to Rousseau and the Social Contract*, Routledge, 2004.
- Andrew Levine, *The General Will: Rousseau, Marx, Communism*, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

#### Further Watching:

- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F>), lectures 12-14 (Hobbes) and 18-20 (Rousseau).

### Session 4: Natural Rights and Property (02-12-2014)

#### Required Reading:

- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm>, (read chaps. II, V, VII, VIII [but only sect. 95-99 and 118-122] and IX).
- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Blackwell, 1974, pp. 174-182 (on Nestor).
- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 41-48

Recommended Reading:

- John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, pp. 101-155.
- Alexander Tuckness, “Locke's Political Philosophy“, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke-political/>.
- Jeremy Waldron, “Property and Ownership“, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/property/>.

Further Reading:

- James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries*, Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- John Dunn, *Locke: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

Further Watching:

- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F>), lectures 15-17.
- Michael Sandel, “Justice” (<http://www.justiceharvard.org/watch/>), lecture 3 and 4.

Session 5: Utilitarianism and Freedom of Speech (09-12-2014)

Required Reading:

- John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism  
available online at [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11224/11224-h/11224-h.htm#CHAPTER\\_II](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11224/11224-h/11224-h.htm#CHAPTER_II)  
(read chapter 2, first 10 paragraphs [until: “...to the whole sentient creation.“])
- John Stuart Mill: On Liberty  
available online at: [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm#Page\\_140](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm#Page_140)  
(read: chapter I, chapter II, but only pp. 28-36, 64, 65, 84-87, 97-102)

Recommended Reading:

- John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism and On Liberty*, ed. Mary Warnock, Blackwell, 2003), pp. 216-235 (Utilitarianism, chapter on justice)
- David Brink, “Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy“, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill-moral-political/>.
- David van Mill, “Freedom of Speech“, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freedom-speech/>.
- John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, pp. 249-315.

Further Reading:

- John Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill*, Routledge, 1989.
- Joel Feinberg, *Offense to Others*, Oxford University Press, 1985.

Further Watching:

- Michael Sandel, “Justice” (<http://www.justiceharvard.org/watch/>), lecture 1 and 2.

## Session 6: Liberal Social Justice (16-12-2014)

### Required Reading:

- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, pp. 55-68 (available on Nestor)
- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Revised Edition; Belknap Press, 1999, pp. 10-13, 15-18, 52-54, 118, 119, 122, 130-135 (available on Nestor)

### Recommended Reading:

- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 52-54, 74-80.
- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ch. 3.
- Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp. 160-164.

### Further Reading:

- Philip Pettit/Chandran Kuthakas, *John Rawls*. Stanford University Press, 1990-
- Norman Daniels (ed.), *Reading Rawls*, Basic Books, 1989.

### Further Watching:

- Michael Sandel, "Justice" (<http://www.justiceharvard.org/watch/>), lecture 8.

## Session 7: Political Liberalism vs. Communitarianism (06-01-2015)

### Required Reading:

- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 131-148
- Michael Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self", *Political Theory* 12(1), 1984, pp. 81-96, available online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/191382>
- John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer, 1985), pp. 223-251, available online at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265349>

### Recommended Reading:

- John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, 1996, chapters II, IV, V and VI.

### Further Reading:

- Amy Gutmann, "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, 1985, pp. 308-322
- Michael Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18(1), 1990, pp. 6-23
- Charles Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in Nancy L. Rosenblum (ed.), *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Harvard University Press, 1991, pp. 159-182.
- Charles Larmore, "Political Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18(3), 1990, pp. 339 – 60.

## Session 8: Marxism and Feminism (13-01-2015)

### Required Reading:

- Susan Moller Okin, “Justice and Gender”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 16(1), 1987, pp.42-72, available online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2265205> (read p. 42-52, and 64-72)
- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, pp. 193-199.

### Recommended:

- Karl Marx, *Value, Price and Profit*, available online at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/value-price-profit/> (see esp. sections 6-9 and 14).
- Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, available online at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>
- Noelle McAfee, “Feminist Political Philosophy”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-political/>
- John Christman, *Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*, chaps. 6 and 7.
- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, chaps 5 and 9.

### Further Reading:

- Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Cape, 1953.
- John Roemer, *Free to Lose*, Harvard University Press, 1988, chap. 2 and 5.
- G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, expanded edition, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx*, Routledge, 1981.
- Allen W. Wood, “Justice and Class Interests”, <http://logica.ugent.be/philosophica/fulltexts/33-2.pdf>
- Jonathan Wolff, *Why Read Marx Today?*, Oxford University Press, 2003

## Session 9: Anarchism, Conclusion, Exam Questions (20-01-2015)

### Required Reading:

- Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism*, available online at <http://www.ditext.com/wolff/anarchy.html> (read chapter 1 and 2 [without Appendix])

### Further Reading:

- M.B.E. Smith, “Is There a Prima Facie Duty to Obey the Law?”, *The Yale Law Journal*, 82(5), 1973, pp. 950-976.
- Christopher Wellman/A. John Simmons, *Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

## Exam (27-01-2015)