Social and Political Philosophy (Minor)
Winter 2016/2017 (Semester Ia)
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculty of Philosophy

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Titus Stahl
E-mail: titus.stahl@rug.nl (if possible, please use e-mail encryption, see: https://u.fsf.org/zb)
Phone: +31503636152
Office Hours: please e-mail me in advance to make an appointment.

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 FORMAT AND GENERAL RULES

This course is an introductory course. It is thought of as an intensive lecture course with as much class discussion as I can get you interested in. Discussion will focus on how to apply political theories to contemporary political reality. It thus presumes an interest in politics generally and in current events.

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 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 people learn in different ways and face different challenges and that the general rules in this course might not be best designed to ensure everyone's success. If you think you might have reason to ask for a modification of the rules for your specific case, please do not hesitate to talk to me in private.
EXAMINATION

The course examination consists of two parts:

a) Three short online quizzes which form part of the exam conditions. In order to be admitted to the final exam, you have to get at least half the points on two of the three quizzes. Please note that the opportunity to compensate for one failed quiz with the other two already constitutes the “resit” option and that no further opportunity for a resit or other forms of compensation for failed quizzes exists. In your own interest, do not skip the first quiz in the assumption that you will pass the last two quizzes as you will have no safety net available with this strategy. In order to avoid any problems due to sudden illness etc., do not postpone completion until the last moment.

The quizzes are due on September, 20, October, 4, and October, 11, at 11am, and will always be made available one week in advance of the due date. They cover the reading material of the week in which they are due. I do not foresee any circumstances under which I will waive the condition, but if you are in a situation where you are unable to complete at least two of them, please get in touch with me before the due date. The results are not used to determine the final grade of the course, but serve only as satisfying admission conditions to the exam.

b) A written exam. The final exam is an in-class exam on November 8th, 14-17 at MartiniPlaza. It will examine your knowledge about basic concepts and the claims of different theories we discuss in the course and will also contain some discussion questions which ask for application of these theories. The exam will cover not only the readings, but also material we have only discussed in class. It is therefore advisable to consult both your readings and the notes you took in class. The final grade of the course is the grade of the exam.

GENERAL READINGS

In addition, to the mandatory literature, I recommend the following three introductions into political philosophy. Each of them is so good that owning all of them is a valuable investment.

- John Christman, Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction, Routledge 2002. (Chapters 2,3 and 5 are especially relevant for our course)
- Will Kymlicka, Contemporary Political Philosophy. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press 2002. (Chapters 2-6 and 9 cover topics from our course)

All required readings for the course and some recommended readings are available on the Student Portal, except the parts from the book Jonathan Wolff, An Introduction into Political Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 2016.

Study load model

The course has 5 EC. The resulting 140 hours are allocated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27h</td>
<td>Attending the course and the exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25h</td>
<td>Reading 179 pages of the Wolff book (difficulty level: easy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57h</td>
<td>Reading 228 pages of the additional material (difficulty level: medium to hard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16h</td>
<td>Reviewing class material, watching additional videos, doing the exercise quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3h</td>
<td>Doing 3 mandatory quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12h</td>
<td>preparing for the exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SYLLABUS

September 6, 2016: Session 1: The Nature of Politics and the Anarchist Challenge

Required Reading:

• Handout with quotes about politics (will be made available on Student Portal).

Recommended Reading:

• John Rawls, Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy, pp. 1-11.

Further Watching:

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

September 13, 2016: Session 2: Justifying the State I: Happiness

Required Reading:

• Aristotle, Politics, trans. B. Jowett, available online at:
  http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html (read: Book One, Part I-II; Book Three, Parts XII-XIII; Book Four, Parts XI-XII)
• John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, 1879, available online at
  https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11224, Chapter 2 (read until “…intelligible mode of deciding such differences.”)

Recommended Reading:


Further Reading:

• Fred Miller, “Aristotle's Political Philosophy”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

Further Watching:
- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” ([https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F)), lectures 2-9.

September 20, 2016: Session 3: Justifying the state II: Consent and contract

**PLEASE NOTE:** Quiz 1 is due today @ 11am

**Required Reading:**
- 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, parts I-VII)

**Recommended Reading:**

**Further Reading:**

**Further Watching:**
- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” ([https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F)), lectures 12-14 (Hobbes) and 18-20 (Rousseau).
September 27, 2016: Session 4: Justifying the State III – Rights, Liberty and Property

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Further Reading:

Further Watching:
- Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813F), lectures 15-17.

October 4, 2016: Session 5: Justifying the State IV - Democracy, Liberty, and Freedom of Speech

**PLEASE NOTE:** Quiz 2 is due today @ 11am

Required Reading:
- John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty*, available online at: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm (read: chapter I, chapter II, but only pp. 28-36, 64, 65, 84-87, 97-102)

Recommended Reading:
• John Rawls, Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy, pp. 249-315 (on Mill) and 191-250 (on Rousseau).

Further Reading:
• Joel Feinberg, Offense to Others, Oxford University Press, 1985.

Further Watching:
• Steven B. Smith, “Introduction to Political Philosophy” (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD319499FC7F5813E), 18-20 (Rousseau).

October 11, 2016: Session 6: Justifying the State V – Social Justice

PLEASE NOTE: Quiz 3 is due today @ 11am

Required Reading:
• Jonathan Wolff, An Introduction to Political Philosophy, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 153-178 (ch.5, two sections on Rawls and Conclusion)

Recommended Reading:
• 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-

Further Watching:

October 18, 2016: Session 7: Resisting Power I: Marx and Foucault

Required Reading:
• Introductory text about Marx (will be made available on Student Portal)

Recommended:
Further reading


October 25, 2016: Session 8: Resisting Power II – Feminism and Critical Race Theory

Required Reading:


Recommended:

- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, chaps 5 and 9.

Further Reading: