

PHIL 120 Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy

Fall 2015

MW 11:30-12:45 Anthropology Building 105

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Bowden Hall 110

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Wednesdays 1-3pm and by appointment

Course Description: This course provides a thematic introduction to social and political philosophy. As such, we will focus on the questions concerning *political freedom* as they have been taken up by various thinkers in the modern Western political tradition, questions such as “What is a political state?”, “What makes for a free society?”, “Why obey any political power?”, “What is law and where does it come from?”, “What is freedom?”, “What is equality?”, “How can we ensure that we are all free and equal?”, “Is citizenship a valid concept?”, “What is war?”, “What is the function of a constitution?” and “What is freedom?”. We will review and critically analyze the answers given by thinkers including but not limited to Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Banneker, Truth, Stanton, Douglass, Dussel, Mills, and Pateman. Our case study for taking up and analysing these questions and answers of social and political philosophy will be the United States of America.

Assignment Schedule

This schedule is subject to change; please check your emails and *Blackboard* (Daily Assignments) regularly to be updated on what is due each class.

Context and Problems: Freedom, State, Laws

Week 1

August 26 Wednesday: Syllabus and Course Introduction

Watch: *Lord of the Flies* (Available for Streaming on Library Course Reserves)

August 31 Monday: Hobbes, selections from *The Leviathan* and Discussion on *Lord of the Flies*

September 2 Wednesday: Hobbes, cont'd. – Reflection Paper (RP) 1

Week 2

September 7 Monday: No Class – Labor Day: University Closed

September 9 Wednesday: Hobbes, cont'd. – RP 2

Week 3

September 14 Monday: Locke, selections from *Second Treatise on the Government*

September 16 Wednesday: Locke, cont'd. – RP 3

The Social Contract: Rights, Liberties, Laws

Week 4

September 21 Monday: Locke, cont'd.

September 23 Wednesday: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* – RP 4

Midterm Take-Home Exam Topics and Guidelines to be posted on Blackboard>Paper Assignments

Week 5

September 28 Monday: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* and *The Social Contract*

September 30 Wednesday: Rousseau, *The Social Contract* – RP 5

Week 6

October 5 Monday: Rousseau, cont'd; *The Declaration of Independence of the thirteen United States of America*

October 7 Wednesday: Guest Lecture by Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies: Dr. Sina Kramer (Loyola Marymount University)- Topic TBA - RP 6

Week 7

October 12 Monday: No class – Fall Break [October 13 and 14]

October 14 Wednesday: Midterm Exam Q&A session (no RP due)

*****Midterm Exam due online by 11:59pm on Friday October 16*****

The U.S. as a Case Study in the Social Contract

Week 8

October 19 Monday: In-class Screening of *Race: The Power of an Illusion*: Episode II & Discussion

October 21 Wednesday: Film Discussion; Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia" - RP 7

Week 9

October 26 Monday: Banneker's "Letter to Jefferson"

October 28 Wednesday: Douglass, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" – RP 8

Week 10

November 2 Monday: Cady Stanton et al, *Declaration of Sentiments*, and Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?"

November 4 Wednesday: Stanton and Truth, cont'd; and Pateman, selections from *The Sexual Contract* - RP 9

A Free Country?

Week 11

November 9 Monday: "Memorial of the Cherokee Nation" and Dussel, selections from *Invention of the Americas*

November 12 Wednesday: Dussel, cont'd. - RP 10

Week 12

November 16 Monday: Dussel, cont'd.

November 18 Wednesday: Mills, selections from *The Racial Contract* - RP 11

Final Exam Topics and Guidelines to be posted on Blackboard>Paper Assignments

Week 13

November 23 Monday: No class: Please view: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*: Episode III (to be streamed online via Library Reserves and Extra Credit Opportunity on the film -to be posted on Blackboard)

November 25 Wednesday: No class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

November 30 Monday: Film Discussion, Mills, cont'd.

December 2 Wednesday: Mills, cont'd. Catch up Day – RP 12

December 7 Monday: Review and Final Paper Q&A