

**Political Philosophy (Phil 4115)**  
**Fall 2011, MWF 10:00-10:50, Pafford 109**

Dr. Riker

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Office hours: MWF 8:30-9:55, MW 3:20-5:00, and by appointment

All email communication will be conducted from your official UWG email account. Check your email account on a regular basis and make sure that your mailbox does not become too full to accept messages.

**Course description**

Liberal democracy is central to contemporary political philosophy. We will start the course by considering the three main approaches to defending liberal democracy: utilitarianism, liberal equality, and libertarianism. We will then consider important critical responses or alternatives to these mainstream theories. We will pay particular attention to the ways these different approaches and responses understand 'equality' (or what it means to treat everyone with 'equal concern and respect') and 'responsibility' (or who is responsible for different needs, costs or choices).

**Course learning outcomes**

- By the end of the semester, students will be able to
  - Explain and critically analyze several philosophical positions
  - Identify, explain and evaluate the main justifications for liberal democracy and several responses/alternatives to the mainstream views
- These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by helping students learn to
  - ask philosophical questions
  - discuss/evaluate philosophical positions in oral and written communications
  - critically analyze philosophical questions
  - exhibit critical thinking skills

**Required text**

Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

**Course requirements**

1. Two tests (25% and 40%). In class. Essay and short answer.
2. Philosophical essay (25%). Explain and critically evaluate a position on an issue raised in the course. 2700-3100 words. Detailed instructions to be passed out later. DUE November 7.
3. Attendance (special). Missed classes put a cap on the highest grade you can get in the course. Students who miss 7-9 classes cannot get higher than a B grade for the course. Students who miss 10-12 classes cannot get higher than a C grade. Students who miss more than 12 classes cannot get higher than a D grade. Three late arrivals count as one absence. I will make exceptions only in extraordinary situations. I will make exceptions for required UWG-sponsored events, provided that all of your absences can be accounted for in this way.
4. Participation (10%). Show up on time and prepared to listen and interact. Read assigned material before start of class. Contribute comments and questions to class discussion. Use the discussion board on Course Den to make these contributions too, *especially if you are not one of the more vocal students in class*. Do not disrupt class. Do not do homework or study for other classes during this class. Late arrivals lower your participation grade. Missed classes also lower your participation grade.

NOTE: Exemplary attendance and participation can help you. Students who come to class prepared and regularly make contributions to class discussions may receive a slight boost to their final grade.

### **Honors conversions**

Any student wishing to receive honors credit for this course must get the approval of the professor and complete all the necessary paperwork within the first two weeks of class. Honors forms will not be signed after this point. Possible honors conversion projects: presenting course paper to class; leading class through (part of) one day's reading assignment; submitting course paper to a conference.

### **Cheating and plagiarism**

The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as "taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are expressed in electronic, print, and verbal sources." The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. It is equally dishonest to make up sources or facts. Cheating (including plagiarism) is grounds for failing an assignment and sometimes the course.

### **Special needs**

Students who have a disability that requires course adaptations or accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services to discuss their specific needs and schedule an appointment with me during office hours.

### **Course schedule**

Aug 22: Introductions

Aug 24: Preface and Introduction

Aug 26: Utilitarianism 10-20

Aug 29: Utilitarianism 20-32

Aug 31: Utilitarianism 32-45

Sept 2: Utilitarianism 45-48

Sept 5: Labor Day

Sept 7: Liberal Equality 53-60

Sept 9: Liberal Equality 60-75

Sept 12: Liberal Equality 75-87

Sept 14: Liberal Equality 88-96

Sept 16: Libertarianism 102-116

Sept 19: Libertarianism 116-121

Sept 21: Libertarianism 121-128

Sept 23: Libertarianism 128-138

Sept 26: Libertarianism 138-148

Sept 28: Libertarianism 148-159

Sept 30: Catch up

Oct 3: Test 1

Oct 5: Marxism 166-175

Oct 7: Marxism 176-187

Oct 10: Marxism 187-195

Oct 12: Marxism 195-201

Oct 14: Communitarianism 208-219

*NOTE: Oct 14 is the last day to withdraw with a grade of W*

Oct 17: Communitarianism 220-228

Oct 19: Communitarianism 228-244

Oct 21: Communitarianism 244-261

Oct 24: Communitarianism 261-268

Oct 26: Communitarianism 268-273

Oct 28: Citizenship 284-293

Oct 31: Citizenship 294-302

Nov 2: Citizenship 302-312

Nov 4: Citizenship 312-319

Nov 7: Multiculturalism 327-336, Papers Due

Nov 9: Multiculturalism 336-347

Nov 11: Multiculturalism 348-365

Nov 14: Multiculturalism 365-370

Nov 16: Feminism 377-386

Nov 18: Feminism 386-398

Nov 21-25: Thanksgiving Break

Nov 28: Feminism 398-409

Nov 30: Feminism 409-420

Dec 2: Conclusions

Wednesday, Dec 7, 8-10 am: Test 2