

Revised Course Proposal
Philosophy 3050G Social and Political Philosophy

1. Catalog Description

PHI 3050G Social and Political Philosophy. (3-0-3) F-odd-numbered years

Short Title: Political Phil

A study of theoretical approaches to understanding social, economic, and political relations. The focus will be on political liberty and its critics from Marxist, feminist, and other perspectives.

Prerequisites: English 1001G and English 1002G.

This course is writing-intensive.

2. Student learning objectives

(a) In successfully completing PHI 3050G, students will

1) demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively. Students will acquaint themselves with various philosophical, political, and legal writing styles. Discussion will enhance their listening and speaking skills. There will be frequent reaction papers which will accustom students to writing out their thoughts regarding material they have been assigned. Students will be required to adopt a reflective, rigorous, philosophical style of analysis in papers.

2) demonstrate the ability to think critically. Students will refine their ability to present their own arguments in class discussions and written work. Student will improve their ability to analyze arguments and identify the reasons for various conclusions.

3) function as responsible citizens. Students will be exposed to an intense review of the nature and purpose of human social interaction. Students will be required to assess the role of government, economic, and social institutions in promoting or inhibiting human freedom. Students will discuss particular issues, in particular pornography and censorship, but also labor issues, church-state relations, community involvement, and others.

b) Additional student learning objectives. Students will

1) discuss the role of art as political expression and problems of censorship of the arts.

2) understand the origin and application of a European political theory, classical liberalism, and will debate its applicability to various cultures in the world.

3) learn about the various approaches to human society from the ancient world through the 20th century. Students will be able to trace the rise of the current Liberal State as the dominant political ideology of the world from its beginnings in Early Modern Europe through its critics in the Industrial and Post-Industrial ages.

3. Course Outline

PHI 3050G is divided into 15 units, to be distributed evenly during a 15-week/50-minute course (45 classes) or a 15-week/75-minute course (30 classes)

Part One: Three Non-Liberal Conceptions of Politics

A. Weeks 1-3: Plato and the Good

1. Competing theories of justice. Relativism.
2. The proper order of the soul.
3. The proper order of the state.
4. DISCUSSION: Politics and Knowledge. Church and State.

B. Week 4: Aristotle on Human Community

1. Humans as political animals.
2. Sphere of the private and sphere of the public.
3. DISCUSSION: Economic Constraints on Community.

C. Weeks 5-6: Arendt and Meaning in Politics

1. Labor and non-political activities.
2. Action in the public realm. Art and Politics.
3. DISCUSSION: Political and community participation as essential to human fulfillment.

Part Two: The Classical Liberal State

D. Weeks 7-8: Locke on Property as Foundation of Government

1. Labor in the State of Nature.
2. Contractual formation of the state.
3. Limits on state power over property.
4. DISCUSSION: Property rights and the environment.

E. Weeks 9-10: Mill on Personal Liberty as the Foundation of Government

1. Freedom of thought and speech.
2. Limitations of state power over actions.
3. DISCUSSION: Paternalistic laws.
4. Morality, justice, and philosophical foundations. Rawls.

Part Three: Criticisms of the Liberal State

F. Weeks 11-13: Marx on Economic Interference with Personal Fulfillment

1. Class struggle and oppression.
2. Alienation in liberal capitalism
3. Inability of liberal state to protect true freedoms.
4. DISCUSSION: Labor issues. Poverty as a limit on political power.

G. Weeks 14-15: MacKinnon on Gender Domination as Interference with Personal Fulfillment

1. Defining gender through dominance.
2. The male state.
3. DISCUSSION: Direct clash with liberalism: pornography and censorship

4. Evaluation of student learning

- a) Student learning will be evaluated on the basis of
 - 1) one mid-term exam and one final exam
 - 2) one 5-6 page paper
 - 3) five to eight short reaction papers.

- b) This is a writing-active course. The mid-term examination will consist mostly of essays and short answers designed to show that students have comprehended the material and are developing a reflective attitude toward social and political issues. The short reaction papers are designed to ensure that students attend class regularly, that they study the course readings each week, and that they improve their skills using writing as a part of the learning process. The longer paper is designed to provide students with the opportunity to improve their skills at detailed assessment of particular issues.

5. Rationale

- a) PHI 3050G is part of the **Social and Behavioral Sciences** segment of the General Education Curriculum. This course will provide students with the background and skills needed for a mature approach to evaluating their place in our social, economic, and political system. By imparting critical skills and reflective habits in these areas, a philosophy course on social and political thought can increase students' abilities to assess the quality of their interactions with others. Students will discuss particular issues, including church-state relations and community involvement. They will understand the origin and application of a European political theory, classical liberalism, and will debate its applicability to various cultures in the world.
- b) The textbooks assigned for this course are appropriate for junior and senior-level students. The evaluation of writing and critical reasoning skills assume a level of writing, reading and critical analysis most appropriate for upperclass students.

- c) This course is not similar to any other existing courses at EIU.

- d) This course is an approved elective in the philosophy major and minor.

6. Implementation

- a) This course is assigned initially to Dr. Jonelle DePetro

- b) Texts may vary, but typically there is an anthology that includes readings in ethical and political philosophy. Current texts are: Michael Morgan, ed. *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* (Hackett Press, 1992), Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, 1958) and Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Harvard University Press, 1989).

- c) No additional cost to students.

- d) Spring 2001

7. Community College transfer

A community college course will not be accepted as transfer credit for this course.

8. **Date approved by the department:** 3-27-00

9. **Date approved by CAHCC:** 4-5-00

10. **Date approved by CAA:** 10-19-00

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