Fall 2014 Prof. S.A. Lloyd

Office Hours: MW 8:30-9:30 MHP 205c

& by appointment Email: lloyd@usc.edu

PHILOSOPHY 337: HISTORY OF MODERN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

This course considers whether and how political authority might be justified, the scope of legitimate governmental action, individual conscience and the limits of political obligation. We will study the works of several of the most important political philosophers belonging to the Social Contract Tradition, from early modern times to the present day. What all “social contract” theorists share is the aim of justifying political norms and arrangements by demonstrating that these could enjoy the consent—the voluntary, rational and morally permissible consent—of all those to whom they apply. However, this broad methodology for political justification has yielded quite distinct theories of political obligation, of the requirements of justice, and of the rights and duties of citizens depending upon the particular aims and practical assumptions of the philosophers using it. We will examine four important versions of social contract theorizing: Hobbes’s use of it to justify political absolutism, Locke’s effort to show only a limited constitutional regime to be justifiable, Rousseau’s radically democratic model, and Rawls’s argument purporting to justify egalitarian principles of justice by appeal to an idealized social contract. In addition, we will consider the critiques of social contract theory and alternative models offered by Hume and J.S. Mill. We will subject the arguments of these thinkers to critical scrutiny, and will also consider the merits and defects of this method of justification itself: Are the social contract theorists right about how political norms and arrangements are to be established?

# Required Readings

Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism*

Plato, *Apology*

Sophocles, *Antigone*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*

Articles on Blackboard by Kavka, Hume, Marx, Dworkin, and Rawls

**Requirements**

Informed, constructive participation in all class meetings is expected. (10%)

First Midterm Exam, Monday, September 29th (25%)

Second Midterm Exam, Monday October 27th (30%)

Term Paper, 1800- 2000 words, due Friday, December 12th (35%)

**Schedule of Topics and Readings**

Please come to class having already read the assigned readings for each section of the course. **Please bring your book to class**. Come prepared to discuss.

**Week 1: Governmental authority, religious authority, and the individual**

“Readings for first class meeting” (BB)

Sophocles, *Antigone* (Fagles translation, on BB)

**Week 2: The Duty to Obey and Civil Disobedience**

Plato, *Apology (*BB)

Rawls on conscientious objection (BB)

**Week 3: Is government necessary? Is it morally permissible to submit to government?**

Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism,* Chapters 1 & 2

Kavka, “Why Even Morally Perfect People Would Need Government” BB

**Weeks 4-5: Hobbes**

*Leviathan* Introduction-Chapter 6; 8; 12-21; 24; 29-32; 37-39; 41-47; Review and Conclusion.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Hobbes’s moral and political philosophy, Plato.stanford.edu

**First Midterm Exam Monday September 29th**

**Weeks 6 & 7: Locke**

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chapters 1-5, 11, 12, 14-15, 18-19

Levan Coffeehouse Conversation Wednesday October 8th, Ground Zero

**Week 8: Rousseau**

Rousseau, *Social Contract,* entire

**Week 9: Hume**

Hume, “Of the Original Contract” and “Of the Origin of Government” (BB)

**Second Midterm Exam Monday October 27th**

**Week 10: Bentham**

BenthamExcerpts (BB)

**Weeks 11 & 12: Burke & Mill**

Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* pp. 1-76

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chapters I, II, V

Mill, *On Liberty*, chapters I, III, IV

**Levan Coffeehouse Conversation Wednesday November 12th, Ground Zero**

**Weeks** **13-14: Marx and Rawls**

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, Parts I & II

**Week 15: Course Review and Paper Preparation**

No new reading

**Course Policies**

There will be no make-up exams, so mark your calendar! Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 1/3 grade per day late (e.g., A- day due = B+ next day). You may turn your paper in early if you wish. Your paper must be submitted both through the Turnitin feature on our course Blackboard and in hard copy to the Philosophy Department Office in MHP 113 before Noon on the due date. All papers and exams will be graded “blind” so please put your name *on the cover-sheet only*.

*No audio or video recording or streaming of lectures is permitted. Internet posting of course materials is prohibited.*

*U.S.C.’s academic integrity standards will be strictly enforced for all assignments in this course. Please be sure to observe all quotation and citation conventions. All written work must be yours alone. Please consult your Scampus guidebook to inform yourself of the details of these standards, and bring to me any questions or uncertainties you may have as to what they require.* *Any academic integrity violation will result in an “F” for the course.*

*Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776*