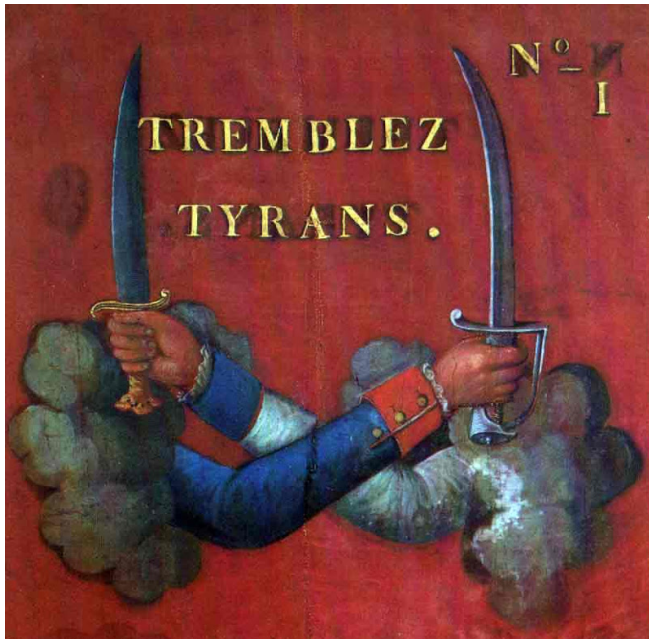


PHIL 207C.1001: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY



PROFESSOR

Simone Gubler

CONTACT

simoneg@unr.edu

LECTURE TIMES

12:00PM - 1:15PM TTh

LECTURE LOCATION

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/93312888750>

OFFICE HOURS

TTh 3-4PM. To avoid overlap, please book a slot on Calendly: <https://calendly.com/simoneg-1/15min>

You will be supplied with a zoom link for our meeting on Calendly.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Today, we find ourselves living in a democratic state. None of us caused the United States to be a democracy, but we all live here, nonetheless, under a democratic regime. And because the American state is not something given to us by nature, but something made by human beings like us, we stand in a special relation to it. We can look at our present political situation as a product of human choices, and we can ask searching questions: Why is our present system of government the way it is? Should we, the inheritors of this system of social organization, change it? Should we replace it altogether?

In this class, we will examine different traditions of human governance and social organization, and ask questions about the origin, nature, and justification of central political concepts such as power, freedom, equality, justice, and rights.

POLICIES

Student Learning Outcomes

As stipulated in the course catalogue, upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. State a thesis about a problem in social and political philosophy, and provide evidence and philosophical argument (including replies to counter-arguments) in its defense.
2. Explain and interpret at an introductory level the ideas associated with social and political philosophy in the contemporary literature.
3. Distinguish better and worse reasoning, and recognize relevant logical relationships and patterns of inference in different works of social and political philosophy.
4. Show what is at stake in abstract debates in social and political philosophy and indicate how different positions in these debates help elucidate our understanding of the Constitutions of the United States and Nevada, as well as the evolution of American institutions and ideals.
5. Trace the sources and development of important political concepts within American intellectual traditions and cultural institutions.

Office Hours

All students are encouraged to visit me during my office hours. I want each of you to come at least once, early on in the semester, so that I can get to know you. To this end, *I will ask you to sign up for a one-on-one meeting with me in Week Two. The sign-up sheet will be distributed after our first class.* After that, you are welcome to see me at any time during office hours - as we are online this semester, please make an appointment using Calendly (<https://calendly.com/simoneg-1/15min>). Office hours represent a great opportunity to discuss any questions you might have in relation to the course, as well as to troubleshoot any challenges that threaten your academic success.

Readings

All assigned readings are compulsory. The readings may be found on Canvas in pdf format. Readings consist of edited extracts from longer works, so be sure to use the versions on Canvas in preparation for class.

Content Accessibility Statement

This course employs third party web and multimedia content, if you experience any issues accessing this content, please notify the professor.

Academic Honesty

The University Academic Standards Policy defines academic dishonesty, and mandates specific sanctions for violations. See the University Academic Standards policy: UAM 6,502.

Disability Services

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Pennington Student Achievement Center, Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

POLICIES

Audio and Video Recording

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Equal Opportunity and Title IX

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, whether on or off campus, or need information related to immigration concerns, please contact the University's Equal Opportunity & Title IX office at 775-784-1547. Resources and interim measures are available to assist you. For more information, please visit: <https://www.unr.edu/equal-opportunity-title-ix>

COVID-19 Training Policies

Students must complete and follow all guidelines as stated in the Student COVID-19 Training modules, or any other trainings or directives provided by the University.

COVID-19 Face Coverings

In response to COVID-19, and in alignment with State of Nevada Governor Executive Orders, Roadmap to Recovery for Nevada plans, Nevada System of Higher Education directives, the University of Nevada President directives, and local, state, and national health official guidelines face coverings are required at all times while on campus, except when alone in a private office. This includes the classroom, laboratory, studio, creative space, or any type of in-person instructional activity, and public spaces. A "face covering" is defined as a "covering that fully covers a person's nose and mouth, including without limitation, cloth face mask, surgical mask, towels, scarves, and bandanas" (State of Nevada Emergency Directive 024). Students that cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability, or who are unable to remove a mask without assistance may seek an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center.

COVID-19 Social Distancing

Face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing. Students shall observe current social distancing guidelines where possible in accordance with the Phase we are in while in the classroom, laboratory, studio, creative space (hereafter referred to as instructional space) setting and in public spaces. Students should avoid congregating around instructional space entrances before or after class sessions. If the instructional space has designated entrance and exit doors students are required to use them. Students should exit the instructional space immediately after the end of instruction to help ensure social distancing and allow for the persons attending the next scheduled class session to enter.

COVID-19 Disinfecting Your Learning Space

Disinfecting supplies are provided for you to disinfect your learning space. You may also use your own disinfecting supplies.

POLICIES

COVID-19, COVID-19 Like Symptoms, and Contact with Someone Testing Positive for COVID-19

Students must conduct daily health checks in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#). Students testing positive for COVID 19, exhibiting COVID 19 symptoms or who have been in direct contact with someone testing positive for COVID 19 will not be allowed to attend in-person instructional activities and must leave the venue immediately. Students should contact the Student Health Center or their health care provider to receive care and who can provide the latest direction on quarantine and self-isolation. Contact your instructor immediately to make instructional and learning arrangements.

Failure to Comply with Policy (including as outlined in this Syllabus) or Directives of a University Employee

In accordance with section 6,502 of the University Administrative Manual, a student may receive academic and disciplinary sanctions for failure to comply with policy, including this syllabus, for failure to comply with the directions of a University Official, for disruptive behavior in the classroom, or any other prohibited action. "Disruptive behavior" is defined in part as behavior, including but not limited to failure to follow course, laboratory or safety rules, or endangering the health of others. A student may be dropped from class at any time for misconduct or disruptive behavior in the classroom upon recommendation of the instructor and with approval of the college dean. A student may also receive disciplinary sanctions through the Office of Student Conduct for misconduct or disruptive behavior, including endangering the health of others, in the classroom. The student shall not receive a refund for course fees or tuition.

Principle of Charity

Some of the ideas that we'll deal with in this class are likely to seem very odd to you. You might even want to reject them outright. That's perfectly normal. When we encounter new or unfamiliar ideas and arguments, especially when they seem to threaten our standard ways of thinking about things, there's a strong impulse to reject them. But the art of being a good philosopher is, in part, the art of pushing through (and then rationally investigating) that initial reaction of repulsion to a strange idea. So, to that end, let's operate according to a guiding principle: 'the principle of charity':

"The principle of charity governs the interpretation of the beliefs and utterances of others. It urges charitable interpretation, meaning interpretation that maximizes the truth or rationality of what others think and say"

- R. Feldman, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

I'd like us to follow this principle in all of our work in this class — in our interactions with each other, with invited guests, as well as with the ideas in the set readings.

So, when someone makes an argument or claim:

- Start from the assumption that the person is rational and is trying to communicate something interesting and meaningful to you.
- Be generous: try to give the best possible interpretation to their statement.
- Be patient: avoid attributing wrongness or confusion until you've carefully considered whether a relevant insight may be derived from their statement.

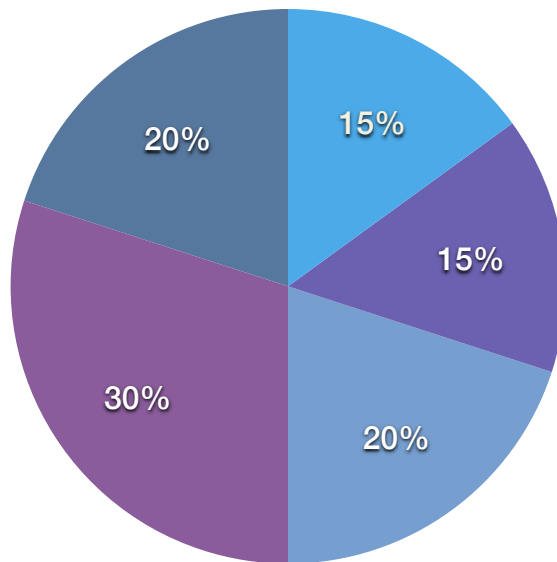
ASSESSMENT

- 15%** **Op-Ed: Democracy**
- The prompt for the op-ed assignment (2 pages) will be posted on Canvas on Thursday, August 27th. Due in class on Tuesday, September 15.
- 15%** **Weekly reading quizzes**
- These multiple choice reading quizzes can be found in your lesson modules on Canvas. They will be available for two days following the relevant lecture/reading. They contain questions that anyone who has done their reading should be able to address. Each quiz is worth 1% of your final grade. **Note: Final responses to quizzes are due by 11:59PM on the Sunday directly following the day on which they are posted.**
- 20%** **Midterm Take-Home Exam**
- The take-home exam will be distributed on Canvas on the 22nd of October and will cover all material up to that date. Answers are due on Canvas on the 27th of October.
- 30%** **Final Paper**
- Topics for the final paper will be distributed on the 3rd of November. This assignment has two components.
1. You are to produce a 2 page blueprint for the paper, including a topic sentence, paragraph by paragraph argument plan and an annotated bibliography. **The blueprint is worth 1/4 of the final paper grade.** It is due on Canvas on the 17th of November. You will receive feedback on the 24th of November.
 2. The final 6 page paper is due on Canvas, on the 15th of December.
- 20%** **Discussion and Participation**
- Each week there will be a discussion forum on Canvas, with a prompt. You can find links in the daily lecture modules. This component of your grade will depend on your sincere and thoughtful engagement in these online discussion fora, as well as on your engagement in interactive exercises during class. **Note: Discussion posts are due by 11:59PM on the Sunday directly following the day on which they are posted.**
- Attendance**
- Attendance is required. Exceptions will only be made with the professor's permission and within the scope of university policy (<https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/3000-3999-students/3020-class-absence-policy>). There will be no grade penalty for the first two unexplained absences. Each further unexplained absence will result in a 2% reduction in the overall course grade.

FINAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

A	94-100	A-	90-93
B+	87-89	B	84-86
B-	80-83	C+	77-79
C	74-76	C-	70-73
D+	67-69	D	64-66
D-	60-63	F	0-59

- Op-ed: 15
- Mid-Term Exam: 20
- Discussion and Participation: 20
- Reading Quizzes: 15
- Final Paper: 30



SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK ONE Tuesday, August 25		<i>Syllabus overview</i>
WEEK ONE Thursday, August 27	<i>Op-ed prompt distributed</i>	<i>How to do Political Philosophy</i> G.A. Cohen
WEEK TWO Tuesday, September 1	Ancient Democracy and its Discontents	<i>The Funeral Oration</i> Thucydides <i>Every Cook Can Govern</i> C.L.R. James
WEEK TWO Thursday, September 3		<i>The Republic, VIII</i> Plato
WEEK THREE Tuesday, September 8		1. <i>Making Athens Great Again</i> Rebecca Newberger Goldstein 2. <i>Power to the People</i> Mary Beard
WEEK THREE Thursday, September 10		<i>Democracy: From City-States to a Cosmopolitan Order?</i> David Held
WEEK FOUR Tuesday, September 15	<i>Op-ed due on Canvas</i>	<i>A Paradox in the Theory of Democracy</i> Richard Wollheim
WEEK FOUR Thursday, September 17	Hobbes & Social Contract Theory	Film: <i>The White Helmets</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQM6t1oSQkE
WEEK FIVE Tuesday, September 22		<i>Leviathan</i> Thomas Hobbes
WEEK FIVE Thursday, September 24		<i>Leviathan</i> Thomas Hobbes
WEEK SIX Tuesday, September 29		<i>Remarks on Hobbes</i> Catharine Macauley
WEEK SIX Thursday, October 1		<i>Prisoner's Dilemmas,</i> Martin J. Osborne

WEEK SEVEN Tuesday, October 6	Rebellion and Revolution	<i>The Social Contract</i> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and <i>On the Trial of the King</i> Maximilien Robespierre
WEEK SEVEN Thursday, October 8		<i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> Edmund Burke
WEEK EIGHT Tuesday, October 13		<i>A Vindication of the Rights of Men</i> Mary Wollstonecraft
WEEK EIGHT Thursday, October 15	Property & Governance	<i>Two Treatises of Government</i> John Locke
WEEK NINE Tuesday, October 20		<i>Private Property</i> Karl Marx
WEEK NINE Thursday, October 22	<i>Mid-term exam distributed</i>	<i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> Robert Nozick
WEEK TEN Tuesday, October 27	<i>Mid-term exam due on Canvas</i>	<i>Why Not Socialism?</i> G.A. Cohen
WEEK TEN Thursday, October 29		Film: <i>World's Water Crisis</i> https://youtu.be/C65iqOSCZOY <i>Tragedy of the Commons</i> Stephen Gardiner
WEEK ELEVEN Tuesday, November 3	<i>Topics for final essay distributed</i>	<i>Justice as Fairness</i> John Rawls
WEEK ELEVEN Thursday, November 5	Rights, Freedom, and Equality	<i>Justice as Fairness</i> John Rawls
WEEK TWELVE Tuesday, November 10		<i>Two Concepts of Liberty</i> Isiah Berlin
WEEK TWELVE Thursday, November 12		<i>Equality as a Moral Ideal</i> Harry Frankfurt

WEEK THIRTEEN Tuesday, November 17	<i>Blueprints due on Canvas</i>	<i>Equality of What?</i> Amartya Sen
WEEK THIRTEEN Thursday, November 19		<i>What is the Point of Equality?</i> Elizabeth Anderson
WEEK FOURTEEN Tuesday, November 24		<i>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</i> Martin Luther King <i>On the Reality of Race</i> (video) Charles Mills https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epAv6Q6da_o
WEEK FOURTEEN Thursday, November 26	No Class - Thanksgiving	
WEEK FIFTEEN Tuesday, December 1	The Family	<i>The Family - Beyond Justice?</i> Susan Moller-Okin
WEEK FIFTEEN Thursday, December 3		<i>After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State</i> Nancy Fraser
WEEK SIXTEEN Tuesday, December 8	Social Media	<i>Escape the Echo Chamber</i> Thi Nguyen
WEEK SIXTEEN Thursday, December 10		<i>How to Fix Fake News</i> Regina Rini
WEEK SEVENTEEN Tuesday, December 15	<i>Final paper due</i>	1. <i>An Open Letter to My Sister,</i> Miss Angela Davis James Baldwin 2. <i>Imagining the Future</i> Angela Davis
	End.	