



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE PHIL/POLS 262: CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY 20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 3 March to 2 July 2014

Teaching dates: 3 March to 6 June 2014

Easter/Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 4 May 2014

Study week: 9 – 13 June 2014

Examination/Assessment Period: 13 June to 2 July 2014

Note: students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Lectures: Wednesday and Friday, 8.00 - 9.50 am
Venue: Hunter (HU) LT119

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Professor Simon Keller
Room No: MY720
Phone: x9638
Email: Simon.Keller@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: Wednesday and Friday, 10.00 – 11.00 am

Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

Prescription

This course examines major positions and issues in contemporary political and moral philosophy, including liberalism, libertarianism, socialism, communitarianism and feminism. Some of the philosophers we read include John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Isaiah Berlin, and Susan Okin.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Identify and explicate the major positions in contemporary political philosophy, and apply the analytical methods of political philosophy to practical political problems.
2. Formulate and defend their own views about the moral issues that arise in politics, using rigorous and well-informed arguments.
3. Advance their abilities to undertake logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis, and rational and ethical decision-making.
4. Practice and improve their critical writing skills.

Teaching format

The bi-weekly meetings will include some lecturing, plus discussion, informal group assignments, and time for questions. There are no tutorials for this course.

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, take part in class discussion, and keep up with the reading.

Workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 200 hours to the course throughout the year. An approximate indication of the hours to be spent on each component of the course is as follows:

Preparation and attendance at classes: 50 hours

Breakdown of assignments:

First essay: 20 hours

Second essay: 20 hours

Third essay: 55 hours

Examination: 55 hours

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	1000 word essay	15%	1-4	28 March, 4.00 pm
2	1000 word essay	15%	1-4	16 April, 4.00 pm
2	2500 word essay	35%	1-4	6 June, 4.00 pm
3	Three-hour closed-book final examination	35%	1-4	13 June to 2 July 2014

The essays and examination will be evaluated against the following five criteria:

1. directness and clarity in answering the question
2. support of answer with relevant and reasoned argument
3. knowledge of relevant material presented in readings and lectures

4. consideration of alternative viewpoints and arguments
5. quality of writing, including clarity of handwriting where relevant

Submission and return of work

All written work must be submitted in hard copy in class, or to the PHIL/POLS 262 mailbox outside MY518 by 4.00 pm on the due date. Written work must also be submitted electronically to the PHIL/POLS 262 site on Blackboard. All written work must use double-spaced 12-point text, and must include page numbers.

Essays and tests will be returned at times to be advised. If students fail to attend these times, they may collect their essay from the Office, MY 518 between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday and must show their Student ID card before collection.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but all extensions require the student to provide documentation. An extension can be granted only with the prior approval of the course coordinator, and only in exceptional circumstances. Procrastination is not a legitimate ground for an extension, so plan accordingly. If you have other assignments due around the same time, plan ahead.

If granted an extension, students must agree to a new due date. Contact your lecturer as soon as a problem emerges. Extension forms are available in the School office.

Penalties

Philosophy Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised. For PHIL/POLS 262 each week or part thereof of lateness, a late assignment gets a 5 point penalty, up to three weeks, after which the assignment will get a zero mark. (i.e. 1-7 days late a loss of 5%; 8-14 days late a loss of 10%; 15-21 days late a loss of 15%, and after that a zero mark.)

Set texts

Students must purchase the PHIL/POLS 262 Course Book. The coursebook will be available from vicbooks. Locations and opening hours for course book purchases are available at www.vicbooks.co.nz.

Recommended reading

Extra reading is not necessary. The following two books provide helpful backgrounds to many of the topics on the course, and may be worth consulting.

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Adam Swift, *Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in the box below:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz