Grossmont College

Official Course Outline

PHILOSOPHY 145 – SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

1. Course Number Course Title Semester Units Semester Hours

PHIL 145 Social and Political 3 3 hours lecture: 48-54 hours

Philosophy 96-108 outside-of-class hours

144-162 total hours

1. Prerequisites

None.

Corequisite

None.

Recommended Preparation

None.

1. Catalog Description

This course is a philosophical examination into the nature of the relationship between morality, politics and social justice, from a multi-cultural perspective. Topics may include: the political significance of religion and culture, the concept of natural law, the existence and nature of rights, the obligation of citizens to their society, the nature of a just society, and theories of reward and punishment. Focus will be on the topics of: justice, equality, liberty, human rights, and the nature and limits of authority.

1. Course Objectives

The student will:

* 1. Recognize a general overview of the competing ideas on human nature, justice, rights, freedom, moral ontology, and happiness that shaped the Western and non-Western political traditions.
  2. Illustrate how every conception of government implies a view of human nature and destiny and that no adequate understanding of politics and its goals is possible without a systematic consideration of the essence of the human condition.
  3. Formulate critical thinking skills through the use of the Socratic dialogue and participation in class discussions.
  4. Rationally evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various competing moral systems and political options.
  5. Assess how problems and issues discussed by political philosophers might be of significance today.
  6. Critically compare and contrast the divergent ways of understanding the world and the nature of social and political institutions.
  7. Evaluate the views of non-Western philosophical traditions concerning the nature of society and relevant political institutions, may be coming into conflict with those of the Western Tradition, and how we can use philosophy itself to appraise the significance of this conflict.

1. Instructional Facilities

Standard lecture classroom

1. Special Materials Required of Student

Electronic storage media.

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1. Course Content
   1. The moral foundations of our social and political institutions. This will include theories of justice, liberty, and equality as well as basic principles of justice by which societies, institutions and practices are rightly evaluated.
   2. The historical origins of our social and political institutions. This will include placing these theories in the context of the social, economic, and historical conditions in which they arose.
   3. The nature and limits of authority. The grounds, if any, of the obligation of a citizen to obey a sovereign.
   4. Democracy and autocracy: circumstances where autocracies are justified and the degree to which a society is democratic.
   5. Culture and politics: the extent to which religion and/or science play a role in shaping our social and political institutions.
   6. Economic justice: The effect of a society’s economic system on the material prospects of its citizens. The state’s role in re-distributive justice. The degree to which economic institutions put limits on the realization of freedom, democracy, and self-determination.
   7. Major issues in social and political settings which are in the news today along with the historical and moral reasoning to contemporary issues.
2. Method of Instruction

a. Lecture.

b. Discussion.

c. Group projects. Students participate in The Veil of Ignorance Project, a social justice activity initiated by philosopher, John Rawls.

d. In-class presentations on such topics as gender equality.

1. Methods of Evaluating Student Performance

a. Midterm and final exams, both of which will contain objective and essay components.

b. Class preparation: reading assignments and class discussion. This will be evaluated by in-class participation and quizzes.

c. Critical-reflection papers concerning the nature of social and political thought on such topics as ethnic identity.

d. Term paper on such topics as comparing democracy and socialism..

1. Outside Class Assignments

a. Read assigned texts.

b. Write analytical and evaluative critical essays.

d. Students may participate in collaborative class projects or be expected to do some research.

e. Field Trip. Students engage in a visit to a homeless shelter.

1. Texts

a. Required Text(s):

(1) Christman, John, *Social and Political Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2nd ed. New York, NY, Routledge, 2018.

(2) Wolff, Jonathan, *Introduction to Political Philosophy*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2016.

(3) Zwolinski,Matt, *Arguing About Political Philosophy*, 2nd ed. New York, NY, Routledge, 2014

b. Supplementary texts and workbooks:

Course packet compiled by the instructor.

Addendum: Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, our students will be able to do the following:

Engage with the relationship among morality, politics and social justice from a multi-cultural perspective and demonstrate knowledge through reading and writing.

Date approved by the Governing Board: December 11, 2018