

Fall 2012 Phl 350 State Community and Individual MWF 3:00 ROBH 307  
Sanford Levy Office: 2-150 Wilson Phone: 994-5211 slevy@montana.edu  
Office Hours: 1:10 – 2:00 MWF

This is a Research and Creative Experience course for the Core. The idea behind R and C courses is to experience research and creativity and to generate a scholarly product. A substantial amount of student autonomy is expected. Goals include the following:

- Improve ability to put concepts and facts into practice.
- Increase understanding of the processes and dynamic nature of knowledge.
- Strengthen habits of critical and creative thinking while seeking and synthesizing information from broad and diverse sources.
- Deepen understanding of the importance of team work and collaboration.
- Develop responsibility, competency, and confidence.
- Expand intellectual curiosity and interest in the subject area.

**Text:** James, Sterba ed., *Justice: Alternative Political Perspectives* plus internet materials

**Save Your Work:** Always keep a copy of work you turn in. Keep all your graded work till you see your official grade for the course. If any errors are made in recording or calculating final grades, they can be easily corrected if you keep all your work.

**Academic Misconduct Policy:** The university's academic misconduct policy can be found at [http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student\\_conduct/](http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/). The most common forms of academic misconduct in philosophy classes are plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration. Plagiarism involves using another person's work without citing the source. Even unintentional misuse or appropriation of another person's (such as relying on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is plagiarism. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, you are expected to ask for clarification. Cheating involves a number of actions including copying from another student's paper during exams, using unauthorized notes during an exam, and using electronic aids during an exam. If you have any questions as to what constitutes cheating, ask.

*Students may not collaborate on graded material*, though obviously, it is good to talk about class material with other students and with people outside the class. If you have any questions about when this becomes collaboration, ask for clarification.

When I discover academic misconduct for an item of work, I usually give the student an "F" for that item and put a report in the student's permanent record. No student who has been found to commit academic misconduct may drop the class.

**General Expectations:** Students must be

- prompt and regular in attending classes
- well prepared for classes
- act in a respectful manner toward other students and the instructor and in a way that does not detract from the learning experience
- and make and keep appointments when it is necessary to meet with the instructor.

**Late Work:** If you need to turn work in late, notify me in advance. In general, prior authorization is given for

causes generally recognized by the university such as illness and participation in a university event. If something comes up fast and you cannot get prior authorization, I will need an official university excuse or a written medical excuse. If for some reason neither is possible, please come see me about the late work anyway. You should still turn in the work but I will lower your grade.

### **Contacting Me:**

- I pick up phone messages from my office voice mail three times a week. I check my email every other day. If you contact me by voice mail or email, *please include your full name and the class you are in.*
- If you contact me by voice mail, be sure to speak slowly and clearly, especially when giving me your name and phone number.
- Do not treat either voice mail or email as instant messaging. However, if you send me an email or leave me voice mail, and I do not respond in three or four days, send another. If an emergency happens, and you will miss a class deadline, contact me as soon as you can.
- I will not accept assignments by email.

**D2L Email:** You are required to check your D2L email accounts at least once a week. I sometimes send out information, such as changes in the syllabus, by D2L email. Failure to check is no excuse for not knowing. It is now possible to forward your D2L email to an outside account that you check more often.

I post handouts in the “files” section of D2L. You will be notified in class when something is posted. However, you are responsible to periodically check.

I use the D2L grade module. I post all grades. Please check once in a while to make sure I did not make a mistake with your grades.

I *might* try the Dropbox function on D2L. This allows you to electronically submit papers rather than submitting them on paper format. It has disadvantages: I hate reading hundreds of pages on a computer screen! But it also had advantages such as convenience for you. This year, the university has introduced a plagiarism checking service and associated it with Dropbox. I might give that a try.

### **Course Objectives**

- As in any philosophy course, you will work on reading and writing skills as well as distinctively philosophical skills involved in philosophical research such as argumentation, theory critique and theory construction.
- You will learn about a number of the most important political traditions of the modern western world, both historical and contemporary.
- In accordance with the research and creative experience component of the course, you will choose one of those traditions to study independently in more depth so as to produce a significant piece of philosophical work.

**Grading Scale:** Each item of work will be grade an a letter scale with pluses and minuses. However, for ease of grade computation, I convert each letter into a number according to the following pattern.

B+ = 8.7

B = 8.5

B- = 8.3

Note, I do not use some numbers, such as 8.2. Also “10” will be rare since it corresponds to an A+++!

**Requirements:** Your grade will be determined by the following.

- Attendance and class participation are required. I will regularly ask people to summarize ideas from assigned readings as well as other things. Since there are no exams, your participation is the way I gauge whether you have read, understood and thought about the material. (10 points)
- One short paper (two to five pages) for five of the six sections for the course. (In other words, you get to skip writing on one section.) You get to choose which five to write on. Short paper assignments will be provided about a week in advance of the due date. *Note, you can do all six papers and I will drop the lowest grade.* (10 points each).
- A project proposal: this is pass/fail. You must get a pass to continue.
- A bibliography project. (10 points)
- An initial 5 page draft of your research project (20 points).
- A research paper project of 15 – 20 pages. (40 points).

**Philosopherstoolkit.com:** I have a website [www.philosopherstoolkit.com](http://www.philosopherstoolkit.com). Much of the material on this website is not relevant to this class, but some of it is. You should download and read the essays on the main page about such things as reading and writing philosophy. This will give you an idea about what I expect from philosophy students.

**Note Taking:** There are a lot of individual readings for this class. It is important that you not only *read* these materials. You must also *understand* them and *keep track* of them. The best way to do this is by note taking. Notes can be very detailed (mine often are) or just capture the basic ideas. I give some advice on note taking on my website, [www.philosopherstoolkit.com](http://www.philosopherstoolkit.com). At a minimum your notes should include

1. clear explanations of main concepts such as *utilitarianism*, and how they differ from other concepts such as *contractualism*.
2. clear statements of the positions of various authors, e.g., what is Hospers's libertarian view and how does it differ from other libertarian views
3. clear statements of the main arguments for various positions, e.g., why does Hospers adopt his libertarian position
4. clear statements of possible responses to those positions and arguments, that is, what philosophers call 'objections'.
5. some thoughts of your own, e.g., is Hospers right or wrong, and why

**The Research Project:** This is a substantial part of your grade and will be explained in a separate handout.

**Readings:** Most readings are in our text though some are online – links are provided in the syllabus. Each section of our book has a number of readings about a particular approach to justice. Some of the readings are by proponents of that approach and some are by critics. Thus, each section involves a dialogue or debate. In each section, your job has three parts.

- First, you must understand the view discussed in that section, for example, libertarianism or socialism. You should be able to explain what the view is in general, and in detail.
- Second you must understand the debate between our authors about that view. This means keeping track of what each author says. Do not let things blur into an amorphous mass of philosophical pudding. You must know, for example, that Hospers is a libertarian and that Sterba tries to turn the libertarians own pronouncements against them.

- Third, you must participate in the debate and make up our own minds about things.

**Syllabus:** The following dates are approximate. Depending on the amount of class discussion and unforeseen circumstances, we may go a bit faster or slower. The titles of the sections correspond to the readings in the book.

Aug 27 Introductory Lectures No Readings

Sept 29 Sterba, “Introduction” (p. 2). This provides you with a brief overview of all the theories of justice we will be looking at. I want you to produce for yourselves a list of these views, a brief statement of what each of these views is, and to *memorize your list and brief statement*. I will ask questions! Also, this is your introduction to the various theories you will have to choose between for your research projects. Please read this section with that in mind!

### **Libertarian Justice**

31 Locke “On Property” (<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr05.htm>)

Sept 3 **Labor day**

5

7 Hospers “The Libertarian Manifesto” (p. 22)

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12 **First Short paper Due** Sterba “From Liberty to Welfare” (p 33):

14

### **Socialist Justice**

17 Marx and Engels, “The Socialist Ideal” (p. 68)

19

21 **Second Short Paper Due:** Nell and O'Neill, “Justice Under Socialism” (p. 77)

24

26 Nozick, “How Liberty Upsets Patterns” (p. 97)

28 **Research project Proposal Due**

### **Liberal Democratic Justice: Contractarianism**

Oct 1 Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: A Restatement” (p. 107)

3

5 **Third Short Paper Due:** Sterba, “Rawls and a Morally Defensible Conception of Justice”

8

10 **Bibliography Project Due**

### **Liberal Democratic Justice: Utilitarianism**

12 <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/g/gaskilld/ethics/utilitarianism%20notes.htm> (This consists of some very accessible notes summarizing the basic idea behind utilitarianisms put on the web by Dan Gaskill at California State University Sacramento)

15

17 **Fourth Short Paper Due:** Rawls, “Utilitarianism and the Distinction Between persons” (p. 152)

19 Hare, “Justice and Equality” (p. 140)

22

### **Communitarian Justice**

- 24 Sandel, “The Public Philosophy of Contemporary Liberalism” (p. 198)  
26  
29 MacIntyre, “The Political and Social Structure of the Common Good” (p. 211) – if we have  
time  
31  
Nov 2 **Fifth Short Paper Due:** Hampton, “The Liberals Strike Back” (p. 218)  
5

### **Feminist Justice**

- 7 Mill, “On the Subjection of Women” (p. 228)  
9  
12 **Veteran's Day**  
14 **Sixth Short Paper Due:** Okin, “Justice and Gender” (p. 236)  
16  
19 **Initial Draft of Research Project.** Sterba, “Feminist Justice and the Family” (p. 251)  
21-23 Thanksgiving Holiday  
  
26 The final two weeks will consist of my meeting with each member of the class individually to  
discuss research projects.  
28  
30  
  
Dec 3  
5  
6 **Final Projects Due**

### **Key Dates:**

- |         |                                   |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Sept 12 | First Short paper                 |
| Sept 21 | Second Short Paper                |
| Sept 28 | Research Project Proposal Due     |
| Oct 5   | Third Short Paper                 |
| Oct 10  | Bibliography Project Due          |
| Oct 17  | Fourth Short Paper                |
| Nov 2   | Fifth Short Paper                 |
| Nov 14  | Sixth Short Paper                 |
| Nov 19  | Initial Draft of Research Project |
| Dec 6   | Final Draft of Research Project   |