

Social and Political Philosophy
Dr. Kristi Sweet
Phil 332
MWF 12:40-1:30
Fall 2007, TAMU

Contact Information:

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Required Texts:

Classics in Moral and Political Theory, edited by Michael L. Morgan

Course Description:

This course will engage with foundational texts in the history of western philosophy that pertain to the topics of society and politics. We will spend the first part of the semester treating classical visions of the state, transitioning then to modern conceptions exemplified in social contract theory. Our investigations into the authors we are reading will be united by the following themes: justice, the role of law in a state, the relation of morality to right, the ideal state, and the relation between the individual and society.

Course Objectives:

Students should complete the course with a deep understanding of the philosophical concepts that orient discussions of society and politics. Students should also come away with a clear sense of the historical movement and development in philosophical perspectives on the state and community.

Course Requirements:

Students will be required to write two five page papers and complete a final examination. Students are also expected to come to class having read all assigned materials, and prepared to engage in critical discussion of the readings and topics addressed.

Grading:

Papers (35% each)	70%
Final Exam	30%

Appointments and Correspondence:

It is my goal to help you succeed in your academic endeavors, and I am therefore more than willing to meet with you outside of scheduled office hours to accommodate your schedule. To set up an appointment, you may see me before or after class, stop by my office, call, or email. If you choose to email me (for any reason), I will expect that your email be professional and courteous in tone and structure, and I will do the same.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

Academic Integrity Statements: Aggie Honor Code:

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>

Plagiarism and/or cheating in this class will not be accepted, and will result in failure of the course. This includes plagiarism that is unintentional or results from ignorance regarding proper citation practices. If you are unsure about what constitutes acceptable citation practices, please consult with the writing center or library resources on writing styles.

Course Assignments

Readings must be completed for the class date listed.

All readings, unless otherwise listed, are from our textbook, *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*.

(These assignments are subject to revision as the semester progresses. Changes will be announced in class, and the online syllabus will be updated to reflect any adjustments to our schedule.)

Date	Topic	Reading
8/29	Plato "Apology"	48-50; 54-59
8/31	Plato <i>Republic</i>	75-86
9/3	Plato: <i>Republic</i>	93-100
9/5	Plato: <i>Republic</i>	100-110
9/7	Plato: <i>Republic</i>	126-136
9/10	Plato: <i>Republic</i>	136-147
9/12	Plato: <i>Republic</i>	153-158; 164-169
9/14	No Class	
9/17	Plato: <i>Republic</i>	186-190; 195-198
9/19	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	255-262
9/21	Aristotle: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	265-272
9/24	Aristotle: <i>Politics</i>	361-369
9/26	Aristotle: <i>Politics</i>	372-379
9/28	Aristotle: <i>Politics</i>	379-383; 389-91
10/1	Distribution of Paper Topics, Discussion of Paper Expectations	
10/3	Augustine: <i>City of God</i>	442-454
10/5	Augustine: <i>City of God</i>	442-454
10/8	Aquinas: <i>On Kingship; Summa Theologica</i>	457-466
10/10	Aquinas: <i>Summa Theologica</i>	466-473
10/12	Paper Due	
10/15	Aquinas: <i>Summa Theologica</i>	473-476
10/17	Hobbes: <i>Leviathan</i>	552-553; 590-604
10/19	Hobbes: <i>Leviathan</i>	606-612
10/22	Hobbes: <i>Leviathan</i>	621-625; 664-671
10/24	Locke: <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>	685-698
10/26	Locke: <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>	704-719
10/29	Locke: <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>	724-727; 740-745(through §229); 749
10/31	Rousseau: <i>On the Social Contract</i>	831-841
11/2	Rousseau: <i>On the Social Contract</i>	841-851
11/5	Rousseau: <i>On the Social Contract</i>	785-795
11/7	Rousseau: <i>On the Social Contract</i>	795-805
11/9	No Class	
11/12	Rousseau: <i>On the Social Contract</i>	805-815
11/14	Kant: <i>Groundwork</i>	914-919; 924-925
11/16	Kant: Selections	TBA

11/19	Kant: Selections	TBA
11/21	Kant: Selections	TBA
11/23	Marx	1086-1092
11/6	Marx	1086-1092
11/28	Marx	1109-1117
11/30	Marx	1117-1128
12/3	Second Paper Due, Review for Final	
	Final Examination	

Social and Political Philosophy Paper Topics

Choose ONE of the following topics for your midterm paper

Due Friday, October 12 (in class)

Five pages

Describe the vision of education that Socrates proposes in the *Republic*. How is this vision of education in the service of virtue? How does Socrates' defense of himself in the "Apology" fit into the relation between education and virtue?

Plato and Aristotle give very different accounts of the role of the family in the state. Give an account of this difference, as regards the end of the state and the function of the familial bonds within it.

Describe the relation between individual virtue and the city-state in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*. In doing so, you should address his claim that the city-state is prior to the other parts of the city, and how this fits into his claims about how we become virtuous.

Plato and Aristotle each make numerous and varied appeals to nature in their writings on ethics and politics. For this paper, pick one author and give an account of what they take the relation between nature and virtue, and nature and the city-state, to be. Is justice natural? Is virtue natural?

You may also write on a topic of your own choosing. You must, however, have me approve your topic prior to Friday, Oct. 5.

Social and Political Philosophy

Paper guidelines

1. Length- Your response should be five (5) pages in length.
2. Format- No cover pages or plastic covers, please. All pertinent information should be located at the top of the first page. Paper should be done in Times New Roman, 12 font, double-spaced, with one inch margins. You must include a bibliography. Also, feel free to use recycled paper (i.e., paper whose other side has writing or text on it).
3. Criteria for grading- The paper questions are deliberately narrow. They are structured this way in order to get you to think about a specific way into the text. You will be graded on how well you answer this question, and how well you situate the answer in relation to the broader philosophy at issue (which you will necessarily have to do in order to give an adequate account). You should demonstrate that you have read the text well, understood it, and can explain a key aspect of it in your own language. Do not simply recount your lecture notes, but formulate the arguments and ideas in your own voice.
4. Thesis- You **MUST** have a thesis statement. For this paper, your thesis statement should be a clear idea expressing an interpretation of the text that you are going to “defend,” that is, explain based on textual analysis.
5. Use of text- You must cite the text, though not to the extent that it outweighs your analysis of it. You should choose quotes that illustrate directly what you are trying to highlight, and be sure to show how and why the quote chosen does so. Do not indent quotes less than 5 lines in length. Part of the assignment is to demonstrate that you can engage with the text thoughtfully; **if you do not cite the text**, I will assume you did not read. Your grade will reflect this. Further, you should not use outside or secondary sources. The task of these papers is to measure how well *you* understand and can interpret the text, not how well you summarize another person’s view on the text.
6. Citation- Be sure to properly cite your quotes. You may use whatever method with which you are most comfortable (parenthetical, footnotes, endnotes, and whichever style—APA, Chicago).
7. Grammar, etc. - Your papers should be proofread, spell-checked, stapled, etc. If there are too many technical errors of this variety, I will return the paper to you and ask you to resubmit it.
8. **I am willing to accept drafts of all of your written assignments, and will give you feedback regarding the direction and content of your paper.** If you wish for me to read your paper ahead of time, you may come by my office during office hours, or set up an appointment at your convenience.
9. If you have problems writing, I highly suggest that you utilize the **writing center** on campus for guidance in formulating the structure and argument of your work.

10. Late paper policy- As both of these papers are scheduled at times that coincide with mid- and end of term grading, you may not receive an extension on these papers. Each *day* that the paper is late, you will be marked down one half of a grade.

Final Paper Assignment

Social and Political Philosophy

Paper Due: 12/3

Length: 5 pages

The goal of your final paper will be to examine a topic of your choice. You may choose to treat one philosopher from the second half of the semester, or compare and contrast two philosophers (either one modern and one ancient, or two moderns). You must choose a topic treated in the readings from class. Moreover, you should refer to the paper guidelines distributed for the midterm paper (which are available online).

Final Exam

12/10

Remember to bring a blue book!!

The final exam will have two sections. The first will be a matching section, in which you will be asked to identify which author wrote a given sentence or sentences. The second section will be a selection of short essay questions, wherein you will be asked to compare and contrast philosophers on the following themes:

The role of reason: in morality; in the state

Human nature

Moral goodness

Portraits of the state of nature

Reason for entering into state

Goal of the state

Foundation of the social contract

Equality

Source/authority of law