

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
LIBERAL ARTS DIVISION
GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

PHI	120	Social and Political Philosophy	3-0	3
Course Prefix	Course Number	Course Title	(Lec-Lab)	Semester Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focuses on the ideas of justice, liberty, equality, law and order, rights and privileges. This includes discussion of such issues as democracy, communism, nuclear war, capital punishment, sexual equality, hunger and drugs.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

The topics of justice, liberty, equality should be the heart of any Social/Political Philosophy course. Whatever selection of topics and whatever order in which they are treated, the development of each topic should include the following elements: (using the concept of justice as an example).

- I. Conceptual development (of the concept of justice)
 - A. Definition(s) of Justice
 1. Traditional definitions
 2. Definition in relation to similar concepts, rights, equality
 3. Definition in relation to opposing concepts, interest of the stronger, arbitrariness
 - B. Implications of the Definition of Justice
 1. For personal morality
 2. For social order
 3. For interrelationships between social orders
- II. Historical Development (of the concept of justice)
 - A. The Concept of Justice in Western Philosophy (emphasis on the ways in which later thought is based on and extends earlier thought)
 1. Classical Greek and Roman philosophy and law
 2. Modern theories
 - B. The Concept of Justice in Oriental Philosophy (optional)
 1. In the classical literature of the various Eastern traditions
 2. Modern formulation
 3. Social/Political issues: abortion, euthanasia, revolution, environmental and population control, censorship, economic injustice, capital punishment, etc.

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

1. Lecture
2. Discussion
3. Small group work
4. Student presentations
5. Student debates

STUDENT OUTCOMES: (*The student should . . .*)

- A. Attitudes
 1. learn to be appropriately skeptical.
 2. be willing to learn from a variety of sources.
 3. have respect for different views.
 4. take personal responsibility for learning.
 5. develop a sense of social concern.

B. Skills

1. read, write, and speak critically and effectively about political and social issues.
2. work maturely with diverse and conflicting views.
3. identify the presuppositions of different social and political views.
4. explore the consequences of different social and political views.

C. Knowledge /Content

1. be able to explain at least one ancient view of society and politics (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, etc.).
2. be able to explain at least one version of the social contract theory.
3. be able to explain at least one theory of democracy.
4. be able to explain at least one contemporary Anglo-American view of society and politics.
5. be able to explain at least one contemporary non-Anglo-American view of society and politics (e.g., Marx).
6. be able to explain at least one feminist view of society and politics.
7. compare and contrast different social and political views.
8. explain and respond to common criticisms of some social and political views.
9. apply the views in the course to contemporary social and political issues such as war, freedom of speech, discrimination, civil disobedience, punishment, drug legalization, etc.
10. formulate a personal social and political philosophy based on one or more of the views in the course.
11. write at least ten pages, of approximately 300 words each, of college-level writing in the process of demonstrating the accomplishment of the other outcomes.

METHODS OF EVALUATION (Some of the following):

1. Quizzes
2. Exams (may be oral)
3. Written reading responses
4. Debates
5. Homework
6. Class activities including discussion groups
7. Participation

SOME SUGGESTED TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Tannenbaum, Donald G. and David Schultz, *Inventors of Ideas: An Introduction to Western Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed. Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2012

Cahn, *Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2013

McKennon and Feingold, *Taking Sides*, 18th ed. McGraw Hill, 2013

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