

# PHI 242: SOCIAL & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

University of Wisconsin–Rock County

Course Syllabus: Fall 2010

Lec 001, 3 Credits, MW 2:30-3:45p

**Professor:** Dr. Stephen E. Schmid

**Office:** A145

**Phone:** 758-6551

**Email:** [stephen.schmid@uwc.edu](mailto:stephen.schmid@uwc.edu)  
[stephen@seschmid.org](mailto:stephen@seschmid.org)

**Web page:** <http://seschmid.org>

**Office Hours:**

TW: 12:00p–1:30p

or, by appt.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

*Political Philosophy*

Pojman

*First Democracy*

Woodruff

*A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd ed.

Weston

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** There are two primary objectives of this course. First, this course will examine some issues in social and political philosophy, including justification and limits of the state, nature of a democracy, distributive justice, and just war theory. By no means are the issues discussed in this class the only topics of concern to modern social and political philosophers. Rather, this is a sampling of the debates and their application to some real-life issues.

The second objective of this course is to improve your critical thinking skills. We will exercise these skills through writing assignments, exams, and class discussion. Improving one's analytical skills not only makes one a better thinker, but a better communicator. A characteristic of both is the ability to see through simplistic and fallacious arguments. The skill of effectively locating and analyzing the reasons and evidence in arguments is germane not only to philosophy, but to any discipline or aspect of life. In terms of this course, one should consider all assignments a form of argumentation; every paper or answer is an argument for some particular thesis or conclusion. I hope this course will help you write and think more effectively and persuasively.

This is not Sunday School. I will not tell you what to think based on my authority or anyone else's. I will not try to convert you to the School of Schmid. Nor will I accept beliefs unaccompanied by arguments. I will expect you to think on your own, to honestly assess your thoughts, to struggle with the difficult issues we will encounter, and to bring your own convictions and intuitions into the process. I will assess the quality of your arguments and whether they are rationally persuasive. In the end, I hope to have provided you with the tools

and necessary knowledge to continue the process of critically thinking about these and other issues.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** There will be one paper, two exams, and one “current event” paper. In addition, I will grade class participation.

**Paper:** This is a three-page paper dealing with a current issue. The specific details for the paper will be posted to the class web and handed out in class. The papers will be typed using 12 pt. Times font, doubled spaced, with one-inch margins, and include page numbers and a title page.

**Exams:** There are two exams. Each exam will test for knowledge of the readings, lectures, and class discussions covered prior to the exam. Each exam may include one or more of the following: identification questions, true and false questions, short answer questions, and/or extended essay questions. Exams are held on D2L.

**“Current Event” Paper:** Being an informed citizen is essential to participation in a democracy. You are required to write one paper based on a current topic extensively addressed in a reputable print media. The selection and your paper should address some aspect of social and political philosophy studied in class (e.g., nature of the state, democracy, just war theory). For example, suppose the *New York Times* publishes an in-depth article on the establishment of democracy in Iraq. First, this article should be substantive and lengthy. The *NYTimes Magazine* often carries multi-page articles of this sort. Other publications that might have in-depth articles of interest include the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Republic*, etc. Do not expect to find in-depth articles that would satisfy this assignment in the *Janesville Gazette* or *USA Today*. Second, this article must deal with some aspect of social and political philosophy discussed in class or in Woodruff’s book. Third, you are to write a three–page paper briefly summarizing the main arguments of the article, how this article addresses some aspect of the course, a brief discussion of this aspect of the course, and your take on the author’s position. Fourth, it should be clear from your discussion whether you agree or disagree with the author of the article. Fifth, you must hand in a copy of the article with your paper. Details of this paper will be discussed in class.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** Class participation and discussion is an essential aspect of this course. You will benefit from attending all classes.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments turned in late will have one letter grade deducted for each day late. If an assignment is 10 minutes late, it is one day late. I will make exceptions to this rule, if you talk to me in advance.

**Success:** For all concerned, this is a very demanding course. The recipe for success is simple: do all the readings on time; come to class prepared; stay on top of the assignments and do not fall behind or wait to the last minute to complete assignments; and, work hard.

**Resources:** The class web page (<http://seschmid.org/teaching>) contains all the essential information, handouts and announcements related to this class. Moreover, certain readings and

assignments may be posted to the class web page for download. In addition, there are several resources available that will ease your introduction into philosophy. These include: Weston's *Rulebook for Arguments*; the links for reading and writing philosophy papers located on the class "Links & Resources" page; and, the links to philosophy dictionaries, encyclopedias and other resources listed on the class "Links & Resources" page.

**Class Meetings:** Please attend each class prepared and on time. Please turn off mobile phones or any other devices with bells and whistles. Please be courteous and respectful to other students in the class. Please ask questions of me or other students. Please do not talk while the instructor or other students are talking. In classes of this size, distractions disrupt everyone. If someone is distracting you personally, then politely ask that person to stop. If someone's actions are distracting the class, then that person may be asked to leave the class.

**Electronic Devices and Recording Devices:** Except for laptops and instructor-approved recording devices, all electronic devices should be turned off and stored out of sight. Following UWS Board of Regents Policy, Section 4-1 (<http://www.uwsa.edu/bor/policies/rpd/rpd4-1.htm>), students needing to record lectures must have signed agreements prior to using any recording device. Any electronic device that is distracting other students or the instructor is grounds for being asked to leave the class.

**Problems with the Course or Instructor:** Students are encouraged to discuss problems concerning the teaching of this course with me. If students wish to pursue a complaint with someone else, they should contact an advisor in Student Services.

**GRADES:** Papers and exams are graded on a point system.

**Assignment Values:**

Paper	20%
Current Event Paper	20%
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	30%
Participation	5%

**Grading Scale:**

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	≤59

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** Following are important notes about the course not specifically covered already.

**Inclement Weather Cancellations**

Class and event cancellations are announced on the UW-Rock County home page and on local radio and television stations including: WJVL 99.9 FM, WCLO 1230 AM, WGEZ 1490 AM, WKPO 105.9 FM, WSJY 107.3 FM, WISC-TV Channel 3, Madison, WKOW-TV Channel 27, Madison, WMTV Channel 15, Madison

Classes and events will be cancelled in blocks:

- Morning classes/events that begin before noon (announced by 6 a.m.)
- Afternoon classes/events that begin between and including noon and 4 p.m. (announced by 10 a.m.)

- Evening classes/events that begin at 4:15 p.m. or later (announced by 3 p.m.)

Students: It's your responsibility to communicate with your instructors to make up missed class time.

### **Learning Support Center (LSC):**

The LSC offers free tutoring in writing, math and other academic subjects to all UW-Rock students. Walk in or call to schedule an appointment. Andrews Hall, Room 02; 758-6565 ext.450; MTWTh 8-5:30, F 8-3

### **Campus E-mail Policy**

All e-mail correspondence to your instructors **MUST** be sent through your official campus e-mail account. For safety against computer viruses and to remove SPAM email messages, your instructor **may delete without reading** any e-mail originating outside our campus e-mail system. If you use any other e-mail account to contact your instructor – you must assume that the message **WILL NOT** be read. Students are encouraged to read their campus email regularly. If you need assistance in accessing your campus e-mail account, please contact Campus Network Administrator, Barb Palmer (office AH19, [barb.palmer@uwc.edu](mailto:barb.palmer@uwc.edu)), or Campus Instructional Technologist, Judy Konkel (office AH15, 758-6565x180, [judy.konkel@uwc.edu](mailto:judy.konkel@uwc.edu) ).

### **Assessment**

A UW-Colleges-wide assessment program has been put into place to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, programs and services of the institution. The following areas of proficiency will be assessed because they are of primary importance in the education of our students: Analytical Skills, Quantitative Skills, Communication Skills, and the Aesthetic Engagement. The assessment will be part of a regular homework or in-class assignment but the assessment is not a “grade” and does not become part of your transcript. Assessment evaluations are compiled and used solely to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student: (a) seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; (b) uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise; (c) forges or falsifies academic documents or records; (d) intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others; (e) engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or (f) assists other students in any of these acts. The above acts are subject to disciplinary action. Further information may be found in the UW Colleges Student Rights and Regulations Handbook at: <http://www.uwc.edu/students/uwc-student-rights-regulations-booklet.pdf>

### **Sexual Assault and Harassment**

Respect for human dignity is essential to an appropriate university environment. Thus, sexual harassment of students and employees is impermissible and unprofessional conduct and will not be tolerated. Conduct determined to fall within the definition of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable due process requirements, including, but not limited to, reprimand, temporary suspension, expulsion, or discharge of the harassing individual. Further information may be found in the UW Colleges Student Rights and Regulations Handbook at: <http://www.uwc.edu/students/uwc-student-rights-regulations-booklet.pdf>

### **Students with disabilities**

Qualified students with disabilities (those who have been admitted and can provide documentation of their disability) have the right to request accommodations from the university, as stipulated within Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1976 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students needing accommodations should provide early notice to staff in the campus Student Services Office because of the time required for arranging accommodations. Students may also contact the coordinator of Services for

Students with Disabilities in Madison at 608-262-2001 (voice) or 608-265-5766 (TDD/TTY) for information and assistance. More information may be found at: <http://www.uwc.edu/students/disability/>

**LIBRARY HOURS:**

Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday, Holidays: Closed

## SCHEDULE\*

### INTRODUCTION

- 9/8 W Introduction. Arguments  
9/13 M More Arguments and Fallacies. Read: Weston, Chs. 1-6 and 10

### TYRANNY & NATURE OF THE STATE

- 9/15 W What is Democracy? Read: Woodruff, Ch. 1  
9/20 M Freedom from Tyranny. Read: Woodruff, Ch. 3  
9/22 W Anarchism. Read, Wolff (P: 11)  
9/27 M State of Nature. Read: Hobbes (P: 2)  
9/29 W Rights. Read: Locke (P: 3)  
10/4 M Film: "Unconstitutional"  
10/6 W Communism. Read: Marx and Engels (P: 8)  
10/11 M Individual Liberty. Read: Mill (P: 10)  
10/13 W Two Concepts of Liberty. Read: Berlin (P: 16)

### PAPER DUE

- 10/18 M Review.  
10/20 W **EXAM 1**

### DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE & EQUALITY

- 10/25 M Rule of Law and Natural Equality. Read: Woodruff, Chs. 5-6  
10/27 W Justice as Convention. Read: Hume (P: 24) & Vonnegut (CP)  
11/1 M Libertarian Theory of Justice. Read: Nozick (P: 25)  
11/3 W Justice as Fairness. Read: Rawls (P: 26)  
11/8 M Nozick & Rawls.  
11/10 W Poverty & Debt  
11/15 M Justice & Equality. Read: Vlastos (P: 36)  
11/17 W Moral Ideal of Equality. Read: Frankfurt (P: 37)  
11/22 M Citizen Wisdom and Reasoning. Read: Woodruff, Chs. 7-8

### JUST WAR THEORY

- 11/24 W Pacifism. Read: Lackey (CP)  
THANKSGIVING  
11/29 M Conducting a Just War. Read: O'Brien (CP)  
12/1 W Was Gulf War Just? Read: Kavka (CP)  
**CURRENT EVENT PAPER DUE**  
12/6 M Justifying Terrorism. Read: Valls (CP)  
12/8 W Morality of Terrorism. Read: Khatchadourian (CP)  
12/13 M Democracy and Terrorism. Read: Erfani (CP)  
12/15 W "Are Americans Ready for Democracy?" Read: Woodruff, Ch. 10

### 12/20 M **FINAL EXAM, 1:00 pm**

\* This schedule of readings and assignments is subject to change.