

***PHIL 1010-01 Introduction to Philosophy: Social  
and Political Issues  
TTH 10:00-10:50, ROZH 103***

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**OVERVIEW**

Human beings are inevitably social animals. We are affected by the choices of others and our choices affect others. We must therefore address issues of how to live with others; if we refuse to think about how to live with others we accept some de facto arrangement that is probably very bad (at least, for some people). To think about how to live together is to engage in *political philosophy*, which is our subject matter. Political philosophy is the activity of thinking about how best to live together.

Unless social decisions are simply to be decided by the interests of the most powerful, we must attempt to arrive at mutually agreeable principles to guide our collective decisions. Today, most pressing public controversies are discussed using a combination of three basic (though by no means simple or clear) principles: respect for individual rights, promoting individual well-being, and acting virtuously. Because these principles are highly abstract, people have different and conflicting interpretations of them. Also, they do not always support the same decision. The most divisive and difficult conflicts we face today have their basis in differing interpretation of these basic principles and conflicts between these principles. For example:

Do we have a right to whatever we freely acquire through our labor? Or do we have rights to things like health and education, even if that means redistributing income?

To what extent may we interfere with personal liberty in the attempt to improve well-being?

What if people end up very badly off as a result of freely agreed upon transactions? Is it just to turn our backs on them?

Can we put a value on a human life? Can children or organs be sold on the market?

To attempt to resolve these questions we must engage seriously in political philosophy. This course introduces the student to methods of philosophical inquiry and to the application of those methods to the study of philosophical issues concerning government and society.

We will also spend a significant amount of time learning to construct and evaluate arguments; these skills are fundamental to the practice of philosophy in any area as well as to careful reasoning generally. Here, we will be applying these skills to interpreting and evaluating the arguments of philosophers writing on issues of political philosophy, as well as to making novel arguments about our issues.

**TEXTS**

There are two texts for the course.

Michael Sandel, *Justice: the Right Thing to Do*  
Michael Sandel (ed.), *Justice: A Reader*

We will also be using tutorials on critical thinking that are available for free, on-line at the following web-address:

<http://austhink.com/reason/tutorials/>

In at least one case, we will use readings on-line, available through our D2L website, which can be found here:

<https://courselink.uoguelph.ca/>

**EVALUATION**

There will be two exams and two short argument papers.

1. Mid-term exam (25%)
2. Final exam (35%)
3. Short Argument Papers (40%)

Your final grade will be computed on the basis of these assignments and your letter grade will be determined by the numerical score that results, using the standard university scale (see Undergraduate Calendar, [http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad\\_calendar/](http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/)).

The **exams** will be a mixture of short answer, multiple choice questions, and essay questions.

**Two short argument papers** will be on topics assigned in class. Specific instructions will be given about how to prepare these. Although they will be short (less than one page), they will consist strictly of reasons carefully selected to prove a point. Tutorial leaders will teach the techniques of argumentation that will be applied in these papers.

**TUTORIALS**

Attendance at the tutorials is essential for success in this course. Our tutorial sessions will be carefully coordinated and new material will be covered in the tutorials that will appear on the exams. Students should attend the tutorial section that they signed up for during registration.

**IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES****E-mail Communication**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

**When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement...**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

**Drop Date**

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2010 courses, without academic penalty, is **Thursday November 4**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the

Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

**Copies of out-of-class assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

**Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

**Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

**Resources**

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

**First: Learning resources for first-year students**

First is a collection of resources, services, and technologies designed to help make the transition to university learning smooth and successful. Visit the First website to register for workshops, find out about Supported Learning Groups, and make individual appointments with staff or peer helpers: <http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/first/>

**Reading Schedule**

Key J = *Justice: The Right Thing to Do*  
 J:R = *Justice: A Reader*  
 AMT = Argument mapping tutorial ([www.austhink.org/reason/tutorials](http://www.austhink.org/reason/tutorials))  
 CL = Courselink/D2L

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings/Assignments</u>
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**Week I**

Sept 9	Course Introduction	
	NO Tutorials	

**Week II**

14	Introducing political philosophy	J 3-30
16	Introducing political philosophy	J:R 3-7
	Tutorials	

**Week III**

21	Utilitarianism	J 31-57
23	Utilitarianism	J:R 9-14
	Tutorials	AMT 1

**Week IV**

28	Utilitarianism	J:R 14-27
30	Utilitarianism	J:R 35-47
	Tutorials	AMT 2

**Week V**

Oct. 5	Utilitarianism	CL Singer
7	Libertarianism	J 58-74
	Tutorials	AMT 3

**Week VI**

12	Libertarianism	J:R 60-73
14	Libertarianism	J:R 83-109
	Tutorials	AMT 4

**Week VII**

19	Markets and Morals	J 75-102
21	Markets and Morals	J:R 144-156
	Tutorials	Paper workshop

**Week VIII**

26	Markets and Morals	
28	Review	
	Tutorials	<b>Paper 1 due</b>

**Week IX**Nov 2 **Mid-term exam**

4	Kant	J 102-129
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**Week X**

9	Kant	J 129-139; J:R 199-201
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12	Rawls	J 140-166
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	Tutorials	AMT 5
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**Week XI**

16	Rawls	J:R 203-221
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18	Rawls vs. Nozick	J:R 223-235
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	Tutorials	AMT 6
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**Week XII**

23	Aristotle	J 184-207
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25	Ability & Discrimination	J:R 301-313
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	Tutorials	Paper Workshop
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**Week XIII**

30	Review	
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Dec 2	No class (follow Monday schedule)	
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**Paper 2 due Dec 2 by 5:00pm****Final Exam December 15 11:30-1:30 – Location TBA**