

University of Guelph  
Department of Philosophy

Fall 2016

Instructor: Monique Deveaux

**PHIL 4390 Selected Topics in Philosophy/ PHIL 6600 Social & Political Philosophy**

Class meetings: Mondays 11:30-2:20 MACK 308

Office hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

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**PHIL 4390/6600: Social Power**

This course examines social power, a crucial but much contested concept in political philosophy, ethics, political science, and sociology. We begin by taking up agent-centered ('agential') and dispositional approaches to power and then focus for the remainder of the course on structural and relational conceptions of power. Along the way, we will touch on several aspects and/or components of these different notions of power, such as interests, oppression, domination, collective resistance, and empowerment. Readings will be drawn from 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century works in political theory/philosophy, and to a lesser extent political sociology. Authors we will read include Max Weber, Steven Lukes, Iris Marion Young, Michel Foucault, Amy Allen, Mark Haugaard, Clarissa Hayward, Phillip Pettit, Frank Lovett, Marilyn Frye, and Serene Khader.

**Class Format**

This course is seminar-style. It is vital that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings (i.e. having not only read but also thought critically about them). I will do a 5-7 min introduction to the topic each class, typically supplying context and background to the readings for the day. I will then hand the floor over to the person (s) presenting on the readings that day. Presenter has/presenters have 5-10 minutes to briefly outline the main arguments of the readings, and to comment on some aspect that you think is insightful, or unclear, or contentious/debatable, etc. If there are two presenters, you should split responsibility for the readings. Presenters will have circulated study questions by the previous Thursday evening (email to me and I will email them to the class), and many of you will have written a reflection piece on

the readings (uploaded to Courselink, 'Discussions'). The presenter(s) then moderates our class discussion using 3 or so of their best questions (pre-circulated). I will step in if discussion is lagging, but otherwise the point person(s) is "on" until our break at 12:45/50.

### **Course Requirements**

You are required to attend and participate in class meetings; do an in-class presentation on the readings for one class (circulating discussion questions in advance)\*\*; and write one final paper. Papers should be 10-12 pp (exclusive of bibliography) for those registered in 4390, and 15-17 pp (exclusive of bibliography) for those registered in 6690.

If you must miss a class, you are responsible for doing the reading. A 2 pp reflection piece on the readings missed is required within one week of the missed class.

### **Course Outcomes**

This course aims to develop your critical reading and critical thinking capacities. Writing and oral presentation skills are also a focal point of this course. Both interpretive/explanatory and argumentative kinds of writing and speaking are important skills that we will work on. More generally, doing the readings for the course – and writing about these and discussing them in class – will serve to increase the depth and breadth of your knowledge of philosophical/theoretical debates about power in contemporary political theory/philosophy.

### **Course Assessment A Option (default for those registered in PHIL 4390)**

Class participation: 15%

6 short (3 para/1 pg) reflection (due by 10:30 a.m. Monday mornings): 15%\*

Class presentation: 10%\*\*

In-depth critical analysis of 2 readings in the course (4-5 pp): 20% **(due Nov. 2)**

Final research paper (10-12 pgs, plus cover pg & biblio): 40% **(due Dec. 14)**

### **Course Assessment B Option (default for those registered in PHIL 6690)**

Class participation: 10%

10 short (3 para/1pg) reflections (due by 10:30 a.m. Monday mornings): 20%\*

Class presentation: 10%\*\*

Final research paper (12-15 pp plus biblio): 60% **(due Dec. 14)**

\*short response pieces will be graded together as a 'dossier' at the end of the course, but I will give you written feedback on the first 2 that you submit

\*\*includes circulating study/discussion questions by the Thursday before class, an in-class presentation on the readings (around 10 minutes; I will stop you if you reach 12 min)

### **Course policies regarding submission of work, academic integrity etc.**

For university policies on submission of work, dropping courses, accessibility, academic misconduct and other matters, see:

[https://www.uoguelph.ca/philosophy/resources/standard\\_statements](https://www.uoguelph.ca/philosophy/resources/standard_statements)

### **Course policies: reading, missed classes, work extensions, and communication**

A fourth year/grad level seminar is very different from lower level courses, both in intellectual level and expectations. You are all busy people – I get it – but it is imperative for the course's success (and your own success in it) that you keep up with the readings and short reflection writings. Your class contributions are so much better when you have put the time into reading/thinking beforehand! Twenty years of teaching has led me to conclude that students who haven't done the readings are disinclined to participate – and worse, they chime in with vague or overly general comments that take our discussion off topic. If you decide take this course, I expect you to commit to staying engaged in the topics and keeping up with the readings from week to week.

Missing classes for reasons other than illness or serious family/life crises is not ok. This includes opting not to attend class because of a concert/birthday/holiday plans, or being busy with other coursework.

Email: I will do my best to reply to your email within 24 hours (weekends excepted) and expect you to do the same.

Work extensions: granted only for illness, family emergencies, and issues of accessibility/accommodation (through SAS). Not granted for work crunches.

### **Readings**

The reading assignments for class generally total an average of 50-80 pages, depending on the difficulty of the texts. The reading assignment for undergrads and that for grad students is the same, but please note that this is a lesser amount of

reading than is typical for a graduate course in contemporary political theory/philosophy (where 100 pages a week is more the norm). Feel free to email me questions if you're having trouble understanding the reading.

Except for the one required book (by Steven Lukes), and links directly visible in this syllabus (Nov. 21 materials) required and supplementary readings are available on ARES, the university's electronic course reserve system. Please bring the readings to class in an easily accessible form, printout or electronic, as we will frequently refer back to them during our discussion.

### **Book to purchase:**

Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View (second edition). Palgrave MacMillan 2005.

## **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

### **a. Agent-centered & dispositional approaches to power**

Sept. 12      Analyzing power

#### Reading:

1. Max Weber, Economy & Society (U California Press 1978), pp. 22, 26-27, and 53-54.
2. Thomas Wartenberg, The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation (Temple Univ. Press, 1990), chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 51-89).
3. Dennis Wrong, "Some Problems in Defining Social Power," American Journal of Sociology 73/6 (1968), **2<sup>nd</sup> half: pp. 677-681** ("Power as Actual and Potential").

Sept. 19      The power of agents

#### Reading:

1. Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View (Palgrave MacMillan 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2005), Ch. 1 (pp. 14-59).
2. Peter Morriss, Power: a Philosophical Analysis (2<sup>nd</sup> edition): part I, "What power is and what power is not," pp. 14-46.

Sept. 26 Lukes on power: power's third dimension

Reading:

1. Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View (Palgrave, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), chapter 2 (pp. 60-86 only) & chapter 3 (pp. 108-151).

**b. Structural Power**

Oct. 3 Social-structural conceptions of power

Reading:

1. Iris Marion Young, "Structure as the Subject of Justice," part of Ch. 2 (pp. 43-64) in Young, Responsibility for Justice (Oxford UP 2011).
2. Clarissa Hayward, "Defacing power," **Ch. 2** (pp. 11-39) in De-Facing Power (Cambridge UP 2000) [note: make sure you are not reading Ch. 6 instead, which is also up on Ares. Both chapters are from Hayward's book, titled Defacing Power.]
3. Chris Lebron, "The Problem of Social Value," Ch. 2 in The Color of Our Shame (Oxford UP 2013).

Oct 10 Thanksgiving (no class)

Oct. 17 Disciplinary Power: Foucault

Reading:

1. Michel Foucault, pp. 92-102, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction (vol. 1), Vintage Edition. [section entitled "Method"]
2. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," Critical Inquiry 8/4 (1982), pp. 777-795. [Or see essay by the same title republished in volumes edited by Faubion, or by Dreyfus and Rabinow]
3. Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," Ch. 1 (pp. 17-34) in Fraser, Unruly Practices (U of Minnesota Press 2008).

For a brief, helpful overview of Foucault on power, see Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), second half of chapter 2 (pp. 88-107).

Oct. 24 Governmental Power: Foucault continued

Reading:

1. Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," pp. 201-222 in Power: Essential Works of Foucault, ed. J.D. Faubion (2000)
2. Michel Foucault, First two lectures on power (Jan 7 and Jan 14, 1976): pp. 1-41 in Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France (Picador edition 2003)

Oct. 31 Domination, power, and unfreedom

Reading:

1. Philip Pettit, Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom (Oxford UP 2000), chapter 2, "Liberty as nondomination".
2. Clarissa Hayward, Ch. 6, "Power and freedom," (pp. 161-178) in De-Facing Power (Cambridge UP 2000).
3. Frank Lovett, Domination and Justice (Oxford UP 2010), pp. 71-84

Nov. 7 Oppression and power

Reading:

1. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," in Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 39-65.
2. Marilyn Frye, "Oppression," in The Politics of Reality (Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press, 1983).
3. Sally Haslanger, "Oppressions: Racial and Other," Ch. 11 in Haslanger, Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique (Oxford UP, 2013)

### **c. Countering power: collective resistance and empowerment**

Nov. 14 Thinking beyond binaries: how do power & empowerment connect?

Reading:

1. Amy Allen, "Rethinking Power," Hypatia 13/1 (1998): 21-40.

2. John Gaventa, *Power & Powerlessness* (1982), pp. 1-32.
3. Amy Allen, "Feminist perspectives on power," in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/> (must first login to U of G library system)

Nov. 21      Collective resistance to oppression

Reading:

1. View: "Idle No More: A Protest for Aboriginal Rights", CBC mini-doc, 2013 (19 min):  
<http://curio.ca.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/fr/video/idle-no-more-a-protest-for-aboriginal-rights-4118/>
2. Glen Coulthard, "Lessons from Idle No More: the Future of Indigenous Activism," Conclusion to *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (U Minnesota Press, 2014), pp. 151-179.
3. View: "What are 'Black Lives Matters' Demands?" - interview with Alicia Garza on MSNBC, Aug. 11/15 (4 1/2 min):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UnBykVezRI>
4. Patisse Cullors, "#BlackLivesMatter Will Continue to Disrupt the Political Process," Washington Post, Aug. 18, 2015:  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2015/08/18/opinion-blacklivesmatter-will-continue-to-disrupt-the-political-process/>
5. Chris Lebron, "Time for a New Black Radicalism," New York Times (Opinionator), June 22, 2015:  
[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/time-for-a-new-black-radicalism/?ref=opinion&\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/time-for-a-new-black-radicalism/?ref=opinion&_r=0)
6. Frank Leon Roberts, "Ferguson on Fire" *Uptown Magazine*, Nov. 24, 2014:  
<http://www.uptownmagazine.com/2014/11/furor-in-ferguson/>

Nov. 28      Empowerment

Reading:

1. Amy Allen, "Power and the Politics of Difference: Oppression, Empowerment, and Transnational Justice," Hypatia 23/3 (2008): 156-172.
2. Serene Khader, "Empowerment Through Self-Subordination? Microcredit and Women's Agency" in D. Meyers, Poverty, Agency and Human Rights (Oxford 2014), pp. 223-248.

Friday Dec. 2          Responsibility and power  
(re-scheduled Thanksgiving class)

Reading:

1. Iris Marion Young, "A Social Connection Model," Ch. 4 (pp. 95-122) and part of Ch. 5 (pp. 142-151) in Young, Responsibility for Justice (Oxford UP 2011).
2. Clarissa Hayward and Steven Lukes, "Nobody to shoot? Power, structure, and agency: a dialogue," in Journal of Power, 1/1 (2008): 5-20.
3. Bernard Boxill, "The Responsibility of the Oppressed to Resist Their Own Oppression," Journal of Social Philosophy 41/1 (2010), pp. 1-12.

**Final papers due Wednesday, December 14\***

\*or sooner, if grades are due at the Registrar's Office before then; we will firm up the date in November, when grade submission dates are given by the Registrar