

GATEWAY TO PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, & ECONOMICS

PHIL/POLI/ECON 384.002

Spring 2025

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



COURSE INFORMATION

Credit Hours: 3

Target Audience: undergraduates and PPE minors

Prerequisites: none - one semester of economics recommended

Meeting Pattern: TR 9:30–10:45 A.M.

Instructional Format: in-person

Classroom or Location: Caldwell 105

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Myraeka d'Leeuwen (please call me Myraeka! pronounced Muh-rae-kuh)

Email: myraeka@unc.edu

Office Location: Caldwell 210C

Office Hours: Monday 2:00-3:30 pm; Tuesday 11 am-11:30 am (or by appointment)

COURSE CONTENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course provides an overview of some of the core conceptual tools used to analyze issues at the intersection of philosophy, politics, and economics (PPE). We will cover a range of theoretical topics, including game theory, voting theory, property, markets, and justice. We will then turn to applications of this theory on modern day social issues, such as inequality, free speech, sex work, and the legalization of illicit drugs. This course will draw from diverse perspectives, including work by classical, contemporary, and feminist authors.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

EXAMS (45%)

This course will have both a midterm and a final exam, worth **20%** and **25%** of your grade, respectively. You will receive more information on the exact structure & content of the midterm and final closer to their dates, but expect these to be relatively short and consist mostly of short answer and multiple choice questions (there will be no essay questions). They will test your understanding of authors, concepts, and formal tools we have covered in class. The final will **not** be cumulative.

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

There will be two short writing assignments, each worth **15%** of your final grade. You will have an opportunity to submit three, and I will **drop** your lowest grade. You are not required to submit a third short writing assignment if you are satisfied with your grade on the first two!

Short writing assignments are 500-750 words (1-2 pages single spaced). There is a detailed rubric for these assignments posted on Canvas. You will be expected to identify a philosophical claim in one of our assigned readings and reconstruct, **in premise and conclusion format**, the argument the author has given for this claim. You then must describe how the author supports this argument, and finally provide your own objection to the claim. We will spend time in class discussing and practicing how to complete each element of this assignment.

READING ANNOTATIONS (15%)

You must complete **15** reading annotations throughout the semester, each worth **1%** of your final grade. The annotations will be completed through Perusal, where I will upload each required reading. There will not be a required reading for every day of class, but you will have more than 15 opportunities to complete reading annotations - once you have done 15, you may stop.

Each reading annotation consists in one comment of your own directly on the reading, as well as one comment responding to one of your classmate's annotations. Both comments should be roughly 75-100 words, though you are welcome to write more. If there is more than one reading assigned for one day of class, you are still only required to write these two comments - the two comments may both be on the same reading or they may be dispersed among the readings. This is a total, throughout the semester, of 2250-3000 words, or 5-6 pages single spaced. These must be done by **11:59 pm** the night before class.

Reading annotations are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

ON-CALL DAYS (10%)

At the beginning of the semester, everyone will sign up for **two** on-call days, each worth **5%** of your final grade. These are just days where you do slightly more preparation for class than you might usually do (for example, by reading the text especially closely, or reflecting on how you feel about arguments made by the author). On these days, you are expected to contribute to class more than you typically would, and I may call on you to provide your thoughts.

You do not have to prepare anything in particular to say (though you are welcome to come with questions or thoughts!) and you do not need to stress out about knowing everything the author says or thinks. This is **not** an oral quiz! If it is clear that you have done the readings and are willing to engage in conversation about them, you will receive full credit.

If you miss your on-call day without documentation of extenuating circumstances, you will receive a zero. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have to unexpectedly miss class on a day you've signed up for an on-call day.

ATTENDANCE AND EXTRA CREDIT (2%)

I have chosen not to make attendance part of the *explicit* grading scheme in class. But, I think that students regularly attending class helps to facilitate learning and makes for a higher quality classroom environment. To that end, I want to reward students who do take the time to regularly show up and participate. Students who miss no more than **two** classes (unexcused) are eligible for completing a brief extra credit assignment, which will amount to up to a 2% boost on their final grade.

Valid excuses for missing class will be handled on a case-by-case basis, just come talk to me or send me an email! I do reserve the right to withhold the extra credit assignment from students who regularly attend but are obviously unengaged, i.e., on their phones constantly, have their AirPods in.

The extra credit assignment will be due at 11:59 pm on the final day of class. I will give more details on this assignment towards the end of the semester, but you can expect it to consist of a brief (200-300 word) write-up about how some topic we covered in class can be applied to a current event *or* something in pop culture/a recent trend.

LATE WORK

Late reading annotations and late extra credit assignments will not be accepted. For short writing assignments, unexcused late papers receive a 5% penalty per 24 hours they are late. Please let me know immediately if you need an extension on a paper, as I am often happy to work something out as long as you communicate. Late exams require documentation of extenuating circumstances.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Tuesday	Thursday	Assignments
January 9	N/A	Syllabus Day Intro to Philosophy	N/A
Game Theory and Collective Action			
January 14/16	The State of Nature <i>Readings</i> Leviathan, Hobbes	Collective Action Problems <i>Readings</i> Governing the Commons, Ostrom	Perusal Jan. 14/16
January 21/23	Introduction to Game Theory <i>Readings</i> Strategic Analysis and Social Problems, T.S. Schelling	Game Theory, Cont. <i>Readings</i> N/A	Perusal Jan. 21

Property and Legitimacy			
January 28/30	Property <i>Readings</i> A Treatise of Human Nature, Hume Two Treatises, Locke	Property, Cont. <i>Readings</i> Property and Homelessness, Essert	Perusal Jan. 28/30
February 4/6	Institutions <i>Readings</i> Primitive Accumulation, Marx The Institution of Property, Schmidtz	Political Legitimacy <i>Readings</i> Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy, Nagel	1st SWA Due February 6th Perusal Feb. 4/6
Markets (and the limits thereof)			
February 11/13	Pro-Markets <i>Readings</i> The Wealth of Nations, Smith	Market Limits <i>Readings</i> The Moral Limits of Markets, Sandel	Perusal Feb. 11/13
February 18/20	Market Limits, Cont. <i>Readings</i> On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs, Graeber	Public Goods <i>Readings</i> Public Good and Government Action, Anomaly	Perusal Feb. 18/20
February 25/27	Application <i>Readings</i> Taking Money for Bodily Services, Nussbaum	Midterm Exam	Perusal Feb. 25
Utilitarianism			
March 4/6	Utilitarianism <i>Readings</i> Utilitarianism, Mill	Effective Altruism <i>Readings</i> Effective Altruism and its Critics, Gabriel	2nd SWA Due March 6th Perusal Mar. 4/6
Spring Break - No Class :) have fun!			

Social Choice Theory and Democracy			
March 18/20	Social Choice Theory <i>Readings</i> Can Ranked Choice Voting Cure American Politics?, Bokatt-Lindell	Mock Election No reading - submit votes!	Perusal Mar. 18
March 25/27	Voting <i>Readings</i> Why You Should Vote to Change the Outcome, Barnett	Democracy <i>Readings</i> Democracy is Not Intrinsically Just, Arneson	Perusal Mar. 25/27
Justice			
April 1/3	Justice <i>Readings</i> What Is the Point of Equality?, Anderson	Justice <i>Readings</i> A Theory of Justice, Rawls	Perusal Apr. 1/3
April 8/10	Justice <i>Readings</i> Responsibility for Justice, Young	Justice <i>Readings</i> Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Nozick The Case for Reparations, Coates	Perusal Apr. 8/10
Freedom			
April 15/17	Paternalism <i>Readings</i> On Liberty, Mill	No Class Well Being Day	Perusal Apr. 15
April 22/24	Free Speech <i>Readings</i> Article on Social Media Reformulating Mill's Harm Principle, Saunders	Last Class 😞	3rd SWA Due April 22nd EC Due April 24th Perusal Apr. 22
May 8	Final Exam: 8 am		