

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline Summer 2011
Philosophy 2801F: Contemporary Political Philosophy
Previously Philosophy 236

Summer Term 2011

Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

University College room 289

Instructor: Dr. Ryan Robb

Office: StH 3124

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 – 2

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Course Objectives:

This course seeks to achieve two goals. The first, and most important, is to build upon the philosophical skills students began developing in their first year courses. In particular, this course will help students to identify and distinguish between good and bad arguments. The continued development of the ability to evaluate the claims made by others will prove to be an invaluable asset in all aspects of life, academic and beyond.

The second goal of this course is to introduce students to the dominant schools of thought in political philosophy that emerged in the latter half of the 20th Century. We will begin by focusing on the canonical Liberal position presented by John Rawls in his *A Theory of Justice*, published in 1971. From there, we will proceed to examine the positions that rose in response to Rawls' liberalism, including libertarianism, communitarianism, and feminist political theory. The importance of understanding the particular issues involved in these debates cannot be underestimated. These views are the theoretical foundations that seek to explain why Western liberal democracies adopt the values they do, and articulate which values liberal democratic societies ought to adopt in the future.

Required Texts:

Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. 2nd edition. (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Course Requirements:

10% - Participation/Attendance

60% - 2 essays, 5-6 pages, worth 30% each*

30% - Final Exam

* Late papers will be assessed a 5% penalty on the first day, and will incur an additional 1% penalty for each subsequent day, to a maximum of 40%, at which point the student will automatically receive 0.

Both essays must be submitted to turnitin for plagiarism checking by following the links posted on WebCT.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.