

**SYLLABUS**  
**POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY (PH 155a1), Fall 2017**  
Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:15, CAS 211

Professor Charles Griswold

Office hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30, Friday 1:00-3:00, and by appointment, in STH 624 (tel. 353-5546). Email: griswold@bu.edu

*Graduate Teaching Fellows:*

- 1) Jordan Kotot (jdkokot@bu.edu)  
Office hours: Tuesday 5:00-6:00, Wednesday 4:00-5:00, and by appointment, in STH 502 (tel. 353-2571)  
Discussion sections: 155a3: CAS 220, Thursday 2:00-2:50  
155a4: STH B22, Tuesday 3:35-4:25
  
- 2) Micah Trautmann (mitraut@bu.edu)  
Office hours: Monday 12:00-1:00, Wednesday 1:00-2:00, and by appointment, in STH 502 (tel. 353-2571)  
Discussion sections: 155a2: PSY B51, Monday 2:30-3:20  
155a5: CAS 228, Wednesday 11:15-12:05

Please visit the instructor as well as the Graduate Teaching Fellows during their office hours. We are here to help you.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to several major themes and questions in political philosophy, such as: What is justice? Does a free and fair society include a free market? What, if anything, legitimizes the exercise of governmental power? What are the arguments for and against the "social contract"? Are anarchism and utopianism defensible? What are the foundations of property rights, liberty, and equality? Can and should politics be conducted philosophically?

While quite a bit of attention will be given to modern European thought (and so to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx, for example), we will also examine works both by contemporary authors and by Plato. Current topics (likely concerning immigration and global justice) will be discussed as well. Throughout, we will cultivate the fundamental philosophical skills of analysis and argumentation as we delve into issues of great contemporary importance.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

The course website (on Blackboard Learn) includes this syllabus as well as some of the readings (see below).

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1) M. Zwolinski, editor. *Arguing about Political Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Routledge, 2014). ISBN 9780415535823

2) Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, 3rd ed. (Plato's *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and death scene from the *Phaedo*.) Trans. Grube, rev. Cooper (Hackett Press, 2001). ISBN 9780872205543

**SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

("Z" = the Zwolinski volume; "T" = Tuesday)

Sept. 5 (T) Introduction; relativism; preliminary comments about Plato.

*The Authority of Reason*

Sept. 7 Plato's *Euthyphro*, pp. 1-11 (in the marginal pagination that is 2a-9d)

Sept. 12 (T) Plato's *Euthyphro*, pp. 11-19 (that is, 9e-16a)

*Political Authority*

Sept. 14 Review the *Euthyphro*, and read Plato's *Crito*

Sept. 19 (T) Z. ch. 5, Rothbard

Sept. 21 Review; **QUIZ**; Z. ch. 1, Hobbes

Sept. 26 (T) Z. ch. 3, Locke

Sept. 28 Z. ch. 4, Hume

Oct. 3 (T) Z. ch. 6, Held

Oct. 5 Z. ch. 7, Mills

[Oct. 10 (T) no class; this day follows Monday's schedule of classes]

Oct. 12 **TEST**

*Rights, Justice, Political Economy*

Oct. 17 (T) Z. ch. 15, Hume; and Z. ch. 14, Nozick

Oct. 19 Z. ch. 17, Rawls, read pp. 211-217 (to start of section 5), pp. 223-226 (section 11), and pp. 231-235 (sections 24 and 46). That is, omit sections 5, 6, 12, 13, 17.

Oct. 24 (T) Z. ch. 26, Locke, pp. 359-361 (through paragraph 34), p. 366 (paragraphs 49-51); and Z. ch. 28, Schmidtz

Oct. 26 Z. chs. 21, 22, Marx and Engels (from ch. 22, read only p. 313 left column and section IV)

Oct. 31 (T) Z. ch. 23, Adam Smith; and the Blackboard PDFs by Smith

**QUIZ**

Nov. 2 Z. ch. 29, Nozick (omit the "Redistribution and Property Rights" section, pp. 401-405)

Nov. 7 (T) Z. ch. 16, Mill

*Freedom*

Nov. 9 Z. ch. 33, Mill (omit pp. 453 and 454, and resume reading on p. 455 starting with

- “The distinction...” at the top left hand side of the page).
- Nov. 14(T) Z. ch. 40, Rousseau; and the Blackboard PDF by Rousseau (read through the PDF, but pay special attention to paragraphs 31 to 35 (pp. 149-51)).
- Nov. 16 **TEST**

*Equality*

- Nov. 21 (T) Z. ch. 41, MacKinnon; and Frankfurt, “Equality as a Moral Ideal” (omit sections III, IV, VI (except for the first paragraph of section VI on pp. 34-35, do read that paragraph), VII, and the Appendix). Blackboard PDF

[Nov. 22-Nov. 26 - Thanksgiving break]

*Immigration, Global Justice*

- Nov. 28 (T) Z. ch. 44, Huemer
- Nov. 30 Z. ch. 45, Miller
- Dec. 5 (T) Nussbaum, “Beyond the Social Contract: Capabilities and Global Justice” (omit sections 3 and 4), Blackboard PDF; and Z. ch. 48, Lomasky (omit subsections A (which starts on p. 699), B, C, E; do read subsection D (pp. 704-706) and the Conclusion (i.e., section V, pp. 708-09).

*The Philosopher in the Agora*

- Dec. 7 Plato’s *Apology* (omit the exchange with Meletus, that is, 24d (middle of p. 27) to 27e (top of p. 31)).
- Dec. 12 (T) Review and **QUIZ**

**Final examination:** Dec. 19, from 12:30-2:30, in our regular classroom (time and place as determined by the Registrar).

The professor may alter the schedule and/or choice of readings, with due notice. A significant amount of material will be presented verbally by the instructor in class—another reason why class attendance is essential (see below)!

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING**

The final examination will take place at the date, time, and place specified in BU’s final examination schedule. It will be “comprehensive”; you are responsible for all of the readings, assignments, and class discussions.

The instructor reserves the privilege of changing the dates and format of the assessments (excepting the date of the final examination) and of scheduling additional tests, papers, or quizzes.

The final exam, quizzes, and the tests will be based on both the texts assigned and the class discussions. Quizzes may consist of multiple choice or short essay questions.

The numerical grade for the course will consist of the average of the (numerical) grades on the tests, the final examination, and quizzes. The final examination and each of the tests are weighed equally (they all “count” for the same) in the computation of the final grade. Consequently, the final examination and the tests each count for 25% of the final numerical grade. A quiz counts a third as much as any of them (so three quizzes taken together (the three grades averaged) count as much as one of the tests). Consequently, the average of the quiz grades counts for 25% of the final numerical grade. Where your contributions to the class discussion or discussion section have been sustained and constructive, I will take them into account in deciding on the grade for the course (a “B+,” for example, might become an “A-”).

*Regular attendance is required;* you should have no more than four unexcused absences the entire semester (counting both the lecture and discussion section). Each unexcused absence after that limit will lower the grade by one step (e.g., a “B” will become a “B-”). Attendance will be taken, starting on a day announced in advance by the professor.

You are expected to arrive to class (the lecture as well as discussion section) on time. You are responsible for all the class discussions in addition to the assigned texts, whether or not you have an approved reason for missing a particular class or discussion section.

I do not give “make-ups” of papers, tests, quizzes, or exams, unless a very convincing reason for doing so is offered (e.g., a medical excuse). Regarding CAS’s policy on “I” grades for a course, please see: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/policies/incomplete-coursework/>

If you have any questions about what academic misconduct consists in, please consult the code: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>  
Feel free to consult the professor as well.

## **ON DISTRACTIONS**

All machines must be in the “off” or “sleep” mode during class and discussion sections (that applies to computers, phones—the works!), unless the instructor asks you to consult assigned readings online (such as those on Blackboard). If you have a documentable need to use a computer during class, please consult the instructor.

*You may not tape or record (audio or video) any part of the course without the instructor’s explicit permission.*

## **Accommodations/Resources/Support**

Students needing academic accommodations are encouraged to contact the Office for Disability Services (353-3658). If you require special accommodations, please notify me within the first two weeks of class so that I can make arrangements in a timely manner and please supply the relevant documentation from ODS.

*Office of Disability Services*

19 Deerfield Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
(617) 353-3658  
<http://www.bu.edu/disability/>

*Educational Resource Center*

One-on-one peer tutoring, study skills help, and writing assistance.  
100 Bay State Road, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(617) 353-7077  
[www.bu.edu/erc](http://www.bu.edu/erc)

*Writing Center*

You can use the Writing Center on a walk-in basis for one-on-one writing assistance, but you may not reserve appointments (unless also in WR).  
100 Bay State Road, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
(617) 358-1500  
<http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/the-writing-center/>