

# **Social and Political Philosophy Through History**

## Course Description

This course provides an overview of some of the most influential and highly regarded works in social and political philosophy throughout history. The selection of texts, which ranges from the ancient Greek tradition over medieval scholasticism to modern western thought, seeks to convey the diversity of ways of theorizing about the sociopolitical realm. Among the questions addressed in these texts are the following: What is the nature of justice? What is the ideal constitution of society? Do humans have natural and inalienable rights? Is it possible to reconcile individual freedom with political authority? How ought one to deal with social problems such as pauperization or mass unemployment? Apart from discussing these questions and their respective answers, we will examine how and why theorists disagree among themselves about the purpose and method of social and political philosophy.

## Texts

All texts will be made available online.

## Course Prerequisite

One course prior in philosophy is required.

## Course Requirements

Midterm papers and final papers are each worth 50% of the course grade. Students are expected to attend all classes; if you miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website at <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. If you miss more than three classes without documentation, your course grade will be reduced.

## Contact

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Please use the reference line "course polphil" for all emails.

## Date and Reading Assignment

- 1/23 Introduction
- 1/27 Plato, Republic: Book I; Book II to 369b
- 1/30 Plato, Republic: Book II from 369c; Book III
- 2/3 Plato, Republic: Book IV; Book V
- 2/6 Aristotle, Politics: Book I; Book II Chs. 1-5
- 2/10 Aristotle, Politics: Book III
- 2/13 Aristotle, Politics: Book IV
- 2/17 Aquinas, Summa Theologica: Quest. 90-93
- 2/20 Aquinas, Summa Theologica: Quest. 94-97
- 2/24 Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima: pages 35-43; 91-122
- 2/27 Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima: pages 123-154; 230-261
- 3/3 Machiavelli, Discourses: Disc. I, Chs. 1-12; 16-18
- 3/6 Machiavelli, Discourses: Disc. I, Chs. 46-60; Disc. III, Chs. 29, 34
- 3/10 Hobbes, Leviathan: Chs. XIII-XVI
- 3/13 Hobbes, Leviathan: Chs. XVII-XXI; XXVI
- 3/24 Hobbes, Leviathan: Chs. XXVII-XXX
- 3/27 Locke, Second Treatise on Government: Chs. I-VII
- 3/31 Locke, Second, Treatise on Government: Chs. VIII-XV
- 4/3 Rousseau, The Social Contract: Book I
- 4/7 Rousseau, The Social Contract: Book II
- 4/10 Rousseau, The Social Contract: Book III, Chs. 1-17; Book IV, Chs. 1-3
- 4/14 Mill, On Liberty: Ch. I
- 4/17 Mill, On Liberty: Chs. II-III
- 4/21 Mill, On Liberty: Chs. IV-V
- 4/24 Marx & Engels: The Communist Manifesto
- 4/28 Marx & Engels: The Communist Manifesto, continued
- 5/1 Rawls: Justice as Fairness
- 5/5 Rawls: Justice as Fairness
- 5/? Final Exam