

**PHIL5340 Seminar on Modern Western Philosophy:  
Political Philosophy**

**Course Outline**

**Mode of Teaching: Face-to-face Teaching**

**Term: 2021-22 Term 1**

**Time : Monday 18:30 – 21:30**

**Location : WMY-301**

**Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)**

This course aims at an in-depth discussion of selected works of major philosophers in modern Western philosophy such as Descartes, Hume, Kant and Hegel. The specific content of the course may vary from semester to semester. Students may repeat the course for credit, provided that two courses with identical course codes are not elected in the same semester.

**Course Outline / Topics**

This course focuses on the most important topic in political philosophy, namely, that of justice and equality. We shall examine the most prominent theories, including libertarianism (Robert Nozick), liberalism (John Rawls), Analytical Marxism (Allen Wood, G. A. Cohen, Richard Miller, and Gary Young), Socialism (Michael Walzer, David Miller, G. A. Cohen), and (if time permits) T. M. Scanlon's theory.

**Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)**

1. Demonstrate a solid grasp of the issues discussed.
2. Analyze and critically interpret some significant primary texts in modern Western philosophy.
3. Demonstrate an enhanced ability to conduct independent research on the topics covered and related issues.

**Learning activities**

- (1) Reading before lecture (25-50 pages per week).
- (2) Lecture (2-hour per week)
- (3) Tutorial (1-hour per week)
- (4) Preparation for tutorial questions
- (5) Four very short papers (1-2 pages)
- (6) A term paper (8-12 pages)

**Assessment scheme**

<b>Task nature</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Short papers		40%
Term paper		50%
Tutorial performance		10%

**Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)**

Up to two points will be added to the final scores of those who are active in raising questions and in discussion during lectures.

**Grade Descriptor**

Please refer to: [http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade\\_descriptors.pdf](http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf)

**Details of course website**

Relevant announcements and course documents will be posted on Blackboard.

## Recommended learning resources

Here is a list of required and recommended readings for the course:

1. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Chap. 7.
2. Thomas Nagel, "Libertarianism Without Foundation," Jeffrie Paul, ed., *Reading Nozick*.
3. G. A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality*, Chaps. 3-4.
4. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (original edition), Chaps. 1-3.
5. Thomas Nagel, "Rawls on Justice," in Norman Daniels, ed. *Reading Rawls*.
6. John Harsanyi, "Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality? A Critique of John Rawls' Theory," *The American Political Science Review* 69, 594–606.
7. T. M. Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism," Stephen Darwall, et al., eds., *Moral Theory and Practice*.
8. G. A. Cohen, "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," in his *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*.
9. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*.
10. John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," in his *The Law of Peoples*.
11. T. M. Scanlon, "Some Main Points in Rawls' Theory of Justice."
12. Hon-Lam Li, "Rawlsian Political Liberalism, Public Reason, and Bioethics," in Hon-Lam Li and Michael Campbell, eds., *Public Reason and Bioethics: Three Perspectives*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in (about) September 2021.
13. G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, Chaps. 2-4, 6-8, 10.
14. Richard Miller, *Analyzing Marx*, Chap. 1.
15. Allen Wood, *Karl Marx*, Chaps. 9 and 10.
16. Richard Miller, *Analyzing Marx*, Chap. 1.
17. G. A. Cohen, Review of *Karl Marx*.
18. Gary Young, "Doing Marx Justice," in Kai Nielsen and Steven C. Patten, eds., *Marx and Morality*.
19. Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*.
20. David Miller and Michael Walzer, eds., *Pluralism, Justice, and Equality*.
21. David Miller, "Why Markets?" in J. Le Grand and S. Estrin, eds., *Market Socialism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989.
22. G. A. Cohen, *Why Not Socialism?*
23. T. M. Scanlon, *Why Does Inequality Matter?*
24. Hon-Lam Li, "Economic Justice," in "Institutional Issues Involving Ethics and Justice," from *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*. Developed under the Auspices of the UNESCO, Eolss Publishers, Oxford, UK.

## Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading and Assignments</i>
1	Utilitarianism; Libertarianism	Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> , 149-182.
2	Libertarianism	Nozick, <i>Anarchy</i> , 149-182; Nagel, "Libertarianism Without Foundation."
3	Libertarianism	Nagel, "Libertarianism w/o Foundation" G. A. Cohen, <i>Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality</i> , Chap. 3 (Recommended: Chap. 4)

4	Liberalism	Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , Chaps. 1 & 2
5	Liberalism	Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , Chaps. 2 & 3
6.	Liberalism	Nagel, "Rawls on Justice." Harsanyi, "Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality?" Scanlon, "Contractualism and Utilitarianism," section IV.
7.	Political Liberalism	(to be announced)
8.	Analytical Marxism	G. A. Cohen, <i>Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence</i> , Chaps. 2-4, 6-8, 10.
9.	Analytical Marxism	Allen Wood, <i>Karl Marx</i> , Chap. 9 (recommended: Chap. 10)
10.	Analytical Marxism	Richard Miller, <i>Analyzing Marx</i> , Chap. 1
11.	Analytical Marxism	G. A. Cohen, Review of Karl Marx. Gary Young, "Doing Marx Justice."
12.	Democratic Socialism	Michael Walzer, <i>Spheres of Justice</i> , Chap. 1.
13.	(a) Market Socialism (b) Socialism	David Miller, "Why Market?" G. A. Cohen, Why Not Socialism?

#### Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

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#### Academic honesty and plagiarism

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For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.