

# PHIL 120: Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

Joshua Mousie

### Email

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### Office Location & Hours

Pierce Hall 232

Office hours: Mon, 12-2pm, Thur, 1-3pm

[Drop by during these hours, no appointments]

## Course Description

What is the political sphere? Is it distinct from social and cultural life? Are all social inequalities political concerns? How do we know if limitations or restrictions we experience are oppressive? Moreover, when faced with injustices, which forms of political resistance can actually promote change? This course is a survey of social and political theories that attempt to answer these questions and that influence contemporary political discourse (popular and academic). We will read key traditional and critical texts, and while reading these texts, students will gain an understanding of central concepts in social and political philosophy: liberty/freedom, power, rights, oppression, resistance, etc.

## Expectations and Goals

**Knowledge:** Understanding key theories and concepts

**Critical Thinking:** Self-sufficiency in analyzing complex arguments and theories

**Communication:** Ability to communicate clearly and persuasively your ideas in dialogue and writing

**Praxis:** Understanding and learning to mobilize the entrenched relationship between theory and practice

## Required Materials

The following books are *required* for our course. There are also pdfs on Canvas that you will need to print. Alternatively, you can bring an e-reader to class on days we are reading pdfs.

*On Violence: A Reader*, Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim, 978-0822337690

*Civil Resistance: Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggle*, Kurt Schock, 978-0816694921

[You can purchase this book or read our library's electronic copy]

## Course Requirements

Discussion participation	10%	Exam 2 (final)	25%
Writing quizzes	15%	Praxis Project (multiple assignments)	25%
Exam 1	25%		

## Grading Scale

94-100 A	93-90 A-		79-77 C+	76-74 C	73-70 C-
89-87 B+	86-84 B	83-80 B-	69-67 D+	66-60 D	
			< 60 F		

## Participation

As a study that is largely focused on the skills of clear, rigorous argumentation and thinking, Philosophy is not a spectator sport. That is, if you want to learn philosophy, it is imperative that you *do* philosophy. With that in mind, I put a lot of emphasis on inclusive classroom discussion, and I do very little lecturing. I expect everyone to come to class having read the assigned reading closely, and you should have a few questions prepared that you'd like to discuss, which focus on main ideas in the reading. I will always prioritize people who have not talked during the class period (or don't talk as much as others), and talking too much or derailing discussions will lower your participation grade. There is a rubric on Canvas in "Files" that I follow when assigning discussion grades. If there's a condition that makes public speaking difficult, we can make up some of your participation credit during my office hours, although I always encourage you to develop your voice and find opportunities to speak during class, too.

## Writing Quizzes

Almost every class period will start with a writing exercise. Unannounced before class, I will collect some of these exercises and grade them as quiz grades. On quiz days, you will not be allowed to use your notes or the assigned reading when completing your writing exercise. These quizzes will test how closely you read the assigned reading, and they will always focus on key concepts, arguments, and distinctions found in the reading.

### Quiz policies:

1. There are no makeup quizzes, unless you have an excused absence. For excused absences, you have one week to take a makeup quiz. You will need to come by my office hours to take your makeup quiz. After a week, you will receive a zero.
2. All quizzes will happen at the very beginning of class, and I will give everyone exactly five minutes to write their quiz.
3. If you are late to class, you will not be able to have extended time to finish your quiz. Also, if you leave class early without an excuse, you will receive a zero on your quiz (if there is a quiz that day).
4. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

## Exams

Both exams are focused on writing (short answer and essay), although there will be some key concept identification. The essay section of your final exam (Exam 2) will be cumulative.

Exam 1: February 22<sup>nd</sup>

Exam 2 (final): 10am class: May 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 2pm

3:30pm class: May 9<sup>th</sup> @ 2pm

Two final exam clarifications:

1. The exam is in our classroom
2. In order to change your exam time, you must get permission from Academic Services. It is against school policy for me to give you permission to change your exam time.

## Praxis Projects

You will form groups of five during the first week of class, and during the course of the semester, your group will develop (in stages) and execute a form of nonviolent action. You will 1) submit a proposal, 2) collectively research and write about background information on your topic, 3) develop your action plan that synthesizes course readings on nonviolence, 4) execute your action plan, and 5) present on your project on the final day of class. In Canvas, there is a detailed document with each assignment's description and due date. We will go over this document and discuss all of these assignments during class throughout the semester.

## Additional Information & Classroom Policies

### Unexcused Absence

An absence is excused only if you are 1) involved in an official Oxford event (sports, for example), 2) have a note from health services, or 3) have a note/e-mail from a dean excusing you from class.

### Electronics

Cell phones should be turned off and stored when class starts

On days when the reading is a pdf, you can have a laptop or e-reader in class.

### Academic Dishonesty

Cheating/plagiarism is not tolerated. Any form of cheating or plagiarism (regardless the assignment) will forfeit any possible credit for that assignment, and following school policy you will be reported to the Honor Council. (Please consult the Academic Honor Code in the Student Handbook.) If you have *any* questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism, don't hesitate to contact me.

### Disability Accommodations

Any student who thinks s/he may need an accommodation should contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS):

#### **The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) Contact Information:**

105 W. Moore Street: Murdy Hall, Room 134

[oas\\_oxford@emory.edu](mailto:oas_oxford@emory.edu)

Telephone: (770) 784.4690

If you have testing accommodations, you are responsible for providing me with documentation, and you are responsible for scheduling your exam with the OAS office. If you do not provide documentation or schedule the exam in time (available time slots fill up quickly!), you will be required to take your exam with the rest of the class during the regular class time without your accommodations. I do not schedule exams outside of our regular class exam times. The OAS office is our campus resource for out-of-class testing.

### Course Schedule - All dates subject to change

Week	Topic	Readings
1		January 18 <sup>th</sup> : Introductions and Syllabus
2	Unit 1: Debating the social and the political/ the private and the public	January 23 <sup>rd</sup> : Arendt (pdf) January 25 <sup>th</sup> : Habermas (pdf)
3		January 30 <sup>th</sup> : Pitkin (pdf) February 1 <sup>st</sup> : Okin (pdf)
4		February 6 <sup>th</sup> : Fraser (pdf) February 8 <sup>th</sup> : Shafer (pdf)
5	Unit 2: The politics of nonviolence  Section 1: Classic voices for nonviolence	February 13 <sup>th</sup> : Thoreau (pdf) February 15 <sup>th</sup> : Gandhi (On Violence)
6		February 20 <sup>th</sup> : MLK Jr. (pdf) February 22 <sup>nd</sup> : Exam 1

Week	Topic	Readings
7	Section 2: Contemporary developments in nonviolent theory	February 27 <sup>th</sup> : Dajani (pdf) March 1 <sup>st</sup> : Cabot (Civil Resistance)
8		March 6 <sup>th</sup> : Vinthagen (Civil Resistance) March 8 <sup>th</sup> : Satha-Anand (Civil Resistance)
10	Unit 3: Violence, Power, and Oppression	March 20 <sup>th</sup> : Marx (pdf) March 22 <sup>nd</sup> : Fanon, pp. 79-93 (On Violence)
11		March 27 <sup>th</sup> : Malcolm X (On Violence) March 29 <sup>th</sup> - no class - Mousie out of town
12		April 3 <sup>rd</sup> : Foucault, pp. 445-455 (On Violence) April 5 <sup>th</sup> : Frye (pdf)
13		April 10 <sup>th</sup> : Young, pp. 39-48 (pdf) April 12 <sup>th</sup> : Young, finish
14		April 17 <sup>th</sup> : Gordon (On Violence) April 19 <sup>th</sup> : Arisaka (pdf)
15		April 24 <sup>th</sup> : Lugones (pdf) April 26 <sup>th</sup> : Project Presentations