

Civil Society: History and Ethics
EASL_OX 102 - 04J
Tuesday 4:00-5:15

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Office hours: By appointment.

This course examines the idea of the good society or the good polity and the role of ethics in thinking about, formulating, and implementing public policy. Its primary focus is addressing the question of how, in a pluralistic society, is it possible for individuals to argue about the common good out of their own particularity? What language can we use? How do we use it? The course begins with discussions about ethics, the common (or public) good, and the nature of the state and public policy. The class will then move to an analysis of how people can argue about public policy from ethical and religious perspectives. As part of this discussion we will examine what is or ought to be the role of ethics or the idea of the good in people's decisions about public policy and its implementation. The questions addressed will include: What can or ought specific religious traditions say about public policy? What is the relationship between one's view of an ethical social order and the making of specific policies? To what extent does ethical policy-making require sound factual analysis and attention to consequences? The course will conclude by looking at contemporary political and policy discourse both in the United States and internationally.

Required texts:

Steven Lukes, *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat* (London: Verso, 2009).

Cass R. Sunstein, *Republic.Com 2.0* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Articles to be assigned. These will be available via link embedded in syllabus, electronically on Blackboard, or distributed during the semester.

Recommended.

Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

Requirements:

Given the relatively small size of this class and the opportunity the topic presents for discussion attendance is required. Class participation will count for 30% of your final grade. Students are expected to attend each class session and come prepared to ask pertinent and appropriate questions and knowledgeably and productively discuss the weekly readings. One unexcused absence per semester is permitted; additional absences

will affect your grade. Regular attendance and class participation will count for 30% of your grade.

The remaining 70% of your grade will be distributed as follows:

Mid-term examination	30%
Final examination	40%

Student Assessment:

Final grades will be assigned to students based on their class participation and the examinations. Paper will be graded on the basis of validity and quality of their content, thoughtfulness, and the nature of the argument. The examinations will require the students to demonstrate both a mastery of the material covered in lectures and the readings and the ability to reflect thoughtfully on this material and the categories and concepts learned.

Examinations.

Mid-term examination--February 26.

Final examination— according to the Oxford schedule

Student Conduct:

At all times students shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the norms of Oxford College of Emory University and with professional standards. This includes responding and behaving respectfully and civilly to the professor, class visitors, and student colleagues. Students are expected to follow all formal university policies. Additionally, through the act of submitting individual work for evaluation by the professor, students assert that the work is their own. Neither plagiarism nor dishonesty will be tolerated and will be dealt with according to the Honor Code of Oxford College. With this publication all students are on notice, both actual and constructive, that all College policies apply to all components of this course, including but not limited to the following articles of the Honor Code.

Honor Code

The responsibility for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work and in campus judicial proceedings falls upon every individual who is a part of Oxford College of Emory University. The Honor Code is based on the fundamental expectations that every person in Oxford College will conduct his or her life according to the dictates of the Honor Code and will refuse to tolerate actions in others which would violate the Honor Code.

Article 1: Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is an offense generally defined as any action or failure to act which is contrary to the integrity and honesty of members of the academic community.

A. Such offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Seeking, acquiring, receiving, or giving information about the conduct of an examination, knowing that the release of such information has not been authorized
2. Plagiarizing
3. Seeking, using, giving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination
4. Intentionally mis-shelving, damaging or removing library materials without authorization
5. Intentionally giving false information to professors or instructors for the purpose of gaining academic advantage
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8. Breach of any duties prescribed by this code

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Article 2: Honor Pledge and Obligation

A. A student's submission of any work to be evaluated for course credit constitutes a declaration that he or she has neither given nor received unauthorized information on the work, nor has condoned the giving or receiving of unauthorized information by others.

B. Each student at Oxford College of Emory University agrees to abide by the honor pledge and takes upon himself or herself the responsibility of upholding the Honor Code. Each student is urged to inquire of the Honor Council about any doubtful case at any time throughout the year.

C. Each professor shall explain to his or her classes at the beginning of each semester any special aspects of the Honor Code as it pertains to that course.

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Article 3: Reporting Cases

It is the responsibility of every member of the faculty, administration and student body to cooperate in supporting the honor system. In pursuance of this duty, any individual, when he or she suspects that an offense of academic misconduct has occurred, shall report this suspected breach to the Student Chair of the Honor Council, the Faculty Coordinator of the Honor Council, or the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Full Honor Code and honor process viewable at:

http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/

Class schedule

January

15 Introduction to course, What is Civil Society? What is Ethics? Relationship.
Readings: Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument."

22 Purpose of State
Readings: John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*, Chapter VIII "Of the
Beginning of Civil Societies" <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr08.htm>

What is the good society?

Jan. 29 Steven Lukes, *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat* pp. 1-41.

Feb. 5 Caritat continued, pp. 41-116.

12 Caritat continued, pp. 117-192.

19 Caritat continued, pp. 193 to end.

26 Mid-term examination

Civil Society and Arguing about the Good.

March 5 Civil society, politics, and the contemporary United States.
Reading: Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone."

12—Spring break, no class.

19 It's all about me!
Reading: Cass R. Sunstein, *Republic.Com 2.0*, pp. 1-45, 97-137.

26 Passover. No class.

April 2 Is there a public good without a public?
Readings: Continue previous assignment in Sunstein.

9 Bad information, bad decisions, bad citizens?
Readings: Sunstein, 46-96, 138-150.

16 What is to be done?
Readings: Sunstein, 151-end.

23 Summation, review for final examination.