

## PHIL 10000-1: Ethics, Justice, and Society

Department of Philosophy  
The College of Wooster  
Spring 2021

Professor: Sid Simpson  
Teaching Apprentice: Rachel Catus

### Course Information:

MW 3:30pm - 4:50pm in Ruth Williams 60 (*first two weeks held on Zoom*)

### Contact Information:

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Office Hours: Times TBA, meetings will be held over Zoom

### Course Description:

In this course, we will read a selection of philosophical texts spanning more than two millennia, from Thucydides to Angela Davis, in order to better confront some of the most foundational questions of the human condition: for example, What is justice? What is political community? What ought to be the role of government? How do we know what is morally right? What is the relation between reason and morality? Are justice, liberty, and equality in tension with each other? As we proceed, we will pay particular attention to *how* and *on what grounds* different thinkers answer these questions. At the same time, we will interrogate the implicit assumptions of the most famous currents of ethical and political thought in the Western tradition. To this end, we will also read texts that explicitly raise the questions of colonization, race, class, and gender. Through close reading and critical discussion, we will test our own political and ethical commitments and in doing so further our understanding of the present.

### Course Policies:

Students are required to complete all assigned readings, participate actively during class meetings (see section B), write two papers, and take two exams.

#### A. COVID-19

We are currently living in the ominous shadow of the Coronavirus global pandemic (COVID-19). Given the circumstances, The College of Wooster is working to provide a rigorous and edifying college experience while implementing measures to reduce risk of infection and spread of the virus. *To this end, students will be expected to wear face masks, to practice (6') social distancing, to thoroughly sanitize one's hands, to remain vigilant for symptoms of viral infection, etc.* If the threat of COVID-19 becomes too menacing, this course will retreat to online instruction. The course would then be held synchronously on the Zoom platform with assignment submissions via email.

**B. Required Texts**

For the sake of simplicity, all readings will be available for download on Moodle.

**C. Grading**

Grades will be as follows:

Participation	10%
Test One (Midterm)	20%
Test Two (Final)	25%
Paper One (4-5 pp)	20%
Paper Two (5-7 pp)	25%

The grading scale is standard:

A: 93-100	C+: 77-79
A-: 90-92	C: 73-76
B+: 87-89	C-: 70-72
B: 83-86	D: 60-69
B-: 80-82	F: 59 or below

Late assignments will be deducted one third of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to a B) for every 24 hours that the assignment is late.

*Please note:* This semester is unlike other semesters, and will inevitably present a number of challenges for us. If, for some reason, you know you will be unable to submit an assignment on time, please let me know *before it is due*. If you would like to negotiate a reasonable extension (e.g. an extra day or two) please contact me *before the day that it is due*.

No incompletes will be given for this class.

**Academic Honesty and the Code of Academic Integrity**

The College's understanding and expectations in regard to issues of academic honesty are fully articulated in the Code of Academic Integrity as published in *The Scot's Key* and form an essential part of the implicit contract between the student and the College. The Code provides a framework at Wooster to help students develop and exhibit honesty in their academic work. You are expected to know and abide by the rules of the institution as described in *The Scot's Key* and the *Handbook of Selected College Policies*.

**Learning Center: Academic Support and Disabilities.**

The Learning Center (ext. 2595) offers services designed to help students improve their overall academic performance. Sessions are structured to promote principles of effective learning and academic management. Any student on campus may schedule sessions at the

Learning Center. The Learning Center also offers a variety of services and accommodations to students with disabilities based on appropriate documentation, nature of disability, and academic need. In order to initiate services, students should meet with the director of the Learning Center, at the start of the semester to discuss reasonable accommodations.

### Schedule of Readings:

**January 20<sup>th</sup> (W):** Introduction, no reading assigned.

**January 25<sup>th</sup> (M):** Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. The Melian Dialogue.

**January 27<sup>th</sup> (W):** Plato, *The Republic*. Book I. (beginning – 338a [i.e. middle of p. 15]).

**February 1<sup>st</sup> (M):** Plato, *The Republic*. Book I (338a – end), Book II (beginning – 361d).

**February 3<sup>rd</sup> (W):** Plato, *The Republic*. Book VIII (beginning – 559d).

**February 8<sup>th</sup> (M):** Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*.

**February 10<sup>th</sup> (W):** Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Ch. 13, 14, 15 (only to 15.3), 17, 18.

**February 12<sup>th</sup> (F):** *Paper One due by email no later than 5pm Eastern to [ssimpson@wooster.edu](mailto:ssimpson@wooster.edu) and [rcatus22@wooster.edu](mailto:rcatus22@wooster.edu)*

**February 15<sup>th</sup> (M):** Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Ch. 19, 21, 29.

**February 17<sup>th</sup> (W):** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Second Discourse*.

**February 22<sup>nd</sup> (M):** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*. Books 1 (entire) and 2 (Sec. 1-8, 11-12).

**February 24<sup>th</sup> (W):** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*. Book 3 (Sec. 1-3, 10-16).

**March 1<sup>st</sup> (M):** Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> (W):** Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Part 1.

**March 5<sup>th</sup> (F):** *Midterm due by email no later than 5pm Eastern to [ssimpson@wooster.edu](mailto:ssimpson@wooster.edu) and [rcatus22@wooster.edu](mailto:rcatus22@wooster.edu)*

**March 8<sup>th</sup> (M):** Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Part 2.

**March 10<sup>th</sup> (W):** Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*.

**March 15<sup>th</sup> (M):** John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*.

**March 17<sup>th</sup> (W):** John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*.

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> (M):** Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Preface (Sec. 1,3,5 and 6).

**March 24<sup>th</sup> (W):** Friedrich Nietzsche, Essay I (Sec. 2-4, 6, 7, 9-11, 13-14, and 16-17). (Don't read the footnotes).

**March 29<sup>th</sup> (M):** Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and "Selections on Alienated Labor."

**March 31<sup>st</sup> (W):** Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*.

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> (F):** *Paper Two due by email no later than 5pm Eastern to [ssimpson@wooster.edu](mailto:ssimpson@wooster.edu) and [rcatus22@wooster.edu](mailto:rcatus22@wooster.edu)*

**April 5<sup>th</sup> (M):** Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*. Part 1.

**April 7<sup>th</sup> (W):** *Rest Day – No Class Meeting*

**April 12<sup>th</sup> (M):** Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*. Part 2.

**April 14<sup>th</sup> (W):** Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* and Malcolm X, *The Ballot or the Bullet*.

**April 19<sup>th</sup> (M):** Angela Davis, *The Meaning of Freedom*.

**April 21<sup>st</sup> (W):** *No Class Meeting*

**April 26<sup>th</sup> (M):** Nancy Fraser, "From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump – and Beyond," *American Affairs*.

**April 30<sup>th</sup> (F):** *Final due by email no later than 5pm Eastern to [ssimpson@wooster.edu](mailto:ssimpson@wooster.edu) and [rcatus22@wooster.edu](mailto:rcatus22@wooster.edu)*