

POLI 110K: Liberty and Equality

Winter 2016

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1 Course Description

Tea Party activists protest taxes in the name of liberty. Gun lobbyists declare regulations on gun ownership an affront to liberty. Racial minorities complain that discriminatory police tactics restrict their liberty. Civil rights groups protest government surveillance of American citizens in the name of liberty.

Gay, lesbian, and transgender rights groups fought for marriage rights in the name of equality. Women's rights groups fight for workplace equality. Occupy Wall Street activists protest CEO salaries in the name of equality. Black Lives Matter activists lobby for policies to support race equality.

Liberty and equality are obviously important mantras in contemporary American political debates. How we think about these issues depends on how we think about these key concepts. What is liberty? What is equality? How are these values related? What are their practical political implications? How are liberty and equality manifest in political society? These and related questions will focus our attention in this course.

The main pedagogical objective of this course is to help you develop a set of skills that will enable you to formulate astute questions and think critically about potential answers. These skills include: (1) The ability to summarize and synthesize what you read; (2) The ability to critically evaluate arguments; (3) The ability to communicate clearly and to construct compelling arguments. (4) The ability to collaborate with others to pursue mutual understanding. Class format and assignments are designed with these objectives in mind.

2 Course Texts

1. Anderson, Elizabeth, *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010)
2. Nozick, Robert, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974/2013)
3. Pettit, Philip, *Republicanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)
4. Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)
5. Satz, Debra, *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

3 Assessment

Please see dwiens.ucsd.edu/assignk.html for details on assignments and grading.

Note. Late assignments will not be accepted without an approved excuse.

4 Expectations

1. Personal Investment. Your success in this course depends on how much you invest in your own learning. Simply recording notes from lecture will not get you very far — there are no exams testing your ability to recall what was said during lecture. The only assignments are writing assignments that will exercise your ability to interpret and synthesize the assigned readings and develop your own critical analyses of these readings. Our meetings will not consist of lectures that exhaustively cover the details of the readings. Instead, our meetings will be “group training sessions”, where we will use individual and group exercises to develop our reading and writing skills. These will be opportunities for you to ask questions about the readings, to help you get clarity on passages that were confusing; this presupposes that you have read carefully enough to know which passages confused you. Our meetings will also be opportunities for you to try out your own ideas about the issues we’ll discuss; this presupposes that you’ve done some thinking about the issues prior to arriving in class. The requirements are designed so that success in this course will require an average investment of 9–12 hours per week including class time (approx. 3–4 out-of-class hours for every in-class hour).

2. Technology I won’t ban laptops, tablets, etc. in the classroom. However, use of technology is strongly discouraged — it typically creates distractions for other members of the class, which have negative effects on the classroom dynamic. (I won’t hesitate to ask you to put it away if it becomes a distraction.) If you take notes, I strongly encourage you to do so with old-fashioned pen and paper.

3. Respect for Others. Philosophy is a collaborative process and students learn philosophy best when they engage in that process. Such a participation-heavy environment requires that each of us gives others adequate space to participate, in addition to recognizing that we don’t know everything. We must work to cultivate an environment in which people do not hesitate to ask “silly” questions, make mistakes, or disagree with others. We will disagree (sometimes vigorously) with each other and we will work through our disagreements in class. But our debate will always be conducted respectfully.

Note: Conducting class discussions respectfully does not mean that everyone gets to be right all the time; it does not mean that we must avoid critically evaluating one another’s claims. Rather, respectful discussion involves acknowledging that you have a limited perspective on an issue and that your thinking can be enriched by viewing an issue from someone else’s perspective. Respectful discussion involves seriously considering the possibility that you might be wrong and that someone who thinks differently than you might be right.

4. Out-of-Class Help. You are welcome to come to me for help with your assignments. However, there are some guidelines.

- (1) Please try to see me during office hours (I've scheduled these to be at times when I'm sure to be available). If these hours are not convenient, it is possible to set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time. To set up an appointment with me, send me an email with the subject line "[POLI 110K] Appointment request". In the body of the email, indicate 3-5 times that work for you. I will then select a time from those provided. (**Warning:** I'm generally not available to meet before noon.)
- (2) If you have a question or concern about the class, please search the syllabus or the course website for the answer. If there is no answer to be found, then approach me at the start or end of the next class session. If you need an answer right away, email may not be the best option. (If this is the case, you may have waited too long.)
- (3) I will not read submissions in advance and tell you what I think needs improvement. If you would like help with a submission, you can tell me which aspects of the paper concern you and, together, we will figure out how to address your concerns.

5. Email. I am trying to minimize the amount of time I spend corresponding by email. Accordingly, I will only reply to emails requesting an appointment to meet with me. I will not answer emails concerning administrative matters, nor will I offer advice on assignments over email. If you have administrative or assignment questions, you are welcome to meet with me outside class or to approach me at the start or end of a class session. Please start the subject line with "[POLI 110K]", otherwise the email is likely to fall through the cracks of my inbox.

6. Grade Disputes. I am willing to re-examine assignment grades with you if you feel your work deserves a better grade. There are two steps to this process:

- (1) You must wait 24 hours after the assignment as been returned before you approach me.
- (2) You must approach me with a written justification for your complaint (a single paragraph is fine). In this, you must outline why you think your work deserves a better grade and where the discrepancy lies between your work and the assigned grade.

Warning: If you challenge a grade, I reserve the right to reset the grade *as I see fit*. Opening a grade dispute means a re-examination of the assignment. Thus, your grade will not necessarily improve and may even go down.

7. Plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and will be treated as such. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Any case of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Integrity Office.

Plagiarism will be defined as follows:

Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements or other works as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. Examples of plagiarism include:

- Copying word for word or lifting phrases or a special term from a source or reference—whether oral, printed, or on the Internet—without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing, that is, using another person's written words or ideas, albeit in one's own words, as if they were one's own thought.
- Borrowing facts, statistics, or other illustrative material without proper reference, unless the information is common knowledge, in common public use.

8. Accommodations. If you feel that you need an accommodation for any sort of disability or for religious reasons, please discuss this with me as early as possible (after class, in office hours, or by email).

5 Reading schedule

See the course page on Google Classroom for the reading schedule.