Course Description:

This course is a broad introduction to political philosophy. The word political derives from the Greek word *polis*, meaning “the city.” In the Greek world there were properly no states as we now understand them, rather everything revolved around the city, e.g., Athens, and the territory it controlled. Thus, political philosophy was first envisioned as the philosophy of the city. Thus, the questions that political philosophy in its inception concerned itself with included (though was not limited to): what makes for a just city? How should the city be organized? Who should rule (i.e., have authority) in the city? What makes for a good citizen? Etc. After the classical period when states arose the questions in some ways stayed the same and in some ways changed significantly. For example, modern political philosophy asked questions such as: What is justice within a state? What grounds the authority of the state? What is the relation between the individual and the state? Is the individual or the state more fundamental? Even later, economic political philosophy became a significant focus. In this regard, new questions arose, such as: What is the relation between socio-economic conditions and the political superstructure of the state? What role should government and the state play in the economic life of its people? Etc. Finally, two issues tend to dominate contemporary debates in political philosophy. The first is: Does justice consist in equality, and in what way, or does justice consist in fairness (giving each his or her due)? The second issue is: Given “postmodern” critiques of political structures, can we save deliberative democracy? In this course, we will touch on each of these issues.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students should have a working knowledge of many of the key issues of political philosophy, be acquainted with the views of both contemporary and historical political philosophers, and be able to think philosophically about the issues raised by political philosophy.

Required Texts:


Course Requirements:

There will be three exams throughout the semester. Each will cover approximately one-third of the material for the class. That is, the first exam will cover the first third of the course, the second exam will cover the second third, and the third exam will cover the last third. The exams will consist of essay questions and will be an hour and fifteen minutes in length. On a regular basis I will give short quizzes at the beginning of class to determine whether or not you are doing the assigned reading. If you have done the reading you should have no problems doing fine on the quizzes. Finally, you will be graded on participation, i.e., asking questions which generate class discussion and participation in those discussions, and attendance. Excessive absences will be guaranteed to negatively affect your grade. Promptness is expected as a general rule. If you are consistently late to class your grade will be negatively affected. No make-up exams will be given except in cases of officially excused absences with the prior approval of the instructor at least a week before the exam or for documented illnesses.

Grading:
Course Itinerary:

January 16th Introductions/Syllabus

Classical Theories of Political Philosophy

18th Plato's Apology, pp. 1 - 4, 31 - 89
23rd Plato's Apology, pp. 89 - 129
25th Plato's Apology (continued)
30th Aristotle, Politics, pp. 129 - 169

February 1st Aristotle, Politics (continued)

Modern Political Philosophy and Social Contract Theory

6th Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 214 - 242
8th Winter Carnival Recess
13th Hobbes (continued)
15th First Exam
20th John Locke, Second Treatise of Government, pp. 243 - 273
22nd Locke (continued)
27th Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, pp. 274 - 293.
Of the Social Contract, pp. 293 - 321

March 1st Rousseau (continued)

The American “Experiment”


Economic Political Philosophy: Capitalism, Communism, and Class

8th Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 331 - 349
13th Spring Break
15th Spring Break
20th Adam Smith (continued)
22nd Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, pp. 406 - 436
27th Marx and Engels (continued)
29th Second Exam

Contemporary Debates

April 3rd John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, pp. 472 - 492
5th Rawls (continued)
10th Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia, pp. 492 - 507
12th Nozick (continued)
17th Jürgen Habermas, Three Normative Models of Democracy, pp. 524 - 534
19th Habermas, The Rule of Law and Democracy, pp. 534 – 541
24th Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, pp. 508 - 524.
26th Third Exam
The breakdown for grading purposes is as follows:

Exams: 25% a piece for a total of 75%
Quizzes: 15%
Class participation and attendance: 10%

**Academic Honesty:**

Students are absolutely required to adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of Michigan Tech, copies of which are available at student affairs. Any violation of this policy will be forwarded to the dean of students. If you have any questions or doubts in a particular case I would be more than happy to discuss that case with you and to clarify what counts as a violation of academic integrity.