Phil 116: Special Topics in Political Philosophy
MWF 2–3 in 200 Wheeler
Website: http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny/S10Phil116.htm

Instructor:
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Description:
This course will survey recent discussions of the following questions in political philosophy: Why, if at all, should we obey the law? Why, if at all, should we accept majority decisions with which we disagree? Is the Supreme Court incompatible with democracy? What limits, if any, should we place on the expression of ideas and feelings? Should we allow consenting adults to enter into whatever contractual relationships (e.g., prostitution, slavery, unequal marriages) they please? Is the only ground for forbidding or allowing abortion that life does or does not begin at conception? What, if anything, is wrong with inequality between rich and poor? Is taxation morally permissible? Why, if at all, should we punish criminals? When, if ever, may we wage war? Is there any difference between “collateral damage” and terrorism?

As taught this semester, Phil 116 satisfies the ethics requirement for the philosophy major.

Prerequisites:
Either (i) two courses offered by the Berkeley Philosophy Department or (ii) one course in moral or political philosophy offered by the Berkeley Philosophy Department.

Requirements:
1. For each lecture, download the handout from the course website and bring it to class.
2. Section participation: 15%. Sections will be cancelled for one week, chosen by the GSI.
3. One 2-page paper: 15%. The main purpose of this is to provide you with some feedback before the Feb. 19 drop deadline.
4. One 2-page proposal for your term paper, describing a question or problem and how you will address it. You may submit this for approval at any time up until April 9. However, the earlier you submit your outline, the earlier you will get comments, and so the more time you will have to write your term paper itself.
5. One 8-page term paper: 40%.
6. Final exam: 30%. The questions will come from a longer list that you will have before the exam.

Note: GSI will not comment on the term paper or final exam, but will be available to discuss them.
Readings:
1. Online readings, some of which can be accessed only from the UC Berkeley network.
   - The obvious advantage is that these readings are all free, but I realize that this may be inconvenient for students who prefer to read things on paper.
   - For off-campus access to the UC Berkeley network, see: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Help/connecting_off_campus.html.
   - If there is a problem with a link, try clicking it a second time, or restarting your browser. (Surprisingly, this often solves the problem.) If that doesn't work, try locating the electronic resource (e.g., "Philosophy and Public Affairs," or "Oxford Scholarship Online") on the UCB library website, and then searching for the title of the specific article or book.
2. Reader with the remaining material, available at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft Way.

Syllabus:

   Wednesday, January 20
   1. Introduction

Authority and obligation
   Friday, January 22
   2. Simmons, Moral Principles and Political Obligation, II.i, III, IV

   Monday, January 25
   3. Simmons, Moral Principles and Political Obligation, VI, VIII

   Wednesday, January 27

   Friday, January 29
   5. Raz, The Morality of Freedom, Ch. 3 in Oxford Scholarship Online (http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/oso/public/content/philosophy/9780198248071/toc.html)

First paper topic

   Monday, February 1
   6. Raz, The Morality of Freedom, Ch. 4

Democracy and Disagreement

   Democracy
   Wednesday, February 3
   7. Waldron, “Participation: The Right of Rights”
Friday, February 5

Monday, February 8

**First paper due**

Wednesday, February 10
10. Estlund, *Democratic Authority*, 136–58

Friday, February 12

Wednesday, February 17

Friday, February 19

**Judicial Review**

Monday, February 22

Wednesday, February 24

Friday, February 26

Monday, March 1

**Individual Liberty**

Wednesday, March 3

Monday, March 8

Wednesday, March 10
Freedom of expression
Friday, March 12

Monday, March 15

Freedom of association
Wednesday, March 17

Abortion rights?
Friday, March 19
Cohen, “Privacy, Pluralism, and Democracy,” up to p. 317

Economic Justice
Property
Monday, March 29

Wednesday, March 31

Friday, April 2

Monday, April 5

Equality
Wednesday, April 7
   Rawls, Political Liberalism, lect. VII 1, 3–5, 7–9
   Rawls, Justice as Fairness, §§14–16

Final deadline for term paper proposal

Friday, April 9
30. Scanlon, “The Diversity of Objections to Inequality”
   No sections this week

Desert

Monday, April 12
   (http://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/sidgwick/)
   Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, §§14, 17, 48

Monday, April 19
32. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*, §20

Political violence

Punishment

Wednesday, April 21
33. Ewing, *The Morality of Punishment*, Ch. 2

Friday, April 23

Monday, April 26
35. Scanlon, “Punishment and the Rule of Law”

War

Wednesday, April 28

Terrorism

Friday, April 30

Term papers due

Review

38. Monday, May 3
39. Wednesday, May 5

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 11, 11AM–2:30PM

Course Policies:

Extensions:
Plan ahead. You may request extensions from your GSI up until 72 hours before papers are due. After then, extensions will be granted only for medical and family emergencies.
Submitting Work:
*Papers must be submitted, on paper, by you, to your GSI, in class, by 2:10pm, before the lecture starts.* Papers submitted later will lose one step (e.g., B+ to B) immediately and then an additional step every 24 hours. If you cannot come to lecture on the due date, you may request to make other arrangements with your GSI, so long as you do so well before the deadline. Whatever the circumstances, you are responsible for ensuring that your GSI gets your paper. Forgotten or unopenable attachments, bounced or lost emails, and so on, are your responsibility.

"Re-grading":
You are strongly encouraged to discuss grades and comments on papers with your GSI or me. However, *grades on particular papers and exams will not be changed under any circumstances.* While there is no perfect system, selective "re-grading" at students’ request only makes things worse. "Second" grades are likely to be less accurate and less fair than "first" grades. This is because, among other things, the GSI does not have access to other papers for purposes of comparison, the student will inevitably supply additional input (clarifications, explanations, etc.) that the original paper did not, and there are certain biases of self-selection.

The only exception, to which none of these concerns apply, is a suspected arithmetical or recording error in your final course grade. Please do not hesitate to bring this to your GSI’s or my attention.

*Academic Dishonesty:*
"Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

You are expected to be familiar with the definitions of academic dishonesty in the Code of Student Conduct, which can be found here: [http://students.berkeley.edu/osl/sja.asp?id=1143&rcol=1201](http://students.berkeley.edu/osl/sja.asp?id=1143&rcol=1201).

*Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized, at a minimum, by an "F" on the paper or exam in question. It may also, depending on its seriousness, result in an "F" in the course as a whole and a report to Student Judicial Affairs.*

*Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:*
If you have an official accommodation letter from the Disabled Students’ Program that is relevant to this course, please notify both me and your GSI at a reasonable time. We will do whatever we can to help.