POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Time: Monday 9:30-12:30
Location: LHS-TR+48
Email: andrewforcehimes@gmail.com (I answer student e-mails at 5:00pm everyday, unless the subject line indicates it is an emergency)
Office: HSS 06-14
Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30pm

1. Course Description

1.1 States claim to have a monopoly on the justified use of coercive force. This is a stunning, and perhaps alarming, claim. All the more stunning once we recognize that this power is wielded, not merely over non-human animals or children, but over competent adults. Accordingly, the fundamental question of contemporary political philosophy is this: How is authority — i.e., the power to create moral obligations in others by means of commands — possible among free and equal moral persons? Anarchists think this question does not admit of a plausible answer. In this class, we’ll see if they’re right.

2. A Non-Exhaustive List of Basic Policies

2.1 Use of laptops and cell phones in class is not permitted. Click here to see why.

2.2 Understand and conform to the NTU Honor Code. Click here for its content.

3. Grading

3.1 Your grade is determined by your performance on three papers and a cumulative final, which have the corresponding weights:

| Essay #1: | 50% |
| Essay #2: | 50% |

3.2 Essays, if late, will not be accepted. For this reason I suggest that you aim to finish your paper a full day before it is due. If you plan ahead in this way, you will be able to address any unexpected problems you encounter and still submit your paper on time. I also suggest that you periodically save your work by sending it to yourself via email, printing it, or otherwise securing a copy in case your computer crashes, is stolen, catches fire, etc.

3.2.1 In the interest of impartiality, the only excuses for a late paper that will be accepted are sent to me directly from the Dean. The Dean is likely to excuse absence due to serious documented illness or a death in the immediate family.

3.1.2 A paper counts as late if it is turned in after the deadline.

3.3 Your paper will be turned in electronically by email. It will need to be a .doc or docx in order for me to grade with track changes. It is due at 11:45am. I will send you a confirmation email by 1:00pm. If you do not receive confirmation by then, you need to get in contact with me.

3.4 Philosophical writing is different from much other writing you are familiar with. It is critical that you appreciate the particular expectations of writing in this discipline. Click here for guidance about writing a philosophy paper.
4. Handouts

4.1 I often provide handouts to supplement the readings. They are designed to (i) serve as a handy reference for technical jargon and defined terms, (ii) provide a reliable guide to the text, and (iii) free up class time for discussion.

4.2 Handouts are not substitutes for the assigned reading. In many cases, I provide a potentially controversial interpretation of the text. You can’t take it for granted that my interpretation is correct. One of the most important lessons you should learn from this course is that in philosophy there are no experts. Of course the professionals have read more than you have, and they’ve spent more time thinking about the issues. Nonetheless, when you are discussing a philosophical question, you can’t say ‘Plato says, X’ as if that were an argument for X. And the same goes for me.

4.3 Past versions of my handouts can be found here. These are not final versions. I will bring hardcopy handouts to class. These hardcopies are what you should use to study.

5. Agreement for Articles

5.1 Copies of the works will be supplied to each student, but students remain subject to all the rights and restrictions of the publisher, and students are to honor those. Copies are to be used solely for purposes of this class; they are not to be distributed, sold, or employed for any other commercial purpose. Each student’s participation in the class will indicate his or her agreement to be bound by these limitations.

5.2 Click here for the course readings.

6. Assignments

6.1 Readings are to be completed before class. E.g., If the class schedule states “11th Anscombe, “On the Source of the Authority of the State” you are to read Anscombe’s “On the Source of the Authority of the State before the start of class on the 11th.

6.2 Schedule:

**SOCIAL CONTRACT**

11th: Syllabus; Anscombe, “On the Source of the Authority of the State”
18th: Hobbes. Leviathan. chps. 13-16 (Recommended: chp. 17-18; 21)

**CONSEQUENTIALISM**

8th: Off for New Year (Optional: Hume, On the Original Contract; Bentham, Principles of Legislation)
22nd: Mill, On Liberty, chps. 3-4 (Recommended: chp. 5)

6th: Essay #1 (2,000-2,500 words)

**WHO SHOULD RULE?**

JUSTICE

14th: Rawls, Theory of Justice, §1-5
21st: Rawls, Theory of Justice, §11; §13; §17; §24; §26; (Recommended: §18)
28th: Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia, chp. 7; Cohen, “Illusions About Private Property and Freedom” (Optional: Nussbaum, “Feminist Critique of Liberalism”)

ANARCHISM

4th: Huemer, The Problem of Political Authority chps. 1-2 (Away at a conference. Class will not meet. I’ll provide a handout for the reading.)
11th: Huemer, The Problem of Political Authority chps. 3-5.
17th: Essay #2 (2,000-2,500 words)