

**Syllabus for Political Science 110C:  
Kant to Nietzsche**

**Spring 2020**

(Last updated on April 1, 2020)

<b>Instructor:</b>	Sean Ingham	<b>Time:</b>	Tu., Th. 8:00-9:20 (but see below)
<b>Email:</b>	singham@ucsd.edu	<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://canvas.ucsd.edu">https://canvas.ucsd.edu</a>
<b>Office hours:</b>	by appointment, via Zoom		

<b>Teaching assistant:</b>	Austin Beacham	<b>Email:</b>	abeacham@ucsd.edu
----------------------------	----------------	---------------	-------------------

### Course description

The course examines questions about individual rights and the greater good; property and the idea of socialism; and freedom and power. It uses influential texts from nineteenth-century political thought—work by Jeremy Bentham, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Henry George, J.S. Mill, and Friedrich Nietzsche—supplemented by more recent literature in political theory and economics that addresses the same topics.

### The logistics of teaching and learning during a pandemic

We may have a challenging quarter ahead of us, as instructors and students try to figure out the best way to teach and learn using only the resources of online platforms like Canvas and Zoom. Our current, tentative plan is the following:

- **Lecture videos:** I will prepare videos that cover the most important content from the lectures I would give under normal circumstances. Between one and three of these videos will be assigned for each class session. A typical video is focused on a single idea and probably lasts anywhere from six to fifteen minutes.
- **Zoom discussions:** On Tuesdays and Thursdays, a Zoom session will begin at 8:20am, twenty minutes after the scheduled class time. The idea is that the first twenty minutes are the time officially allotted for watching the lecture videos, although you can watch them at anytime before the Zoom session. Here is a link to the recurring Zoom session:

<https://ucsd.zoom.us/meeting/register/vpEsd-mrjwiPR8DG74q3md0dV3WekmmnQ>

If you are able to participate in the Zoom session, you should join at the beginning of the session, at 8:20am, and stay until its conclusion at 9:20am. You should complete the assigned reading, try to answer the posted reading questions, and watch the online lecture videos before the Zoom session. You should come prepared with questions about the text and video lectures or with ideas you would like to discuss. (See the section on participation below.) The

format of the Zoom sessions will be general Q&A and discussion. They will be more or less interesting and fruitful, depending on how many people choose to actively participate.

The Zoom sessions will be recorded for students who are unable to participate.

- **Canvas discussion board:** There will be a discussion board on the Canvas website where you can post questions, comments, and arguments about the texts. If you are unable to participate in the Zoom sessions, you should participate in this forum (although it is not reserved exclusively for people who are unable to participate in the Zoom sessions; everyone is encouraged to participate in both).

I recommend watching at least the first half of this video by a UCSD psychology professor for some tips on how to learn effectively in online classes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IIUVU-d1DM&feature=youtu.be>

## Expectations and grading

Students and instructors need to adjust their expectations on account of the special challenges of teaching and learning during a pandemic. In addition to dropping several standard requirements for the course, you can expect me to be compassionate and reasonable in administering the remaining requirements of the course. I am assuming that you have a sense of integrity and will not abuse my trust and willingness to make special accommodations.

In any given week, if you are in good health, not worried out of your mind about a friend or relative, have access to internet, and are not experiencing any other severe pandemic-related disruptions, then you are expected to do the assigned reading before the Zoom discussion session, answer the reading questions, watch the assigned lecture videos, and participate in the Zoom discussion or the Canvas discussion forum. If you do find yourself in difficult circumstances, please reach out to me right away and let me know so we can figure out what accommodations to make.

You should bring such information to me *before* completing a graded assignment whose quality might be affected. Do not wait until after completing an assignment to explain that your performance was compromised by circumstances outside your control; I will not make post hoc changes to assigned grades in such a case.

In addition to these general, standing expectations for each week, there are four kinds of graded assignment:

- **Participation.** 25 points. At the beginning of the course, students will be randomly assigned to small groups of four or five, and each group will be given responsibility for preparing discussion questions for two discussion sessions.

A good discussion question is one that is hard to answer even for someone who has read the assigned text carefully, and one that reasonable people might disagree about how best to answer. If the members of the group themselves disagree about how to answer the question even after discussing it amongst themselves, that is a good sign that it may stimulate a good discussion among the rest of the class.

Students should try to form opinions about the ideas presented in the texts and should try to think of ways of defending their opinions against skeptics. Having formed opinions, one

might then put to the class a question asking whether one's stated reasons for holding these opinions are good reasons, or what other reasons someone could give for holding or rejecting these opinions.

A group should post 2-3 discussion questions to the Canvas discussion forum by 2pm the day before its assigned Zoom session so that people have time to think about the questions in advance. Before posting their questions, the members of a group should meet virtually over Zoom to discuss the material and identify the questions that they find most interesting and worthy of further discussion.

While it will not be graded in any formulaic way, all students are also expected to contribute to all Canvas/Zoom discussions in the ways described above.

- **Midterm and final exams.** 100 points. There will be a midterm exam and a (non-cumulative) final exam. Each is worth 50 points. The exam questions will be similar to the reading questions. The date of the midterm exam is below and the date of the final exam can be found on the Registrar's website.
- **Papers.** 75 points. There are two papers. The first is due April 30, and the second is due May 30. Details of the assignments will be released later in the quarter. If a student gets a score of  $x\%$  on one and  $y\%$  on the other, and  $x \leq y$ , then the student's combined score for the pair of papers will be  $\frac{x}{100}25 + \frac{y}{100}50$  points. For example, a student who gets perfect scores on each would get 75 points, and a student who gets 85% on one paper and 70% on the other paper would get  $\frac{7}{100}25 + \frac{85}{100}50 = 60$  points. So the better paper receives twice as much weight as the other.

A student's fraction of the 200 points will be converted to a final letter grade according to the following (provisional) rule:

90–100% = A or A-,  
80–89% = B-, B, B+,  
70–79% = C-, C, C+,  
60–69% = D,  
 $\leq 59\%$  = F.

This rule is provisional. The goal of the grading policy is that students will receive grades in the A-range if their work is *excellent*, grades in the B-range if their work is *good* but not excellent, grades in the C-range if it is *satisfactory* but not good, and grades of D or F if the work is unsatisfactory.

The university has adopted special grading policies concerning adding/dropping courses and the P/NP option for the Spring 2020 quarter. Please familiarize yourself with them:

<https://senate.ucsd.edu/COVID-19-Academic-Senate-Updates>

If you are considering switching from a letter grade option to the P/NP option, I would recommend that you talk with me and your undergraduate adviser first. You want to be sure that withdrawing isn't the better option and to be sure that sticking with a letter grade isn't the better option.

## Academic honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the university's policies regarding academic integrity. Academic dishonesty will be punished to the maximal extent permitted by university policy. For more information about what constitutes academic dishonesty and the potential repercussions, see the information at the following link:

<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

## Schedule

The schedule of readings can be found below. It specifies what should be read and which video lectures should be watched before each Zoom discussion session. All assigned texts and videos can be found on the Canvas website.

- [1] **Tuesday, March 31.** Read the syllabus. We will discuss the syllabus, the logistics of teaching and learning during a pandemic, and get acquainted with the Zoom features.

### Part 1. Utilitarianism and individual rights

- [2] **Thursday, April 2.** Bentham's utilitarianism

- Assigned reading: Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. I.
- Assigned lecture videos: "The principle of utility"

- [3] **Tuesday, April 7.** Utilitarianism and helping the less fortunate

- Assigned reading: Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. IV; Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality"
- Assigned lecture videos: "Interpersonal comparisons of utility" and "Utilitarian arguments for equality"
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Victoria A.'s group, Donovan's group

- [4] **Thursday, April 9.** Utilitarianism and punishment

- Assigned reading: Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. XIII.
- Assigned lecture video: "Utilitarianism and punishment"
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Dylan Kay's group

- [5] **Tuesday, April 14.** Kant's ethics

- Assigned reading: Kant, *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and Chapter 1.
- Assigned lecture videos: "Moral duties and the moral worth of actions", "The Categorical Imperative: Universal Law Formulation"

- Groups preparing discussion questions: Victoria Bracco's group

[6] **Thursday, April 16.** Kant's ethics, continued

- Assigned reading: *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, chapter 2.
- Assigned lecture videos:
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Christia's group

[7] **Tuesday, April 21.** Kantian ethics and libertarianism

- Assigned reading: Robert Nozick, "The Rationality of Side-Constraints"; Onora O'Neill, "Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems"
- Assigned lecture videos:
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Victoria Bracco's group

[8] **Thursday, April 23.** Midterm exam.

## Part 2. Property, markets, and communism

[9] **Tuesday, April 28.** Marx and Engels on the self-destruction of capitalism

- Assigned reading: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, introduction, §§I.
- Assigned lecture videos:
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Hector's group

[10] **Thursday, April 30.** Historical materialism and communism

- Assigned reading: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, §§II, IV; Marx, Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*; *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. **First paper due.**
- Assigned lecture videos:
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Shayan's group

[11] **Tuesday, May 5.** Socializing land ownership

- Assigned reading: Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, "Introduction: The Problem of Poverty Amid Progress," and "The True Remedy."
- Assigned lecture videos:
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Garrett's group

[12] **Thursday, May 7.** Private property as inefficient monopoly

- Assigned reading: Eric A. Posner and E. Glen Weyl, *Radical Markets*, ch. 1.
- Assigned lecture videos:
- Groups preparing discussion questions: Garret's group

- [13] **Tuesday, May 12.** Combining market efficiency with socialized property
- Assigned reading: Eric A. Posner and E. Glen Weyl, *Radical Markets*, ch. 1, continued.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Donovan’s group, Madison M.’s group

### **Part 3. Freedom and power**

- [14] **Thursday, May 14.** When may society interfere with individual liberty?
- Assigned reading: J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 1 and 2.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Madison M.’s group
- [15] **Tuesday, May 19.** Mill on the harm principle, continued
- Assigned reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 4 and 5.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Dylan Kay’s group
- [16] **Thursday, May 21.** Mill on unequal power relations
- Assigned reading: Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*, chs. 1, 2.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Hector’s group
- [17] **Tuesday, May 26.** Marriage and gender equality
- Assigned reading: Susan Okin, “Vulnerability by Marriage,” in *Justice, Gender, and the Family*.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Shayan’s group
- [18] **Thursday, May 28.** Nietzsche’s moral psychology
- Assigned reading: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface, §§1–6; First Essay, §§1, 2, 4, 7–17.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Victoria A.’s group
- [19] **Tuesday, June 2.** Nietzsche on power, domination, and nihilism
- Assigned reading: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, selections to be determined.
  - Assigned lecture videos:
  - Groups preparing discussion questions: Christia’s group
- [20] **Thursday, June 4.** To be determined.