

Syllabus for Political Science 110C: Kant to Nietzsche

Spring 2023

(Last updated on April 18, 2023)

Instructor:	Sean Ingham	Time:	Tu., Th. 12:30-1:50pm
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Course description

The course examines questions about individual rights and the greater good; property rights, capitalism, and socialism; and freedom and power. It uses influential texts from nineteenth-century political thought—works by Jeremy Bentham, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Henry George, J.S. Mill, Frederick Douglass, and Friedrich Nietzsche—supplemented by more recent literature in political theory and economics that addresses the same topics. The primary pedagogical goals are to expose students to influential ideas in political theory and to improve students’ abilities to think carefully about them.

Course format

The course uses a “flipped classroom” format, in which class time is reserved for discussion instead of lecturing. There are pre-recorded lecture videos that cover the most important points from the assigned readings. Students are expected to watch these and complete the assigned reading before coming to class so that they are ready to participate in more detailed, higher-level discussions of the readings.

- **Readings.** You can find all assigned readings on the Canvas website.
- **Lecture videos.** To access the lecture videos, click on the Media Gallery tab on the Canvas course website. Canvas may not display the videos in the order in which you are to watch them, so consult the syllabus to determine which videos you need to watch before the Zoom session.
- **Reading questions.** You can find reading questions by clicking on the Files tab on the Canvas website. You should try to answer the reading questions as you read the text, prior to coming to class, and use the class time to ask for clarification or discuss your answers to the reading questions. You do not need to write up and submit your answers, but you should be ready to volunteer your answers in class discussions.

Expectations and grading

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

- **Participation.** 5 percent. At the beginning of the course, each student volunteers to prepare discussion questions for two class sessions. Before their assigned session, the student should send their discussion questions to singham@ucsd.edu.

A good discussion question is hard to answer even for someone who has read the assigned text carefully. It is a question that reasonable people might disagree about. The reading questions that are marked with an (E) are examples.

Students should try to form opinions about the ideas presented in the texts and should try to think of reasons they could give for holding their opinions. Having formed opinions, one might then put to the class a question asking whether one's reasons for holding these opinions are good reasons, or what other reasons someone could give for holding or rejecting these opinions.

- **Quizzes.** 20 percent. Quizzes are designed to test whether a student has been completing the reading assignments and attempting to answer the reading questions. They are administered in class.
- **Exams.** 75 percent. There are two midterm exams and a final exam, each worth 25 percent of the grade. The midterm exams will have several questions about the assigned readings, where each question requires several paragraphs to answer. The final exam, on June 12, 11:30am-2:30pm, will be a short essay exam; more details will be released later in the quarter.

Participation and exam answers are assessed qualitatively. Following university policy,¹ the qualitative judgments correspond to grades as follows:

Qualitative judgment	Letter grade	Numerical grade
poor	D	1
fair, but not good	C	2
good, but not excellent	B	3
excellent	A	4

Markedly unsatisfactory performances receive a grade of F, or 0 on the 4-point scale.

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/>

¹<https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/academic-info/grades/system.html>.

Schedule

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

Part 1. Utilitarianism and individual rights

[1] Tuesday, April 4. 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"

[2] Thursday, April 6. Utilitarianism and helping the less fortunate (**first quiz**)

- 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"
- Students preparing discussion questions: Adam, Evan

[3] Tuesday, April 11. Utilitarianism and punishment

- Assigned reading: Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. XIII.
- Assigned lecture video: "Utilitarianism and punishment"
- Students preparing discussion questions: Emma, Aden, Yoo Jin, Teresa, Conrad W, Luke, Micah

[4] Thursday, April 13. Kant's ethics (**second quiz**)

- Assigned reading: Kant, *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface and Chapter 1.
- Assigned lecture videos: "Kant on the moral worth of actions", "The Categorical Imperative: Universal Law Formulation"
- Students preparing discussion questions: Jackson, Nathan, Gavin, Reyana, Tania, Ashley, Paige, Luna

[5] Tuesday, April 18. Kant's ethics, continued

- Assigned reading: *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, chapter 2.
- Assigned lecture videos: "Second formulation of the categorical imperative"
- Students preparing discussion questions: Emily, Joseph, Lily, Gavin, Adam, Lindsay, Emma,

[6] **Thursday, April 20.** Kantian ethics and libertarianism (**third quiz**)

- Assigned reading: Robert Nozick, “The Rationality of Side-Constraints”; Onora O’Neill, “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems”
- Assigned lecture videos: “Side constraints”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Sam, Jackson, Dan, Sheila, Dominic, Gene, Catherine, Yoo Jin

[7] **Tuesday, April 25. First midterm exam**

Part 2. Property, markets, and communism

[8] **Thursday, April 27.** Marx and Engels on the self-destruction of capitalism

- Assigned reading: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, introduction, §§I.
- Assigned lecture videos: “Marx and Engels on capitalism”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Delaney, Tania, Greg, Luna, Malaya, Joseph, Evan, Dominic, Tyler, Artemis, Noah

[9] **Tuesday, May 2.** Historical materialism and communism (**fourth quiz**)

- Assigned reading: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, §§II, IV; Marx, Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*; *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.
- Assigned lecture videos: “Historical materialism”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Emily, Freddy, Sophie, Conrad, Kevin, Artemis, Teresa, Noah

[10] **Thursday, May 4.** Socializing land ownership

- Assigned reading: Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, “Ch. 25: The True Remedy,” “Ch. 26: The Injustice of Private Property in Land,” “Ch. 28: Are Landowners Entitled to Compensation?”, “Ch. 31: Private Property in Land Is Inconsistent with the Best Use of Land”, and “Ch. 32: Securing Equal Rights to Land.”
- Assigned lecture videos: “Property in land”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Lily, Ashley, Malaya, Kevin, Micah, Tae

[11] **Tuesday, May 9.** Private property as inefficient monopoly (**fifth quiz**)

- Assigned reading: Eric A. Posner and E. Glen Weyl, *Radical Markets*, ch. 1, through p. 54.
- Assigned lecture videos: “The Monopoly Problem”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Rayanah, Alexis, Aden, Nikolas

[12] **Thursday, May 11.** Combining market efficiency with socialized property

- Assigned reading: Eric A. Posner and E. Glen Weyl, *Radical Markets*, ch. 1, pp. 55–79.
- Assigned lecture videos: “Common Ownership Self-Assessed Tax”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Teresa, Nikolas

[13] Tuesday, May 16. Second midterm exam

Part 3. Freedom and power

[14] Thursday, May 18. When may society interfere with individual liberty? (sixth quiz)

- Assigned reading: J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, excerpts from chs. 1 and 2.
- Assigned lecture videos: “On Liberty, ch1”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Delaney, Page, Cloe, Dan, Catherine, Nathan, Sam

[15] Tuesday, May 23. Mill on individual liberty, continued

- Assigned reading: Mill, *On Liberty*, excerpts from chs. 4 and 5.
- Optional supplementary reading: Robert M. Simpson, “Dignity, Harm, and Hate Speech”, *Law & Philosophy* 32(6) (2013): 701–28.
- Assigned lecture videos: “Mill on freedom of speech”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Lindsay, Sophie, Ethan

[16] Thursday, May 25. Mill on unequal power relations

- Assigned reading: Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*, chs. 1, 2.
- Assigned lecture videos: “Mill on the subjection of women”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Sheila, Cloe,

[17] Tuesday, May 30. Freedom as non-domination (seventh quiz)

- Assigned reading: Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, ch. 17 (“The Last Flogging”), and “Inhumanity of Slavery” (available at <https://www.gutenberg.org>); additional readings tbd.
- Assigned lecture videos: “Freedom, interference, and domination”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Gene, Luke, Alexis,

[18] Thursday, June 1. Nietzsche’s moral psychology

- Assigned reading: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Preface, §§1–6; First Essay, §§1, 2, 4, 7–17.
- Assigned lecture videos: “*Ressentiment* and moral judgments”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Greg, Freddy, Aylin, Ethan

[19] Tuesday, June 6. Nietzsche on power, domination, and nihilism (eighth quiz)

- Assigned reading: Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Second Essay, §§4–14, 16–24.

- Assigned lecture videos: “Nihilism and the will to power”
- Students preparing discussion questions: Noah, Aylin

[20] **Thursday, June 8.** Racism in the history of political thought.

- Assigned reading: Robert Bernasconi, “Nietzsche as a Philosopher of Racialized Breeding” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race*, ed. Naomi Zack (Oxford University Press, 2017).
- Students preparing discussion questions: Tyler, Tae