Syllabus for Political Science 110K:
Liberty and Equality

Spring 2021
(First updated on January 11, 2022)

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Course description

The course considers questions about the concepts of freedom and equality and their roles in political argument. What individual freedoms ought society to recognize as important and worthy of protection? What does it mean to be free or unfree anyway? What kind of equality is necessary in a just society? Equality of basic rights and freedoms only, or also equality of opportunities for attaining wealth, positions of power, and other goods? What of inequalities in wealth and income that arise under conditions of equal opportunity? Other topics include freedom of speech, markets and economic liberties, and racial injustice. The primary pedagogical goals are to expose students to influential ideas in political theory and to improve students’ abilities to think and write clearly about them.

Zoom meetings for Jan. 4-Jan. 13

Per university policy we will be meeting remotely during the first two weeks of the quarter. Use the following link to register for the Zoom meeting:

[Zoom link]

After registering you will receive an email with a link for joining the meeting.

Expectations and grading

Class discussion

Neither attendance nor participation are graded, although they are strongly encouraged. If you attend class, you are expected to participate and should be ready to discuss the assigned reading. Our goal for each meeting is to improve our understanding of the ideas covered in the readings, explore their implications, test them against objections, and work out our own opinions about them on the basis of reasons and arguments. This is a collaborative exercise that works best when everyone participates. You can participate by asking questions about the material, attempting to answer questions that others have posed, offering arguments or engaging with the arguments other
students have made. To encourage equal participation of all participants, I may occasionally call on you.

The expectation is that we will sometimes disagree with each other, and, when we do, we will try to learn from those disagreements through respectful but critical engagement with each other’s ideas. In the presence of disagreement, everyone should try to remain open to the possibility that they are wrong, or that their views are poorly reasoned, and use the disagreement as an occasion to explore the reasons for and against different views.

Graded assignments

Your final grade reflects your performance on the following assignments:

- **Short papers (30 points; 5 points each).** There are six extremely short “papers”—ranging from four to twelve sentences each—that you must submit during the quarter.
  - A four-sentence paper is due January 13 (5 points)
  - An eight-sentence paper is due January 15 (5 points)
  - During the remainder of the quarter, you should submit three additional eight-sentence papers (5 points each), on topics of your choosing.
  - A twelve-sentence paper is due February 15 (5 points); a second twelve-sentence paper is due February 24 (ungraded). The second of these should be the skeleton of your final paper. You will exchange it with a peer as part of the peer editing assignment.

- **Peer editing (10 points).** You will exchange twelve-sentence papers with one of the other students in the class. You will submit an edited copy of your partner’s paper together with your “referee report” to your partner and to me. This submission is due March 1.

- **Final paper (30 points).** An essay of 1200-1600 words is due March 10. It should be an extension of the second twelve-sentence paper you submit on February 24.

- **Midterm exam (10 points).** The midterm exam is on Feb. 3. More information about its format will be shared later in the quarter.

- **Final exam (20 points).** The final exam will be scheduled according to the university’s schedule of final examinations. It is cumulative. More information about its format will be shared later in the quarter.

Late submissions

If a paper is submitted after the deadline, it receives a penalty of one third of a letter grade for each of the days that have passed since the due date: thus A instead of A+ (or B instead of a B+) if it is one day late, B+ instead of a A- (or B- instead of a B) if it is two days late, and so on.

If circumstances beyond your control will prevent you from submitting a paper by the due date, you must contact me as soon as you become aware of this fact. 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.
A student’s fraction of the 100 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
- ≤ 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.

**Academic integrity**

Please familiarize yourself with the university’s policies regarding academic integrity. For general information about what constitutes academic dishonesty and the potential repercussions, see the information at the following link:

https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/

I will provide specific information about the expectations for the writing assignments and the exams, and what would constitute violations of academic integrity in the context of those assignments, via email and course documents later in the quarter. You are responsible for knowing university policy and for reading all course-related email and documents that explain the expectations for assignments and exams. Ignorance of this information or of general university policy does not absolve students of culpability for violations of academic integrity.

**Resources**

Resources to help you improve your writing:

- UCSD’s Writing Hub: www.writinghub.ucsd.edu

**Schedule**

1. Jan. 4. Justice as fairness

- *(First) four-sentence paper due.*


- *(First) eight-sentence paper due.* *(First) four-sentence paper due.*


- *(First) eight-sentence paper due.*

[8] Jan. 27. Freedom and money


- *(First) twelve-sentence paper due.*

- Pettit, *Republicanism*, ch. 4.


- Anderson, “Freedom and Equality”


- (Second) twelve-sentence paper due.


- Peer review assignment due.

[18] Mar. 3. Reparations for slavery


- Anderson, *Imperative of Integration*, ch. 4, 6


- Anderson, *Imperative of Integration*, chs. 7, 9