

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
The City University of New York

CURRICULUM DATA TRANSMITTAL SHEET

DEPARTMENT History, Philosophy & Political Science DATE 3/11/15

Title of Course or Degree: Political Philosophy

Change(s) Initiated: (Please check)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closing of Degree              | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Degree or Certificate Requirements         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closing of Certificate         | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Degree Requirements (adding concentration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Certificate Proposal       | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Pre/Co-Requisite                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Degree Proposal            | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Course Designation                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Course                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Course Description                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New 82 Course       | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Course Titles, Numbers, Credits &/or Hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Course             | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Academic Policy                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe): _____ |   |

PLEASE ATTACH PERTINENT MATERIAL TO ILLUSTRATE AND EXPLAIN ALL CHANGES

I. DEPARTMENTAL ACTION

Action by Department and/or Departmental Committee, if required:

Date approved 3/12/15 Signature, Committee Chairperson: MCB

Signature, Department Chairperson: Michael G. Bur

II. PROVOST ACTION

Provost to act within 30 days of receipt and forward to College-wide Curriculum Committee exercising one of the following options:

- A. Approved  B. Returned to department with comments

Recommendations (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature, Provost: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

III. CURRICULUM SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Approved  B. Tabled  (no action will be taken by Curriculum Committee)

Recommendations (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature, Sub-Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

IV. COLLEGE-WIDE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee to act within 30 days of receipt, exercising one of the following options:

- A. Approved  (forwarded to Steering Committee)  
B. Tabled  (Department notified)  
C. Not Approved  (Department notified)

Signature, Chairperson of Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
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**PRESENTATION OF CURRICULUM PROPOSALS**

- 1. Philosophy 8200: Political Philosophy**
- 2. This course meets distribution Requirements for Group B.**
- 3. This course should transfer as:** an elective philosophy course. Political Philosophy is an elective philosophy course at John Jay College (Phi 203), Brooklyn College (Phi 3703), and at many other colleges and universities. If it becomes a permanent course offering, this course will meet the Pathways requirements for the Flexible Common Core's areas of Individual and Society and World Cultures and Global Issues.
- 4. Bulletin Description of Course:** An examination of foundational concepts and problems of political philosophy: the individual, society, and the state; sovereignty and the law; legitimization of authority and political power; freedom and servitude; wealth and poverty; alienation and autonomy.
- 5. Number of Weekly Class Hours: 3**
- 6. NUMBER OF CREDITS: 3**
- 7. COURSE PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES: None**
- 8. BRIEF RATIONALE TO JUSTIFY PROPOSED COURSE TO INCLUDE:**
  - A. ENROLLMENT SUMMARIES, IF PREVIOUSLY OFFERED AS AN 82: NA**
  - B. PROJECTED ENROLLMENT:** unknown, but it should be similar to the enrollment for a comparable ethics course such as, Phi 74 Ethics: A Study of Ethical Problems.
  - C. CLASS LIMITS: NA**
  - D. FREQUENCY COURSE IS LIKELY TO BE OFFERED:** Twice a year, Fall and Spring. Depending on student and faculty interest, the course may be offered in the Winter and Summer Modules as well.
  - E. ROLE OF COURSE IN DEPARTMENT'S CURRICULUM AND COLLEGE'S MISSION:** This course serves as an introduction to the basic concepts and problems of political philosophy and as a means to be better prepared in the practice of political life.

As a central offering in the liberal arts, this course provides students with a broad and solid theoretical grasp of political problems. As a result, students who take the course will be better positioned to make educated and adequate choices in the innumerable political situations of everyday life. The course relies on conceptual analysis, reading and interpreting texts, and writing clearly and effectively. The result is an enhanced ability to think critically, understand the sophisticated and nuanced political discourse, and intervene in it for the sake of civic engagement and communal life.

9. LIST OF COURSES, IF ANY, TO BE WITHDRAWN WHEN COURSE(S) IS (ARE) ADOPTED: None
10. IF COURSE IS AN INTERNSHIP OR INDEPENDENT STUDY OR THE LIKE, PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION AS TO HOW THE STUDENTS WILL EARN THE CREDITS AWARDED. THE CREDITS AWARDED SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH STUDENTS' EFFORTS REQUIRED IN A TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM SETTING: NA
11. PROPOSED TEXT BOOK(S) AND/OR OTHER REQUIRED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL(S): At the discretion of the individual instructor, any text or collection of texts that emphasizes primary material as well as secondary sources relating to political philosophy can be used.

Recommended Texts:

- Guignon, Charles, ed., *The Good Life*. Hackett Publishing, 1999. ISBN: 978-0-87220-438-6. [This volume is an excellent collection of Western and non-Western primary sources in political philosophy from its emergence up to our times.]
- Strauss, Leo and Joseph Cropsey, eds. 1987. *History of Political Philosophy*, third edition. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Risse, Mathias. 2012. *Global Political Philosophy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Miller, David. 2003. *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zwolinski, Matt. 2009. *Arguing about Political Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.

12. REQUIRED COURSE FOR MAJORS AND/OR AREA OF CONCENTRATION? No

13. IF OPEN ONLY TO SELECTED STUDENTS (specify): NA

14. EXPLAIN WHAT STUDENTS WILL KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO UPON COMPLETION OF COURSE:  
Students will be able to analyze political discourse, understand political situations, and participate in political practice in ways that are both critical and innovative. They will acquire a more adequate sense of the nature of political society and the idea of justice.

To meet these objectives, we will focus on the following specific goals and outcomes.

Learning Goals:

The purpose of this course is to:

1. Expose students to the basic concepts, questions, and problems of political philosophy with an emphasis on the application of classic theories (including the traditions originating with Plato, Aristotle, and Hobbes) to the significant political issues that arise in contemporary social, political, and everyday life. These issues include the relationship of the individual to society and the state, authority and autonomy, sovereignty and (bare) life, the defense of human rights, freedom, identity and difference, poverty, inequality, alienation, and the use and abuse of ideology.
2. Foster the skill needed to read and critically interpret texts.
3. Foster the skills needed to analyze arguments.
4. Foster the skill needed to write an essay explaining and defending a position.
5. Enable students to locate and/or develop their own position in relation to important political issues.
6. Foster tolerance toward a variety of perspectives and toward difference.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking this course, students will learn or be able to do the following:

1. Read and comprehend source texts.
2. Identify and understand key vocabulary terms and concepts.
3. Identify and analyze arguments.
4. Explain and defend their positions on political issues.
5. Write more clearly, critically, and effectively.

**15. METHODS OF TEACHING:** Lectures based on assigned readings, using a close reading of the text and the Socratic method to engage students. The lectures will be complemented by in-class writing assignments, group studies and presentations, online video contents, and blackboard tests and activities.

**16. ASSIGNMENTS TO STUDENTS:** Reading assignments will be combined with low stakes and high stakes writing assignments. These may include:

- Summaries of readings
- Outlines of the arguments presented
- Assessments such as
  - “One Minute Summaries”
  - Identification of the “Muddiest Point,” and
  - “Knowledge Mapping” will be used where appropriate.
- Periodic participation in online discussion forums related to case studies.

**17. DESCRIBE METHOD OF EVALUATING LEARNING SPECIFIED IN #15:** Strategies (activities, tools, instruments of measurement) to be used in demonstrating that students’ learning has been achieved will include:

- Classroom discussion: 10%
- In-class (“low-stakes”) writing assignments: 10%
- Group discussion and presentations: 10%
- Take-home writing assignments: 10%
- Examinations (essay and objective/factual): 30%
- Short papers: 30%

**18. TOPICAL COURSE OUTLINE (WHICH SHOULD BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE REGARDING TOPICS COVERED, LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS):**

**1. Why Study Political Philosophy?**

*Student learning objectives:*

- *Identify the reason why studying political philosophy is important;*
- *Explain the nature and meaning of political philosophy;*
- *Explain the difference between political norms and other norms;*
- *Clarify the difference between politics and ethics;*
- *Describe the distinction between public and private;*
- *Distinguish between the personal and the political;*
- *Identify political issues within a case description.*

**2. Political Theory**

*Student learning objectives:*

- *Understand the basic categories and concepts of political theory;*
- *Define the notion of the autonomy of the political sphere;*
- *Explain the political notion of sovereignty;*
- *Explain the relation between the political and theological notions of sovereignty;*
- *Describe the relation between politics and the law as command;*

- Clarify major challenges to the theory of sovereignty;
- Explain the difference between the state of nature and the political state;
- Understand Aristotle's notion that the human being is a political animal by nature;
- Explain the relation between the concepts of politics and life;
- Explain the relation between (bare) life and the good life.

### **3. The Individual, Society, and the State**

*Student learning objectives:*

- Understand the link between the individual and society;
- Describe the difference between individuality and individualism;
- Define the notion of the social (or political) individual;
- Understand and describe the relationship between the Self and the Others;
- Describe the relationship between the Self and the World;
- Explain the origin of the state;
- Describe the position of the individual within the state;
- Understand the difference between society and the state.

### **4. Legitimization of Authority and Political Power**

*Student learning objectives:*

- Understand the relationship between violence and the law;
- Understand the source of authority and political power;
- Describe the difference between power as potency and power as authority;
- Understand the difference between the use and abuse of power;
- Define the notion of power as domination;
- Describe ways through which power can be legitimated;
- Explain the difference between legitimate and illegitimate use of power;
- Integrate authority with personal autonomy and freedom.

### **5. Sovereignty and the Law**

*Student learning objectives:*

- Understand the relationship between sovereignty and the law;
- Distinguish between the law-making and law-preserving activity;
- Describe the position and role of the sovereign within the framing of the law;
- Explain the difference between sovereign power and bare life;
- Define the right of the sovereign;
- Describe a framework for evaluating the sovereign decision;
- Describe the relationship between sovereignty and domination.

### **6. Freedom and Servitude (Unfreedom)**

*Student learning objectives:*

- Define the concepts of freedom;
- Describe the relationship among freedom, right, and power;
- Distinguish between positive and negative freedom;
- Explain the relationship between freedom and responsibility;
- Describe the difference between freedom and servitude;
- Understand the causes of servitude;
- Illustrate ways in which servitude turns to resistance and rebellion;
- Explain the difference between servile and free work;
- Explain the difference between service and care;
- Describe the relationship between servitude and dignity.

## **7. Wealth and Poverty**

*Student learning objectives:*

- *Understand the causes of wealth;*
- *Understand the causes of poverty;*
- *Explain the relationship between wealth and poverty;*
- *Define the concepts of labor and capital;*
- *Distinguish between sustainable and unsustainable production;*
- *Distinguish between development and growth;*
- *Identify social classes;*
- *Describe a framework for evaluating the pros and cons of growth and degrowth;*
- *Understand the meaning of uneven distribution of wealth on a global scale.*

## **8. Alienation and Autonomy**

*Student learning objectives:*

- *Understand the place of the individual in society;*
- *Understand the meaning of alienation as estrangement and homelessness;*
- *Explore the positive and negative sides of alienation;*
- *Understand the passage from alienation to autonomy;*
- *Explain autonomy as the nonsovereign establishment of the self;*
- *Define the limits of autonomy (and independence);*
- *Explain the concept of interdependence;*
- *Define the relationship between alienation and anxiety;*
- *Describe ways in which the modality of interdependence (being-with-others) can make sense of one's original anxiety.*

## **9. Identity and Difference**

*Student learning objectives:*

- *Understand the relationship between identity and difference;*
- *Explore and analyze categories of political identity; for instance, ethnic, religious, racial, sexual, national identities.*
- *Consider Simone de Beauvoir's statement that "no one is born a woman; one becomes a woman," and extend and apply it to other forms of identities;*
- *Explain the political basis of one's sense of identity;*
- *Understand the ideology inherent in the construction of identities;*
- *Explain the difference between a positive and negative sense of difference.*

## **10. Human Rights**

*Student learning objectives:*

- *Understand the concept of human rights;*
- *Describe the difference between human rights and other types of rights;*
- *Understand the meaning of international law and its difference from other types of law;*
- *Explain the place of human rights within international law;*
- *Describe the power and limits of the politics of human rights;*
- *Give illustrations of situations in which human rights are the last resort for the maintenance of human dignity;*
- *Define the politics of poverty, war, and genocide and the importance of institutions for the defense of human rights.*

## **11. Ideology: Political Realism and Utopia**

*Student learning objectives:*

- Understand various forms of political coercion;
- Explore the notions of hegemony, domination, and consensus;
- Explain the political state in terms of security and coercion;
- Describe the notions of the enemy and of war;
- Explore the concept of concrete utopia;
- Describe the theoretical possibility of a better and more just world.

## 12. Contemporary Problems in Political Philosophy

*Student learning objectives:*

- Identify and explore various issues in contemporary political philosophy (e.g., gender, race, discrimination, migration, and globalization).
- Understand the main movements and schools of thought in contemporary political philosophy (e.g., feminism, postcolonial studies, gender studies, disability studies, nationalism, anarchism, and cosmopolitanism).
- Give illustrations of the way in which the new arising issues are changing the political landscape at the local and global level.

## 19. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCE MATERIALS:

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- Davis, Angela. 2003. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.
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**Please contact your Department Chairperson or Associate Dean Stanley Bazile at the Office of Academic Affairs x5328, if you require any assistance completing a course proposal according to this format. Copies of this format are available electronically.**