

Power, Justice and Freedom (Online)

POL 1150-80

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Department of Political Science

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William Paterson University

Course Description

This course is designed to expose you to the major theories, problems, and questions that give shape to human social and political life and it is an introduction to these themes through the lens of political philosophy. The questions of power, of justice, and of freedom are the core themes that permeate the human experience throughout history. Our time is no exception, but despite this, we see our society increasingly affected by a lack of critical consciousness and awareness about these most basic, most essential human goods.

With this in mind, this class will explore texts from various traditions and ideological positions. We will question, debate, and seek to challenge our own ingrained ideas and preconceptions about how the world works, what it ought to achieve, and how to aid in its transformation. As a result, this class rests on certain philosophical perspectives and themes that will also expose you to the basic ways of thinking in ethical and political philosophy. As such, it fulfills the core curriculum requirement of Philosophical Perspectives.

Course Requirements

There will be a reading scheduled for each day of the course except for weekends and New Year's Day. There will be written assignments throughout the course. These will be short (no less than 500 words each) and ask you to summarize the argument of the reading. In addition, there will be a final paper asking you to probe the relationship between power, justice, and freedom based on the readings we do throughout the course. The final paper will be 7-8 pages in length and require you to cite texts from our readings. ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE HANDED IN ACCORDING TO THE ASSIGNED DUE DATES. NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED. Each essay is due within 24 hours after the reading has been assigned. So, if a reading is assigned on the December 26th, your 500 word summary will be due by 12 midnight on the 27th, and the summary for the reading assigned on the 27th will be due by midnight on the 28th, and so on. The following is the list of due dates for each reading.

summary 1 - 12/27 (midnight)

summary 2 - 12/28 (midnight)

summary 3 - 12/31 (midnight)

summary 4 - 1/2 (midnight)

summary 5 - 1/3 (midnight)

summary 6 - 1/4 (midnight)

summary 7 - 1/7 (midnight)

summary 8 - 1/8 (midnight)

summary 9 - 1/9 (midnight)

Final Paper - 1/11 (midnight)

It is important that you keep to the schedule since this course is brief and we have much material to cover. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Part of your grade is determined by your ability to focus and follow the rules of the course.

Plagiarism

There is no simpler way to say this: any work that you hand in must be your own. If not, you will automatically fail the class and you will be reported to the Dean. It's not worth it—do your own work.

What is plagiarism? According to the Undergraduate Catalog of William Paterson University, it defines plagiarism as "the copying from a book, article, notebook, video, or other source material, whether published or unpublished, without proper credit through the use of quotation marks, footnotes, and other customary means of identifying sources, or passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, programs, and experiments of another, whether or not such actions are intentional or unintentional." It further describes that "plagiarism will also include submitting, without the consent of the professor, an assignment already tendered for academic credit in another course." (Undergraduate Catalog, William Paterson University, 2002)

Schedule of Readings

QUESTION ONE: WHAT IS POWER?

12/26 - Reading 1: Karl Marx: The Communist Manifesto

12/27 - Reading 2: Michel Foucault: Discipline and Punish

12/30 - Reading 4: Hannah Arendt: On Violence

QUESTION TWO: WHAT IS JUSTICE?

12/31 - Reading 5: John Rawls: Justice as Fairness: A Restatement

1/2 - Reading 6: John Dewey: The Public and its Problems

1/3 - Reading 7: G.A. Cohen: Why Socialism?

QUESTION THREE: WHAT IS FREEDOM?

1/6 - Reading 8: Immanuel Kant: "What is Enlightenment?"

1/7 - Reading 9: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

1/8 - Reading 10: Herbert Marcuse: An Essay on Liberation

1/11: Final Paper Due