Introduction to Politics, Philosophy, and Economics
PPE 2200F

September-December 2020

Instructors: D. Klimchuk, C. Jones, and A. Slivinski

Office Hours:

Our office hours will be held remotely by Zoom this year. Please contact whomever you’d like to meet by e-mail to schedule a particular time to meet.

Klimchuk: Thursdays 10-12 (ET), or by appointment, klimchuk@uwo.ca
Jones: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 (ET), or by appointment, cjones@uwo.ca
Slivinski: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 (ET), or by appointment, aslivins@uwo.ca

Class Meetings: Monday 11:30-1:30 (ET) & Wednesday 12:30-1:30 (ET), via Zoom

Description of the course: This course is designed to get you to thinking and writing carefully about a number of social issues, while also introducing you to the ways in which the three disciplines approach them. For each issue you will be expected to read the assigned readings on that issue written by practitioners of one or more of those disciplines, to come to class prepared to discuss those readings, and then to write essays in which you put the ideas discussed to use.

Text: There is no textbook. All readings will be available on the course OWL site.

Course requirements and evaluation

1. Three 1,500 word essays, each counting for 20% of your course mark. Instructions for each paper will be given to you by each of the three instructors during their section of the course, and posted on OWL. They are due on the following dates: October 5, November 11, December 9.

You must upload an e-copy of your essay into OWL by the start of class that day. Papers handed in late are penalized at the rate of 2%/day late, calculated from this time. We will use turnitin.com in this course.

2. A take-home final exam consisting of three essay questions, to be scheduled by the Registrar, will make up the other 40% of your final mark.

Participation

While there is no formal participation grade in the mark, please understand that you are expected to participate in discussions of the readings and topics. While a second-year course, its format and size allow us to run it more like an upper-year seminar, and we do. There will be a forum open on the course OWL page to discuss the material, and we encourage you to do so ahead of
class meetings. This will, among other things, give us some notice on what you find interesting, wrong, perplexing, and so on, which will be helpful in preparing our classes.

**A note on readings**

We’d like to strongly encourage you to do the readings before class, even if in some particular cases they seem challenging. This is especially (but not only) true for material you’ve not come across before. If you wait until class, you will lose an opportunity you will never be able to regain, namely reading the texts without a particular interpretation in mind. After class you won’t be able to do that. It will be like reading the novel after seeing the movie: you can’t help but picture the screenwriter’s and director’s interpretations. Furthermore, in our experience, students who come to the material without preconceptions often have novel insights into it. So by reading first you may be bringing something extra to the class’s collective understanding of the text.

**Schedule of topics**

**Philosophy** (Klimchuk; Sept 9-Oct 5)

**Weeks 1 and 2: Political Authority**

Wed Sept 9    Plato, *Crito*

Mon Sept 14   Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Bk I, chs 1-6
              Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Bk. II, ch 2, paras 4, 6, 7; ch 7, paras 95-101, 119-22

Wed Sept 16   Hume, “Of the Original Contract”

Mon Sept 21   Simmons, “The Principle of Fair Play”

**Weeks 3 and 4: Property**


Mon Sept 28   Schmidtz, “The Institution of Property”
              Hume, handout on convention
              Grotius, *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, pp. 315-21


Mon Oct 5     **Common topic: Poverty**
              Thomas Paine, “Agrarian Justice”
              Locke, *Two Treatise of Government*, Bk. I, ch. 4, para 42.
              Essert, “Property and Homelessness”
Politics (Jones: Oct 7-Nov 11)

Week 5: Markets

Wed Oct 7


Adam Smith, ‘Of the Expences of the Sovereign or Commonwealth’, from An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, 1776, Book V, Chapter I, Parts I, II, and III (Articles 1 and 2), and Conclusion, excerpt.


Mon Oct 12: Thanksgiving: No class today

Wed Oct 14

Karl Marx, Capital, Volume 1, 1867, excerpt on appearance and reality.


Week 6: Justice

Mon Oct 19


Wed Oct 21

G. A. Cohen, If You’re an Egalitarian, How Come You’re So Rich?, Chapters 8-10 (on Rawls).

Week 7: Justice

Mon Oct 26


Wed Oct 28 Common Topic: Poverty


Reading Week: Nov 2-8

Week 8: Equality

Mon Nov 9


Wed Nov 11


Economics (Slivinski; Nov 16-Dec 9)

Weeks 9-10 Rational Choice: Crime, Voting and Altruism


Program profile of the Minneapolis HotSpots experiment, National Institute of Justice


**Week 11: Common Topic: Poverty**

Atkinson, A, 2015, “Inequality – what can be done?” *LSE International Inequalities Institute Working paper 2*


**Week 12: Markets on the Margins**

**Sex:**


**Drugs:**


**Rock’n’roll:**
