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PHL 502.01: Topics in Value Theory - Justice and the Good Society

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Justice and the Good Society

(1) INTENT OF THE COURSE

The intent of the course is to have students see (1) how Rawls has set the terms of the contemporary discussions of social justice, (2) how Sandel has set Rawls's theory in the context of complementary and competing theories, and (3) how Dreyfus and Kelly have opened a discussion of how the framework of the good society, set out by theories of justice, can be given substantial normative content.

(2) TEXTS

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness*.

Sandel, *Justice*.

Dreyfus and Kelly, *All Things Shining*.

We will spend four weeks each on Rawls and Sandel and seven on Dreyfus and Kelly.

(3) REQUIREMENTS

a. Classroom Participation (one third of course grade)

It will be your obligation to show through participation in the classroom discussion that you are keeping up with the reading assignments and are in command of the material presented in class. In particular, everyone is to take careful notes and, when called on, to present, on the basis of those notes, a ten-minute summary of the preceding session's main points. It will be my obligation to make everyone feel welcome and encouraged to participate.

b. In-Class Examinations (one third of course grade)

There will be three in-class examinations on October 4, November 8, and on the day of the final, December 14, at 10:10 am. Each exam will count for a ninth of the course grade and consist of four course content questions and one essay question on the course material of the preceding third of the semester.

c. Term Paper (one third of course grade)

The term paper has to define and discuss a topic of personal and general significance in the areas of political, social, or cultural ethics. I will present sample topics, and students are then invited to outline a topic of their own. I will be glad to assist in the selection and formulation of the topic.

The length of the paper should be about 4000 words (16 pp.). The emphasis has to be on original reflection. But there also has to be consideration of some pieces of scholarship: one or more books, chapters of a book, or articles.

The papers must be double-spaced, paginated, paper-clipped, the notes at the end of the paper; no outline or bibliography. Follow any of the standard styles and formats.

Outline due: November 3.

Paper due: December 6.

(5) OFFICE HOURS

TWR, 11:00-11:30 and by appointment in LA 149.

Phone and messages: 243-2792

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If you have a disability, please let me know so that we can provide accommodations.