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Spring 2-1-2001

PHIL 201.01: Political Ethics

Richard E. Walton

University of Montana - Missoula

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Walton, Richard E., "PHIL 201.01: Political Ethics" (2001). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 6449.
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Phil. 201: Political Ethics
Spring 2001
Prof. Walton

SYLLABUS

Philosophy 201 is the companion course to Philosophy 200, which introduces students to classical ethical theory. Philosophy 201 is *not* a subsequent course in ethics for which Philosophy 200 is prerequisite; i.e., 200 and 201 do not constitute a course series. Philosophy 201 considers ethical issues from the point of view of the role of the individual considered as a citizen, while Philosophy 200 pays no particular attention to citizenship. The general aims of the two courses are the same. Thus, the subject matter of the two courses overlaps somewhat.

The fundamental problem to be considered in this course is that of the nature of *justice* and the characteristics of the political order in which it may be established. Our emphasis will be on the American political tradition.

TEXTS:

The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution of the United States of America (Cato).

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. M. Ostwald) (LLA).

J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, etc. (LLA).

Jose Ortega Y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (trans. anon.) (Norton).

REQUIREMENTS:

The first requirement for the course is that students carefully read all assignments from the texts, and come to class fully prepared to discuss them.

There will be a quiz given most weeks of the semester following the first, and possibly excepting the last week of classes. These quizzes will cover the material of the lectures of that week, and that of prior weeks as performance indicates such repetition to be advisable. Each quiz will include at least one brief essay topic. If it appears to be appropriate, a paper assignment will be made about the tenth week of the semester. There will be a comprehensive final examination required of all students.

See the attached *Academic Policies* (part of the syllabus) for an explanation of grading standards and procedures.

READINGS:

TEXT	WEEK
<i>D.I., Constitution</i>	I-III
<i>On Liberty</i>	IV-V
<i>Judgment at Nuremburg</i> (film)	V
<i>The Revolt of the Masses</i>	VI-VIII
<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bks. I-IV	IX-XI
<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Bks. V, VIII-IX	XII-XIV

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 18, 8:00-10:00

ACADEMIC POLICIES

1.0 ASSIGNMENT OF GRADES:

✓ Course grades will be assigned on the basis of a statistical analysis of the total class performance, adjusted by the instructor's judgment. In other words, grading will basically be "on a curve," except that the curve will be shifted up or down according to how the class compares to previous classes in the same course. Thus, there are no simple absolute grading standards ("90 percent or better, for an 'A,'" etc.); however, experience indicates that you are unlikely to be awarded a grade higher than 'D' unless you earn at least 50% of the available points for the term.

Grades on individual examinations or writing assignments will be assigned as objectively and accurately as possible; there is always some degree of variation or "error," however. This variation will be taken into account when course grades are determined. Grading accuracy estimates will often be announced when tests and papers are returned. These may be recorded in the gradebook, along with all other descriptive information for the assignment (total points possible, average score, etc.). A difference of a half-dozen points, or so, in the semester total will therefore not by itself usually make a difference in your final grade for the course.

When assigning final grades, improvement over the period of the term will be taken into account. Effort, in and of itself, will *not* be taken into account.

✓ Students registered under the Pass/No Pass option must qualify for a grade of 'C', or better, to earn a 'P'. Courses without prerequisites should not be taken Pass/No Pass.

Incompletes will be assigned only as University policy intends. I will not give anyone an incomplete simply as a means of avoiding an unsatisfactory mark.

✓ A note on dropping this course: You may drop by phone [until Feb. 16], or merely by filing a **drop slip** with the Registrar's Office anytime before the published drop deadline [March 12]. Drop slips require my signature; the Department secretary may sign for me should I be unavailable. *I will approve a petition to drop after the latter deadline only if the reason for seeking to drop is something beyond the student's control, and it implies that this particular course, and not some other, must be dropped. Poor performance—or relatively poor performance—is not such a reason.* It is not possible to drop a course by any means after the last week of classes.

2.0 TIMELINESS:

Examinations must be taken when given unless satisfactory, *prior* arrangements have been made with me. Permission to take an examination at an alternate time will ordinarily be granted only for reasons of health, family emergency, participation in a University sponsored event away from campus, or similar factors generally beyond the student's control. You may not postpone examinations because you are not prepared to take them, or otherwise find it inconvenient. University policy forbids faculty from rescheduling finals.

Written work must be presented on the announced due date. *Papers will be accepted without penalty for one calendar day following the due date*; thereafter, they will be marked down one grade ('B'=> 'C', etc.) for tardiness. No papers will be accepted after the marked papers have been returned to the class. Exceptions to these rules will be made under the same conditions as those for examinations.

3.0 CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled class meetings: see the University attendance policy. You should realize that class attendance and careful attention to the lectures are necessary conditions for achieving the ends at which the course aims. Therefore, attendance will be checked and unexcused absences noted. Since examinations and other written work are only samples of your knowledge of the course material, attendance will be taken into account when assigning final grades. Course grades may be reduced for excessive absence. Students who are absent without excuse for a week's worth of classes (e.g., 3 absences in a course meeting MWF), or more, certainly are in jeopardy of having their course grade reduced.

4.0 PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Students should read the plagiarism warning in the *University Catalog*. I will strictly enforce the University's rule against plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism or cheating on a minor assignment will be punished by a grade of 'O' on that assignment; these offenses on a major assignment will earn the transgressor an 'F' in the course and a memorandum to the Dean of Students. For purposes of this provision two minor offenses will be treated as equivalent to one major one.

5.0 A NOTE ON CLASSROOM COURTESY:

✓ Classes begin at 10 minutes past the hour. Students are expected to be seated by that time and to remain seated until the class is dismissed. If you must leave before the class ends because of a medical appointment, or similar commitment, notify me before class begins and sit in the back row near the door. *Students who leave without providing such notice and have not suddenly taken ill will be expected to file a drop form and not to return.*