

**Lingnan University**  
**Department of Philosophy**

<b>Course Title</b>	: Social and Political Philosophy
<b>Course Code</b>	: PHI3203
<b>Recommended Study Year</b>	: 1-4 Years
<b>No. of Credits/Term</b>	: 3
<b>Mode of Tuition</b>	: Sectional approach
<b>Class Contact Hours</b>	: 3 hours Lecture per week
<b>Category in Major Programme</b>	: Free Elective
<b>Prerequisite(s)</b>	: N/A
<b>Co-requisite(s)</b>	: N/A
<b>Exclusion(s)</b>	: N/A
<b>Exemption Requirement(s)</b>	: N/A

**Brief Course Description**

This course is concerned with the fundamental issues and questions that surround the individual, community, public life and the manner in which society is structured. The course examines questions surrounding the individual and his/her relation to society and the state.

**Aims**

To enable the students to formulate reasoned political judgments on problems pertaining to immediate or wider social and political concerns.

**Learning Outcomes**

The course is designed to equip the student to:

1. Be able to recognize commonly held criteria for judging social and political affairs
2. Demonstrate an ability to identify aspects of government policy and legislation
3. Be able to articulate their opinions clearly on topics such as liberty, democracy, and justice
4. Demonstrate an ability to argue about the above-mentioned issues with discipline and rigor.

**Indicative Content**

Plato's *Republic* and the idea of utopia

Advancing the public good;

The idea of the best outcome

On the search for a theory of justice

Liberalism and its critics

Democracy and the rule of law

Law, society and the individual conscience

Negative, positive and republican conceptions of liberty

**Teaching Method**

Lecture and class discussion

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes**

Students' progress toward the desired learning outcomes will be assessed as follows:

1. Students will take a final examination where they will be able to properly identify specific social and political issues. Students will also be able argue a position on a selected question topic and then move from their premises to conclusion through reasoned arguments. Refers to Learning Outcomes 1-4.

2. Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussion, in terms of contributing questions and observations in both lecture, or small group discussions. Refers to Learning Outcomes 1-4
3. Students will write an academic paper which will be on a selected topic within the discipline of social and political philosophy. Refers to Learning Outcomes 1-4
4. As a voluntary optional activity, students may opt to volunteer for a service learning component. In the service learning component, students will spend two hours each week (30 contact hours) during the academic semester at a pre-selected service learning agency within the community. They shall also keep regular entries in a journal and submit an essay at the end of the semester. Refers to Learning Outcomes 2 and 4.

### **Assessment**

Research Paper/Service Learning Option: 30%

Class Participation: 25%

Examination: 45%

### **Required Readings**

Christman, John, *Social and Political Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction*, Routledge, 2002.

### **Supplementary Readings**

Kymlicka, W., *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Maravall, Jose Maria, & Przeworski, (eds.) *Democracy and the Rule of Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Nathanson, S., *Should We Consent to Be Governed?* Belmont, C.A.: Wadsworth, 1992.

Pettit, Philip, *Republicanism: A Theory of Government*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Przeworski, Adam, Stokes, Susan & Manin, Bernard, (eds.), *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Sandel, Michael, *Public Philosophy: Essays on Morality in Politics*, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Sterba, James P., *Contemporary Social and Political Philosophy*. Belmont, C.A.: Wadsworth, 1995

Waterfield, Robin, (trans.), Plato, *Republic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Wolff, Jonathan, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

### **Important Notes**

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>