

# Liberalism: Theories, Problems, Critiques

**PHIL 307: Social and Political Philosophy, Fall 2011, University of Oregon**

## **Instructor:**

Dr. Colin Koopman (koopman@uoregon.edu); Office Hours Wed 12p-2p in PLC 333

## **GTFs:**

George Furlas (gfurlas@uoregon.edu); Office Hrs Fri 12p-2p in PLC 319

Al Frankowski (afrankow@uoregon.edu); Office Hrs Thur 1p-3p in PLC 323

Paul Guernsey (guernsey@uoregon.edu); Office Hrs Tues & Thur 11a-12p in PLC 369

**Course Meetings:** Tues & Thur 8:30a-9:50a in McKenzie 129

Fri sections with your GTFs (time as per your CRN)

**Course Website:** <http://coursekit.com/app#course/PHIL307.Koopman> (access code: 32YT8N)

## **Course Objective & Description:**

Liberalism has long been the dominant theoretical tradition in contemporary political philosophy in both North America and Europe. It is therefore unsurprising that liberalism has been subjected to severe criticism over the decades. In this course we will explore: I) the major theoretical and cultural origins of modern liberalism as a context for understanding the foremost work in contemporary liberal theory, II) a selection of critical problems which liberal political regimes face today, and III) some of the most influential and troubling criticisms of liberalism that have been voiced over the past few decades. In Part I we will begin with a brief tour through John Stuart Mill's (1806-1873) classic statement of liberalism, exploring how Mill saw himself as reconciling the twin imperatives of romanticism and utilitarianism central to nineteenth-century British culture. We will then turn to contemporary liberalism and focus primarily on John Rawls's (1921-2002) political liberalism and Friedrich Hayek's (1899-1992) constitutionalist. We will conclude this portion of the course with a brief look at John Dewey's (1859-1952) pragmatist liberalism. In Part II we will briefly discuss some of the most pressing problems on the political scene today with an eye toward their impact on standard liberal governance: globalization, new media and internet networked media, the politics of gender and race, and the role of the law in maintaining a stable distinction between public governance and private freedom. In Part III we will consider a small selection of canonical criticisms of liberalism, including the communist critique of Karl Marx, the anarchist critique of Emma Goldman and the recent historico-genealogical critique of the twentieth-century French social theorist Michel Foucault.

## **Course Requirements:**

1. Lecture Participation and In-Lecture Writing Assignments (12.5%).

You are expected to attend all lectures and complete a number of individual and group in-class writing exercises which will be assigned during almost every lecture session. Many of these assignments will require a good comprehension of the assigned reading at the beginning of class. If you do not attend lecture, you cannot make these up. If you have a legitimate reason for absence, such as a signed doctor note, you can submit the note with the makeup work in order for it to be considered, but it will be your responsibility to find out what you have missed. Please note a strict attendance policy: three absences from lecture is grounds for an 'F' in the course; for each

absence after the first absence, points will be deducted from your final grade. Here is a good way to remember my policy for this course: if you don't want to show up for class, then you should not take this course.

## 2. Seminar/Section Participation (12.5%).

You are expected to attend all sections and contribute to seminar discussions in your sections with your GTF. Your sections are an absolutely crucial component of this course. Do not take them lightly or treat them as a merely secondary learning venue. Seminars are often the most productive learning environment in a course of this size. Lectures will facilitate exposure to ideas, but it is in seminar that you will be able to really develop these ideas and sink your teeth into them. Come to your seminars prepared with questions about the readings and lectures. You must attend section: three absences from section is grounds for an 'F' in the course; for each absence points will be deducted from your final grade.

## 3. First Short Research Essay (25%). – Due Tue. Nov. 1

At the middle of the term, you will write a short 5-7 page argumentative essay concerning some aspect of one, or two, or all three of the major authors we will be working with during Part I of the course (Mill, Rawls, & Hayek). It is your responsibility to develop both the question to which your essay is addressed as well as the thesis which you will argue for in response to this question. You need not discuss secondary literature (i.e., articles, books, or chapters about Mill, Rawls, Hayek by other authors) but it will undoubtedly strengthen your essay as well as assist you in formulating a thesis if you do—one place where you can find relevant secondary literature is *The Philosopher's Index* online database available through the UO library website. *Formatting Your Papers*: standard requirements apply—margins no tighter than 1", 12pt Times or equivalent font, double-spaced, all quotations and references cited according to any standard format you prefer.

## 4. Second Short Research Essay (25%). – Due Thur. Nov. 17

In the second half of the term, you will write a short 5-7 page argumentative essay discussing one of the major problems for contemporary liberalism that we will be considering in Part II of the course (you may write on Privacy Law, Globalization, Identity, or Internet). It will again be your responsibility to formulate a question or problem as well as a thesis in response. Once again, the point is for you to develop *your* thinking on these matters. The best students will find useful secondary literature and develop their essays in terms of questions that arise in those essays, articles, chapters, and books.

## 5. Revised Research Essay (25%). – Due Tue. Dec. 6

At the very end of the term, you will revise one of your first two short research essays in light of the feedback you received on that paper from your GTF (and from peers during an in-class writing workshop). You must turn in both your revised essay as well as your original essay with a copy of your GTF comments.

### **Course Schedule for Lectures (with Instructor):**

<b>Introduction and Plan of the Course</b>	
Sep 27	In-class reading: K. Anthony Appiah, <i>The Ethics of Identity</i> , ix-xi <i>Note that all subsequent readings should be done before that class session.</i>
<b>Part I: Liberalism(s)</b>	
Sep 29	<b>Origins of Liberalism:</b> John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , selections (pp. 7-16, 42-53) David Hume, "Of the Original Contract"
Oct 4	<b>Classical Liberalism:</b> J.S. Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Ch. I, pp.1-14 (Public/Private: The Harm Principle)
Oct 6	J.S. Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Ch. II, pp.15-52 (Liberty of Thought)
Oct 11	J.S. Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , Ch. III, pp.53-72 & Ch. IV, pp.73-9 (Individuality & Authority)
Oct 13	<b>Egalitarian Liberalism:</b> John Rawls, <i>Justice as Fairness</i> , Pt. I, pp.1-29 (Metaphilosophy: The Fundamental Ideas)

Oct 18	John Rawls, <i>JaF</i> , Pt. II, pp. 39-72 (Two Principles of Justice) & Pt. IV, 162-176 (Pub/Priv)
Oct 20	John Rawls, <i>JaF</i> , Pt III, pp.80-94 (Argument for the Two Principles)
	<b>Market Liberalism:</b>
Oct 25	F.A. Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society"
Oct 27	F.A. Hayek, "Liberalism" (read only §§1, 7, 16)
	<b>Pragmatist Liberalism:</b>
Nov 1	John Dewey, <i>Liberalism and Social Action</i> , pp. 13-5, 35-6, 37-41, 53-6, 61-2, 73-6, 86-93 John Dewey, "The Future of Liberalism"
<b>FIRST RESEARCH ESSAY DUE IN LECTURE ON TUESDAY OF WEEK 6 [NOV 1]</b>	
<b>Part II: Problems for Liberalism(s) Today</b>	
Nov 3	<b>Internet &amp; Media (New Publics &amp; New Privacies):</b> Peter Singer, "Visible Man" [secrecy and transparency] Cass Sunstein, "Democracy and the Internet" [online publics] Daniel Solove, "Why Privacy Matters Even If You Have 'Nothing to Hide'" [online privacy] Interested?: take PHIL 123 ("Internet, Society, & Philosophy" with Dr. Koopman, Winter 2012)
Nov 8	<b>Globalization (Economic &amp; Cultural):</b> Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, & Morality" [globalizing economy] K. Anthony Appiah, "Making Conversation" in <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> [globalizing culture] Interested?: take PHIL 309 ("Global Justice", to be offered next year)
Nov 10	<b>Identity (Gender &amp; Race):</b> Iris Young, <i>Justice and the Politics of Difference</i> , "The Ideal of Impartiality" [gender identity] Cornel West, <i>Race Matters</i> , Introduction & Chapter One [racial identity] Interested?: take PHIL 107 ("Philosophy of Love & Sex" with Dr. Bonnie Mann, Spring 2012) Interested?: take PHIL 452 ("Philosophy of Race", to be offered next year)
Nov 15	<b>Private and Public in American Law:</b> Olmstead v. US (1928), Katz. v. US (1967), Kyllo v. US (2001) [informational privacy] Griswold v. CT (1965), Roe v. Wade (1973), Lawrence v. TX (2003) [decisional privacy] Interested?: take PHIL 344 ("Philosophy of Law" with Dr. Cheyney Ryan every Fall); consider law school
<b>SECOND RESEARCH ESSAY DUE IN LECTURE THURSDAY OF WEEK 8 [NOV 17]</b>	
<b>Part III: Critique(s) of Liberalism(s)</b>	
Nov 17	<b>Marxist Critique:</b> Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour", pp.70-81 & "On the Jewish Question", pp.26-46
Nov 22	<b>Anarchist Critique:</b> Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For", pp.47-69
Nov 24	[Thanksgiving Break]
Nov 29	<b>Genealogical Critique:</b> Michel Foucault, selections from <i>Discipline and Punish</i>
<b>Conclusion: The Tradition(s) of Liberalism(s)</b>	
Dec 1	<b>Concluding Reflections:</b> Liberalism as a Tradition of Debate K. Anthony Appiah, <i>The Ethics of Identity</i> , ix-xi
<b>FINAL REVISED ESSAY DUE TO YOUR GTF TUESDAY OF EXAM WEEK [DEC 6]</b>	

### **Course Schedule for Sections (with GTF):**

<b>Part I: Liberal Theories</b>	
Fri Sept 30	Introductions and Introductory Discussion: ‘What is liberalism?’
Fri Oct 7	Discussion of Mill’s <i>On Liberty</i>
Fri Oct 14	Discussion of Rawls’ <i>Justice as Fairness</i>
Fri Oct 21	<i>Research Paper Workshop #1: Choosing Topics &amp; Formulating Theses</i>
Fri Oct 28	Discussion of Hayek (1 <sup>st</sup> Half); Group Work on Papers (2 <sup>nd</sup> Half)
<b>Part II: Problems for Liberalism</b>	
Fri Nov 4	Discussion of Internet and Globalization
Fri Nov 11	Discussion of Identity and Privacy Law
Fri Nov 18	<i>Research Paper Workshop #2: What an Argument is and How to Develop One</i>
<b>Concluding Meeting</b>	
Fri Nov 25	[No sections due to Thanksgiving Holiday]
Fri Dec 2	Group Work on Papers (1 <sup>st</sup> Half); Concluding Discussion (2 <sup>nd</sup> Half)

### **Primary Readings Available at the Bookstore (you must purchase these):**

The following readings are available at the Bookstore and you must bring your copies to lecture and sections:

- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).
- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001).

### **Primary Readings Available on Course Website:**

The following readings are available on our course website and you must bring printed copies to lecture and sections:

- Locke, *Second Treatise*, selections
- Hume, “Of the Original Contract”
- Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society” and “Liberalism” (paired together in the ‘Two Essays’ file)
- Dewey, “The Future of Liberalism” and selections from *Liberalism and Social Action*
- Four packets of selected readings on topics: internet, identity, globalization, and privacy law
- Marx, “Estranged Labor” section of the *1844 Ms.* and “On the Jewish Question”
- Goldman, “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For”
- Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, selections

### **Some Additional Facts about this Course:**

- **Grades:** Work must be truly excellent to receive an ‘A’, pretty good to receive a ‘B’, and average to earn a ‘C’.
- **Late Work:** Late assignments will not be accepted except in exceptional cases when both GTF and Instructor agree.
- **Cheating:** If you cheat and/or plagiarize your assignment you will fail that assignment (no exceptions) and, except in very exceptional cases, you will also fail the course. If you have questions see me, or visit <conduct.uoregon.edu>.
- **Discrimination:** Expression of bias on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or ability will not be tolerated.
- **Barriers:** If you anticipate any barriers to effective participation in this course, please notify me as soon as possible.