

Instructor: Kyle Scott
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Course Location: Royce Hall 156

Course Time: 2-3:15pm
Office: Dodd Hall 394
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm

PHIL. 156: TOPICS IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: ALIENATION & ESTRANGEMENT



Course Description

This course provides a focused examination of the concepts of alienation and estrangement as they feature in prominent social and political philosophies from the 19th-21st centuries. The touchpoint for the course will be Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, but we will also consider the theories of alienation and estrangement in 19th century thinkers such as G.W.F. Hegel, Friedrich Schiller, and Ludwig Feuerbach; 20th century philosophers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Frantz Fanon, and Hannah Arendt; and 21st century philosophers such as Rahel Jaeggi, Talbot Brewer, and G.A. Cohen.

Objectives

This course will provide students many opportunities to practice the fundamental skills of philosophical inquiry, including the extraction, expression, and evaluation of arguments articulated in philosophical texts; the crafting of compelling and convincing philosophical prose; and the development of one's own informed point of view on philosophical issues. More specifically, students will learn:

1. How to produce a cogent argument and how to express it with maximum perspicuity, both in writing and orally.
2. How to articulate and even welcome objections to one's views; how to apply the principle of charity to others' opinions; and how to address objections and competing views effectively and respectfully in one's writing.
3. How to read, analyze, and articulate arguments and viewpoints in primary philosophical texts, both historical and contemporary.

4. How to turn a rough idea into a polished piece of writing through the process of outlining, drafting, redrafting, and editing.
5. How to develop and defend one's own position with respect to problems that have occupied both historical and contemporary philosophers.

Course Requirements

Participation (15%). It is an expectation that you will do the required reading and actively take part in the discussion. This usually entails regular attendance and engagement in discussion during class and section, but can also be accomplished by taking part in other fora, such as office hours. More specifically, all of the following counts as active participation:

- Asking questions and engaging with the instructor and other class participants in a courteous and charitable dialogue about the week's required reading.
- Asking a classmate to clarify or repeat a point they made or asking them a question about something they said.
- Explaining that you are confused or unsure about some aspect of the course material.
- Visiting office hours or scheduling an appointment with me to discuss the material.

For further examples of effective participation, please see **“But How Do I Participate? A Sampling of Ways to Contribute to a Philosophical Conversation,”** by Olivia Bailey, which is posted to the course website.

The weekly discussion section is a vital component of the course. It is crucial to learning philosophy that it be actively practiced: the discussion section is the primary place for you to do this. Sections will provide an opportunity for all students in the class to voice their positions on the important topics we are covering from week to week, and to potentially revise and reform those positions via deliberation and debate. Your attendance and informed participation in the discussion section is expected. That being said, **please do not attend lecture or section if you are sick. Just let me or Sam know via email in advance of the meeting time if you have a legitimate reason not to attend.**

Short Writing Assignment (15%). Your first writing assignment will be a short piece, 1-2 pages, analyzing a specific piece of text. Your job is to offer a close reading of the text, breaking it down into parts that are easy to understand, even for someone who is not in the course and hasn't read it. You should detail and motivate the view being presented as clearly and concisely as possible, but you should not attempt to assess or otherwise criticize the

argument. Think of this as the first step in writing an argumentative essay. This assignment will be graded on a pass / no pass basis. It is due on the course website by **October 10th by 11:59pm PST**.

Two Essays (70%). The majority of your grade will be determined by how well you do on the two required papers you must complete for the course. Having to explain our ideas to others in writing forces us to be clear, and to be thoughtful and honest about the positions we hold. The first essay will be worth 30% of your grade, and the second essay will be worth 40%. You will have a choice of three or four topics for each paper. I will send out the topics at least ten days before the paper is due. There is no minimum length for each paper; but Sam may suggest a maximum length so that he does not work beyond his contracted hours grading your papers. The papers are due on the course website by **November 4th by 11:59pm PST** and **December 4th by 11:59pm PST**, respectively. There is no midterm or final exam for this course.

Summary Grade Breakdown and Due Dates

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Percent of Grade</u>
Participation	-----	15%
Short Writing Assignment	10/10	15%
First Essay	11/04	30%
Second Essay	12/04	40%

Grading and Late Policy

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments will receive a letter grade based on the UCLA 4.0 scale. Work turned in late is considered to have been turned in the next day and will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (A to A-, B- to C+, etc.) for each day late (including weekend days). Email submissions will not normally be accepted. Unless otherwise noted and under appropriate circumstances, short extensions on papers may be granted so long as they are arranged 36 hours in advance of the deadline. Extensions will not be granted within 36 hours, short of a documented emergency. **The midterm and final must be completed to pass the course.**

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Cite all sources consulted. Students are expected to know and comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity, information about which is available here:

Student Code of Conduct: <https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconductcode>

Academic Integrity: <https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity>

Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism: <https://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing/plagiarism/avoid>

If you have any question about what counts as a violation of academic integrity or how to cite your sources, please consult with me. Err on the side of caution. Any standard citation style will do (Chicago, APA, MLA, etc.). If you aren't sure which to use, consider Chicago style author-date format:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Course Readings and Schedule

Optional readings: In addition to the required reading for the course, I have listed, for some class sessions, *optional* readings. The required readings are above, and the optional readings below, the horizontal line. The optional readings are designed to either (a) help your understanding of the required readings or (b) expand and supplement your understanding of the day's topic. You will not be expected to have read the optional readings; however, you are highly encouraged to do so, as it will significantly improve your grasp of the course material.

Week 0 Introduction to the course

Class 1 (09/22)

Defining and historicizing alienation.

- Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, pp. 3-13

- Pablo Gilabert and Martin O'Neil, "Socialism," esp. section on "Alienation," *Stanford Ency. of Philosophy*
- David Leopold, "Alienation," *Stanford Ency. of Philosophy*

Week 1 Introduction to Marx

Class 2 (09/27)

Introduction to Marx & Marxian economics.

- Marx, “Wage Labour and Capital” (abridged)
- Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, “The Rate of Exploitation: The Case of the iPhone,” pp. 1-6, 23-31

- Jonathan Wolff and David Leopold, “Karl Marx,” *Stanford Ency. of Philosophy*
- Marx, “Value, Price, and Profit”

Class 3 (09/29)

Introduction to Marx on alienation I.

- Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (EPM)*, pp. 270-282
- Video: [Nadav Kurtz, “Paraíso”](#)
- Video: [“First Taste of Chocolate in Ivory Coast”](#)

- Jan Kandiyali, “Producing for Others: Marx on Unalienated Production”

Week 2 Introduction to Marx / The dialectic of alienation

Class 4 (10/04)

Introduction to Marx on alienation II.

- Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (EPM)*, pp. 270-282 (cont.)
- Marx, “Letter to Ruge”

- Marcello Musto, *Karl Marx’s Writings on Alienation*, Ch.1, pp. 3-7, 28-33, 36-44
- Andrew Chitty, “Species-Being and Capital”

Class 5 (10/06)

The three stages of Marx's dialectic.

- G.A. Cohen, "Marx's Dialectic of Labor"

Week 3 The dialectic of alienation / Undifferentiated unity

Class 6 (10/11)

The three stages of Hegel's dialectic.

- Friedrich Schiller, *Letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, "Twenty-fifth Letter"
- G.W.F. Hegel, *The Early Theological Writings*, "Love"
- G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, "The Need of Philosophy"

Class 7 (10/13)

Undifferentiated unity.

- Plato, *The Republic*, 405a - 408b.
- Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, 181-2, 470-80.
- Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, 64-66
- Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 16-30.

Week 4 Differentiated dis-unity

Class 8 (10/18)

No Class

Class 9 (10/20)

Alienation from others and from one's own labor I: care and emotions.

- Talbot Brewer, "On Alienated Emotions"
- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 185-198.

Week 5 Differentiated dis-unity

Class 10 (10/25)

Alienation from others and from one's own labor II: care and emotions II.

- Marx, *Comments on James Mill, Éléments D'Économie Politique* (focus on pages 212-16, 225-6)

Class 11 (10/27)

Alienation from the product and species-being I: the social meanings of products.

- Langdon Winner, “Do Artifacts Have Politics?”

Week 6 Differentiated dis-unity

Class 12 (11/01)

Catch-Up Day: Catch up on any readings you have not done (and/or get a head start on the first essays)

Class 13 (11/03)

Alienation from the product and species-being II: world alienation and second nature.

- Hannah Arendt, “World Alienation,” from *The Human Condition*
- Georg Lukács, “The Epic and the Novel,” from *The Theory of the Novel*

- Maurizio Passerin D’Entrèves, “Modernity and the Human Condition: Hannah Arendt’s Conception of Modernity”

Week 7 Differentiated dis-unity

Class 14 (11/08)

Alienation from the product and species-being IV: commodity fetishism.

- Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, “The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret”
- Ben Lerner, excerpt from *10:04*

- [Danielle Carr, “Mental Health is Political,” *New York Times*](#)

Class 15 (11/10)

Catch-Up Day: Catch up on any readings you have not done (and/or work on your essays)

Week 8 Differentiated Unity

Class 16 (11/15)

Alienation from the product and species-being III: second nature & the Keynesian Beauty Contest.

- John Maynard Keynes, “The State of Long-term Expectation” (focus on Section V, pp. 153-58)
- Georg Lukács, “The Epic and the Novel,” from *The Theory of the Novel* (focus on pp. 61-64)

- [David Kestenbaum, “Ranking Cute Animals: A Stock Market Experiment,” *NPR*](#)
- [Nick Rogers, “How Wrestling Explains Alex Jones and Donald Trump,” *New York Times*](#)

Class 17 (11/17)

Producing as Humans I

- Marx, *Comments on James Mill* (focus on pages 227-8)
- Studs Terkel, selections from *Working*
- A.J. Julius, “Suppose We Had Produced as Humans” (excerpt)

Week 9 Differentiated Unity

Class 18 (11/22)

Producing as Humans II: The Jazz Band

- Daniel Budney, selections from *Marx’s Attempt to Leave Philosophy*
- G.A. Cohen, “Marxism and Contemporary Political Philosophy”

(11/03) No class - Thanksgiving Break

Week 10 Conclusion

Class 19 (11/29)

- Option 1: Comradeship and resistance.
 - Marx, selections from *EPM* and *The Civil War in France*
 - Jodi Dean, selections from *Comrade*

- Vivian Gornick, selections from *The Romance of American Communism*
- Frantz Fanon, “Algerian Revolutionary Consciousness” and selections from “On Violence”
- Rosa Luxembourg, selections from *The Mass Strike*
- Option 2: Sex, love, and conversation.
 - Hegel, “Love”
 - Simone de Beauvoir, selections from *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and/or *Pyrrhus et Cineas*
 - Maurice Merleau-Ponty, selections from *The Phenomenology of Perception*
 - Vida Yao, “Grace and Alienation”
- Option 3: Visions of reconciliation.
 - Albert Camus, selections from *The Myth of Sisyphus*
 - Gabriel Garcia Marquez, excerpt from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*
 - Hegel, selections from the *Lectures on Aesthetics* and/or *The Phenomenology of Spirit*
- Option 4: Social union.
 - John Rawls, selections from *A Theory of Justice* and *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*
 - Wilhelm von Humboldt, selections from *The Limits of State Action*
 - Daniel Brudney, selections from *Marx’s Attempt to Leave Philosophy*
- Option 5: markets and motivation.
 - Barry Maguire, “Efficient Markets and Alienation”
 - Nancy Folbre, “For Love or Money or Both?”

Class 20 (12/01)

- Conclusion