PHIL 3110 – Political Philosophy

3209A Kohrman Hall
Wed. 4:00-6:30
Instructor: james.v.martin@wmich.edu (3012 Moore Hall, by appointment)
TA: jared.a.park@wmich.edu (3022 Moore Hall, Tues. 10-11 and by appointment)

Required Texts:  
The Prince (Machiavelli)  
A Letter Concerning Toleration (Locke)
All other readings will be online at http://homepages.wmich.edu/~jnk5408.

Course Description:  This course is an introduction to some of the key ideas and problems of political philosophy. After thinking about what role political philosophy might play in our political and social lives, we’ll go on to consider justifications for a state; arguments for and against democracy; the extent to which a government should be allowed to influence its citizens’s lives; some contemporary conceptions of justice (including global and social justice); the relationships between politics and both morality and the economy; the grounding of rights, desert, and power; and the influence of ideology on our political thought. Throughout, we’ll be guided by some of the classic texts of the subject, but we’ll always also have one eye towards applying the concepts and arguments these texts provide us to issues we still face today.

Schedule and Readings:

Week 1 Jan. 13  Introduction
— Miller, Why Do We Need Political Philosophy?
— Geuss, Tasks of Political Theory

Week 2 Jan. 20  Ideas about pre-political living
— Hobbes, Leviathan, Chs. 13 & 17
— Rousseau, The Second Discourse (excerpt)

Week 3 Jan. 27  Justifying the state (contractarian vs. utilitarian considerations)
— Rawls, A Theory of Justice, §§3 – 5
— Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, Ch. II

Week 4 Feb. 3  Who should rule? (1) Against democracy  (FIRST PAPER DUE)
— Plato, Republic, Book VI to 506d
— Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (excerpt)
— Burke, Speech to the Electors at Bristol at the Conclusion of the Poll (excerpt)
Week 5  Feb. 10  Who should rule? (2) For democracy
   — Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Ch. 6
   — Dahl, *On Democracy*, Ch. 5

Week 6  Feb. 17  Liberalism and toleration  (SECOND PAPER DUE)
   — Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Week 7  Feb. 24  Meet at *Divorce (Professional): A One Act Play*

Week 8  Mar. 2  On justice (1) Justice as fairness

Week 9  Mar. 16  On justice (2) A libertarian view and critique of Rawls
   — Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Ch. 7

Week 10  Mar. 23  Morality and “real politics”  (THIRD PAPER DUE)
   — Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Week 11  Mar. 30  Political economy and Marx
   — Wood, *Karl Marx*, Ch. 1
   — Marx, *Value, Price, and Profit*, Ch. VI to the end

Week 12  Apr. 6  Rights, exploitation, and desert
   — Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies*, Article II
   — Arneson, What’s Wrong with Exploitation? §§ I-V, X
   — Sher, *Desert* (excerpt)

Week 13  Apr. 13  Ideology and power
   — Marx, *The German Ideology* (excerpt)
   — Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, Ch. 2 (excerpts)

Week 14  Apr. 20  Global and social justice  (FINAL PAPER DUE)
   — Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*, Ch. 6
   — Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*, Ch. 1.ii, ix
Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Short expository paper</td>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Short critical paper</td>
<td>Feb. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Medium length paper evaluating an argument or position</td>
<td>Mar. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 4</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Final paper for the course</td>
<td>Apr. 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>This is necessary for a course that meets only once a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accommodations: Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact me and the appropriate Disability Services office at the beginning of the semester. The two disability service offices on campus are: Disabled Student Resources and Services (269) 387-2116 and the Office of Services for Students with Learning Disabilities (269) 387-4411.

Academic Honesty: You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the university’s policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.