

PHIL/POL/PA 250 – The Social Contract  
Summer 2015 (online)  
Tristan Rogers

**Semester dates:** July 13th – August 12th

**Email:** [tristanrogers@email.arizona.edu](mailto:tristanrogers@email.arizona.edu)

**Course website:** <http://d2l.arizona.edu>

**Office hours:** By appointment

**Important Dates (put these in your calendar now!)**

July 13th – Course begins

July 19th – Assignment 1 due

July 26th – Assignment 2 due

July 28<sup>th</sup> – Paper topics made available

August 2nd – Assignment 3 due

August 9<sup>th</sup> – Assignment 4 due

August 12th – Paper due

August 12th – Course ends

**Course overview:** In this course we will study one of the most influential ideas in the history of political philosophy: the social contract. Can government be justified by appealing to an agreement to which all rational individuals would assent? If so, what would the terms of the agreement be? While seemingly abstract, these two questions are really about what it takes for a group of individuals to live in a community together. We will look at three of the major historical theorists (Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau) and John Rawls, who revived social contract theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remains the dominant figure in political philosophy.

**Course format:** This is an online course. Everything we do will be coordinated through D2L. You are expected to check it daily, as I will post announcements about the course in the 'news' section. We have 4 weeks to cover the equivalent of a full semester's work, so we have our work cut out for us! The course will follow a Monday-Friday schedule. You are expected to carefully read one selection per day, view (short) lecture videos corresponding to the readings, and post your thoughts on the readings on the D2L discussion board.

The lecture videos, as well as the corresponding lecture notes, will be posted on D2L the night before the scheduled readings. These should help you make sense of the readings, *but should not serve as a substitute for them*. The aim is for you to engage with the readings on your own and then discuss your ideas with your peers on the discussion board. Along the way, the daily short quizzes and weekly short assignments will serve as feedback on your progress. The final paper is a chance for you to apply what you've learned to one or more of the theorists that most interests you.

**Office hours:** I will hold office hours *online* via Google chat. You can access this via your Catmail address. Office hours are not mandatory, but encouraged. Please let me know if you'd like to speak with me and we'll arrange a suitable time.

**Email policy:** Like most people these days, I am available more or less 24/7 by email. But, this does not mean I will/can respond to emails at all hours of the day. I will aim to respond within 24 hours. This syllabus contains everything you will need to know about the mechanics of the course. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourself with it. Except in unusual circumstances, I will not respond to email

questions that could be easily answered by consulting the syllabus. I also prefer not to answer substantive questions about the course material via email. Save these for office hours or the discussion board.

**Readings:** Most of the readings for this course are drawn from the following texts, which are available in the university bookstore or the online bookseller of your choice. All other readings will be available on D2L.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Penguin Classics)

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Hackett Publishing)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, ed. Donald A. Cress, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Hackett Publishing)

**Please make sure you have these editions.**

*Readings Disclaimer: due to their historical time period, both in terms of ideas, and style, these texts can be difficult to read and accordingly you probably want to budget time to reread each selection. I will do my absolute best to help you, but you need to put in the requisite effort.*

**Assessment:**

15 % – Discussion board posts (i.e. 'participation'). You are **required** to make **one post** on the discussion board **each day of class** (Monday to Friday), by either asking your own question about the material, answering someone else's, or simply participating in an ongoing discussion. These posts have no required length, but should be intelligently constructed. You are permitted to miss two days of posting, after which you will be penalized 2 points per missed day. The aim here is to get discussion going about the material and facilitate one another's learning.

15 % – Quizzes. There will be a short quiz for each day's reading (4-5 questions), so that you can gauge your understanding. These will be timed and on D2L. You can take the quizzes whenever you like, but it's probably wise not to fall too far behind. Your two lowest scores will be dropped.

30 % – Short answer assignments (four total). At the end of each week there will be a small assignment asking you to explain in your own words some of the key ideas/concepts/arguments from the week's readings. There will be three questions total and you will pick *two* to answer in a short paragraph each. The assignment will be posted Friday morning and is due the following Sunday at midnight.

40 % – Final Paper (in lieu of final exam). A five page paper (double spaced) will be due on August 11<sup>th</sup> at Midnight (PST). The paper topics will be made available July 28th. You are welcome to propose your own topic, subject to my approval. **Please submit papers via D2L. They will be checked for plagiarism through turnitin.com**

*There is no final exam for this course.*

**Missed papers:** I won't accept late papers. If you must submit a paper late due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict, illness, etc., where possible, you (or someone on your behalf) must notify me in advance of the expected due date, so that an alternate date may be arranged.

**Academic dishonesty:** You are expected to be familiar with the University's code of academic integrity, which can be found here: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>. If you are unsure about something, please ask me. Pleading ignorance is not an acceptable excuse, and I have a zero-tolerance policy toward plagiarism.

**Academic freedom:** Feel free to express your views to the fullest extent you feel comfortable with. It is not my job to teach you what I think. You will be assessed in accordance with how *well* you argue your view, not in accordance with whether I (or your classmates) agree with you.

**Code of conduct:** Since this is an online class, the usual disclaimer about in-class conduct does not apply. However, you are still expected to be respectful toward your fellow students and myself in any interactions that take place (on the discussion board, in office hours, etc.)

**Accommodations:** Those who require accommodations related to disabilities are instructed to first register with Disability Resources (520-621-3268; [drc.arizona.edu](http://drc.arizona.edu)). Please also notify me in advance, so that we can make arrangements to help you better participate in the course.

### **Schedule of readings & activities:**

**NB: Subject to revision, if necessary**

#### **WEEK ONE – Thomas Hobbes**

Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup> – Introduction to the course & Hobbes' Life and *Leviathan* in Context  
Reading: C.B. Macpherson's introduction to *Leviathan*, pgs. 9-30 (optional: 30-63)  
No Quiz

Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> – Hobbes' Theory of Human Nature  
Reading: *Leviathan* Ch. 1-7, pgs. 81-134  
Quiz 1

Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> – Problem: The State of Nature & Laws of Nature  
Reading: *Leviathan* Ch. 13-15, pgs. 183-217  
Quiz 2

Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup> – Solution: The Sovereign  
Reading: *Leviathan* Ch. 16-18, pgs. 217-239  
Quiz 3

Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup> – Result: Government and Liberty of Subjects  
Reading: *Leviathan* Ch. 19 & 21, pgs. 239-251, 261-274  
Quiz 4  
First Assignment (due 19<sup>th</sup>)

#### **WEEK TWO – John Locke**

Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> – Introduction to Locke  
Reading: C.B. Macpherson's Introduction to *Second Treatise of Government*, pgs. vii-xxi  
No Quiz

Tuesday, July 21st – Locke’s State of Nature  
Reading: *Second Treatise of Government* Ch. 1-4, pgs. 7-16  
Quiz 5

Wednesday, July 22nd – Locke on Property  
Reading: *Second Treatise* Ch. 5, pgs. 18-30  
Quiz 6

Thursday, July 23rd – Locke’s Commonwealth  
Reading: *Second Treatise* Ch. 7-9, pgs. 42-68  
Quiz 7

Friday, July 24th – Locke on Tyranny and Revolution  
Reading: *Second Treatise* 27-29, pgs. 100-124  
Quiz 8  
Second Assignment (due 26<sup>th</sup>)

### **WEEK THREE – Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Monday, July 27th – Introduction to Rousseau  
Reading: David Wooten’s introduction from *Basic Political Writings*, pgs. ix-xxxiv  
No Quiz

Tuesday, July 28<sup>th</sup> – Rousseau on the State of Nature  
Reading: *Basic Political Writings*, “Discourse on Inequality” Part II, pgs. 69-92  
Quiz 9

Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> – Rousseau’s Social Contract  
Reading: *Basic Political Writings*, “The Social Contract” Book I, pgs. 155-170  
Quiz 10

Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> – Rousseau on Liberty  
Reading: *Basic Political Writings*, “The Social Contract” Book II, pgs. 170-191  
Quiz 11

Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> – Rousseau on Democracy  
Reading: *Basic Political Writings*, “The Social Contract” selections from Books III & IV  
Quiz 12  
Third Assignment (due 2<sup>nd</sup>)

### **WEEK FOUR – John Rawls**

Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> – Introduction to Rawls  
Readings: TBD  
No Quiz

Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> – Justice as Fairness

Readings: John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness” (1958) (online)  
Quiz 13

Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> – The Original Position  
Readings: Selections from *A Theory of Justice* (online)  
Quiz 14

Thursday, August 6<sup>th</sup> – The Two Principles of Justice  
Readings: Readings: Selections from *A Theory of Justice* (online)  
Quiz 15

Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup> – Stability  
Readings: Readings: Selections from *A Theory of Justice* (online)  
Quiz 16  
Fourth Assignment (due 9<sup>th</sup>)

#### **WEEK FOUR CONT. – Critics of the Social Contract**

Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> – David Hume  
Reading: “Of the Original Contract” (online)  
Quiz 17

Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> – Martha Nussbaum  
Reading: Selection from *Frontiers of Justice* (online)  
Quiz 18

Wednesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> – Wrap up lecture  
No reading  
Paper due