

PHIL 365 SYLLABUS
Social and Political Philosophy
Fall 2026
MW 10:00am-11:15am, EU 136
Class Number: 15236

Prerequisites:

Completion of the Lower Division writing requirement.

Contact Information:

Dr. Kristina Meshelski

Office: Sierra Tower 518

Office hours: In person MW 5:30-6:30pm, or zoom meetings available by appointment

For appointments use: <https://meshelski-csun.youcanbook.me>

Course Description:

Covers classical and contemporary theoretical approaches in the philosophical study of human social and political organization, addressing topics such as taxation, reparations, immigration, private property, voting, secession, or war. Questions may include: What is justice? Is governmental power legitimate? What is freedom? Does freedom require a certain form of government or a certain type of economy? What is the nature of oppression? What should be done to make up for historical injustices, such as genocide or slavery? Regular written assignments will be required.

Course Requirements and Method of Evaluation:

45% In-class Writing

Essays completed in class. Writing days are marked on the syllabus. If you miss a writing day, you can do a make-up during the scheduled final exam period.

40% Class discussion memos (8% each)

You will reconstruct the class discussion of particular readings and summarize the most important points. You will need to complete five of these by the time the class is over. You can choose to write about any reading that you do not write an in-class essay about.

15% Attendance and participation

You will need to attend class, having completed the reading assigned, and be ready to discuss it. You will need to bring the printed out reading with you to class with margin notes.

All writing in this course must be entirely your own, without outside help from the internet, AI, or other people.

CSUN can provide you with a computer: <https://www.csun.edu/it/device-loaner-program>

If you need help with food, housing, money, or healthcare: <https://www.csun.edu/heart>

DO NOT COME TO CLASS WHILE SICK. If you get sick please let me know and we will reevaluate the course requirements as necessary.

Revised August 23, 2026

Schedule:

Monday, August 24	Introduction
Wednesday, August 26	Jo Wolff, <i>An Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> , Ch. 1
Monday, August 31	
Wednesday, September 2	Writing
Monday, September 7*	Labor Day – no class
Wednesday, September 9	Virginia Held, “Non-contractual Society: A Feminist View”
Monday, September 14	Robert Paul Wolff, <i>In Defense of Anarchism</i> , Ch. 1
Wednesday, September 16	
Monday, September 21	Writing
Wednesday, September 23	Michael Sandel, “Morality and the Liberal Ideal”
Monday, September 28	John Rawls, <i>A Theory of Justice</i> , selection
Wednesday, September 30	
Monday, October 5	Robert Nozick, <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i> , selection
Wednesday, October 7	
Monday, October 12	Writing
Wednesday, October 14	John Tomasi, “Democratic Legitimacy and Economic Liberty”
Monday, October 19	Harry Frankfurt, “Equality as a Moral Ideal”
Wednesday, October 21	
Monday, October 26	Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?”
Wednesday, October 28	
Monday, November 2	G. A. Cohen, “Freedom and Money”
Wednesday, November 4	
Monday, November 9	Jeppe von Platz, “Principle of Merit and the capital-labour split”
Wednesday, November 11*	Veteran’s Day – no class
Monday, November 16	Writing
Wednesday, November 18	Writing
Monday, November 23	Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, <i>Reconsidering Reparations</i> , Ch. 4
Wednesday, N November 25	
Monday, November 30	Anna Stilz, “Settlement, Expulsion, and Return”
Wednesday, December 2	
Monday, December 7	Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”
Wednesday, December 9	
December 14 Final exam 10:15am-12:15pm	Revising or make-up writing