

PHIL 535/635: Political Philosophy: Varieties of Solidarity
Mondays 4:00 – 6:45 P.M.
HUM 113

Instructor: Avery Kolers

Office: Humanities room 314.

Office hours: MWF 1:00 – 2:00 and by appointment

Phone: 852-0453

email: akolers@louisville.edu

web: <https://blackboard.louisville.edu>

Be safe leaving campus after class!

Be visible and walk/ride with friends.

Bike routes: <http://www.ridethecity.com/louisville>

TARC schedules (ride free with UofL ID):

<http://www.ridetarc.org/maps-schedule/> or Google [trip planner](#)

Black Loop Parking Shuttle (ride free with UofL ID):

<http://louisville.edu/parking/shuttle/shuttle.html>

Campus Police Escort Service (up to four blocks off campus): 852-6111

<http://www.louisville.edu/admin/dps/police/escort.htm>

Texts:

All books are required. All are available in the local bookstores. Several of them are also available online used and in ebook format.

- Martha **Nussbaum** (2002), *For Love of Country?*, Beacon Press.
- Chaim **Gans** (2008), *A Just Zionism*, Oxford University Press.
- Anna **Stilz** (2009), *Liberal Loyalty*, Princeton University Press.
- Tommie **Shelby** (2005), *We Who Are Dark*, Harvard University Press.
- José **Medina** (2013), *The Epistemology of Resistance*, Oxford University Press.
- Occasional Articles available in full text on **Blackboard** or **Online** through the library

Purpose & Aims of the Course

This is a course in political philosophy. Historically, political philosophy has focused on two core questions: the *problem of authority* is how to justify obedience to political rule; what we might call the *problem of the ideal* is how to articulate the ideal political order. These two questions may be thought to be identical – you might think, after all, that articulating an ideal is all there is to justifying an authority; or you might deny that unjust authority could be owed obedience. This is a common assumption of the moderns, since the moderns reject utopias and presuppose that social institutions are profane, mutable, and conventional; they seek to portray “men as they are and institutions as they might be”; thus the only way to justify any *particular* set of institutions is to show that that particular set is choiceworthy for you and me, here and now. And what could be choiceworthy other than justice?

In 1971 John Rawls published *A Theory of Justice*, a work that almost immediately became the orienting pole of Anglophone political philosophy. For Rawls in *Theory* the problem of authority is not very interesting, since he assumes that the state is not voluntary and so the question of whether we ought to have a state at all is empty. The interesting questions emerge from his portrayal of the ideal and the underlying theories of society and of the person. Key questions have to do with the nature of liberty and equality, the criteria of fairness in a choice situation, the role of secondary associations within the just society, the types of economic arrangements compatible with justice, and so on. For at

least a decade, and more like a generation, most political philosophers were teasing out unnoticed implications of Rawls's theory, applying Rawls's methodology to any and every moral problem, correcting perceived errors in Rawls's theory, or arguing against Rawls. Quite literally and with remarkably few exceptions, analytic political philosophy from 1972-1989 became a series of footnotes to *A Theory of Justice*. Much current work still is.

For his part, Rawls would have held that his theory was little more than a footnote to Kant. And indeed one important, if not *the most* important, element of Rawls's theory insofar as it affected the history of philosophy *per se*, is that it knocked Utilitarianism out of the driver's seat and replaced it with deontological approaches and particularly Kantianism as the dominant framework for political theory. Piggybacking on this deontological shift was a Lockean framework. An early critique of Rawls – by Robert Nozick in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* – announced Lockean libertarianism as a main alternative to Kant-Rawls egalitarianism. And the Lockean tradition has burgeoned ever since.

Because of the fecundity of the Rawlsian project and the Lockean critique of it, the consensus that emerged after Rawls has now shattered into a million pieces. Justice remains a central question, but there is no longer anything like the shared understanding of how to think about justice that oriented so many people for a generation after Rawls. Moreover, the number of subjects has also exploded, and not all these subjects are fruitfully discussed using a Rawlsian methodology. Historical figures beyond Kant and Locke – most prominently Aristotle, Hobbes, Hume, and Adam Smith, and more recently Grotius – have been rediscovered. The problem of authority has returned – including in Rawls's later work – to some prominence, particularly as libertarians and Hobbesians have grown in number and influence. Related to this is the problem of the justification of democracy, representation, majoritarianism, constitutionalism, and global governance. This last issue is part of a larger move toward justice beyond borders (international or global justice), interacting with just war theory and theories of secession, genocide, humanitarian intervention and terrorism. Closely related to cross-national justice are issues of justice arising from human ethno-cultural, gender, linguistic, and intellectual diversity. Intersections among political philosophy, economics, geography, ecology, law, and other disciplines have been mapped.

Politics, roughly, occurs any time power relations exist between persons; in other words, wherever two or more people do anything (and sometimes all it takes is one). And political philosophy is the philosophical consideration of politics, with special emphasis on normative and conceptual questions arising there. Insofar as there remains any essence of political philosophy, that is pretty much it.

It is therefore impossible to do justice to the expectations of students in an upper-level course by surveying contemporary political philosophy – we would not be able to get deep enough into any one thing. So I have chosen to focus on one concept (or is it two?) which has been largely neglected until quite recently among political philosophers, namely, solidarity. Solidarity may be an updated version of *fraternité*, one of the three pillars of the French revolution. If so it may involve some sort of national sentiment. This notion of solidarity orients the first part of the course. Instead or in addition, solidarity is the main political tool of those without power. In this sense solidarity works *against* national sentiment and *for* some kind of partial or class-based aims. The solidarity of the civil rights organizations or labor unions would be examples. This second notion of solidarity orients the latter half of the course.

This seminar is designed to introduce you to up-to-date discussions of vitally important questions of political and moral life. It is intended that through this work you will achieve an understanding of some important areas of political philosophy that are typically missed in the (especially undergraduate) curriculum—areas that are crucial to understanding some of the fundamental institutions and practices of our daily lives. There will be significant room for independent work. Through papers and other assignments, you will be encouraged to develop your own ideas and/or do independent research on specific problems that you find particularly interesting.

By the conclusion of this course, then, it is intended that you will have nurtured the following skills (among others):

- Ability to read, comprehend, and discuss primary source texts, and evaluate their arguments, with emphasis on the two core virtues of *fidelity* and *charity*
- Ability to read, comprehend, and discuss secondary/critical/interpretive sources and assess them in light of the primary source materials
- Ability to evaluate claims about value and values in society
- Ability to formulate and examine arguments regarding complex and abstract phenomena
- Ability to write expository and critical essays
- Understanding of important contemporary issues including the value of democracy and the role of individuals in politics and social movements.

Requirements	UG	G-535	G-635
Participation:	10	10	10
Discussion Leaders	20	40	35
Paper Draft:	10	10	15
Midterm Exam:	30	n/a	n/a
Final Paper:	30	n/a	n/a
Term Paper:	<u>n/a</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>40</u>
Total:	100	100	100

Participation: We only have 13 substantive meetings. I expect you to attend every time. If you cannot attend, please let me know in advance. I will expect a good reason. You are all intelligent adults, but you cannot expect to gain a full understanding of this material in the absence of discussion with your peers. Therefore I will deduct one point of participation credit for each unexcused absence, up to 5; more than 5 absences will be sufficient for a failing grade. Remaining participation grades will be based on your contribution to discussions and participation in any miscellaneous class activities.

NOTE: I reserve the right to give pop quizzes if it appears that a critical mass of people is not reading, and these pop quizzes will be part of your participation grade.

Discussion Leaders: Each week we should have two students who have prepared to either **Explicate** or **Critique** a reading on the syllabus for that day. (You must do each of these functions **twice**; once each before and after midsemester.) These tasks require you to complete and upload to the blog (or type into the blog directly) the Explication and Critique forms located there and under Assignments in Blackboard. Completed forms should be up on the blog no later than midnight on the day before the relevant meeting. On your days you should expect to play a major role in the discussion, including potentially starting us off for the day, though you do not technically have to *lead* discussion. I will pass

around a sign-up sheet on the first day of class and any day thereafter that is required to get a full complement.

*Midterm Exam**: For **undergraduates only**. This is a take-home exam covering Part One of the course. I will distribute the exam and instructions on 9/30; it will be due on 10/14. If you are seriously considering dropping the course depending on your midterm grade, let me know and I will be sure to grade your exam before the drop date.

Paper draft or thesis worksheet: on 12/2 you must bring to class your paper draft or thesis worksheet. It is not worth points but we will discuss these in class that day and it is required. Also, it should help you write a much better paper and enjoy the process more.

*Final paper**: For **Undergraduates only**. This is a major paper of **10-12 pages** that takes up a particular issue we've discussed during the course. You must go beyond mere critique to articulate and evaluate a clear, controversial philosophical thesis. I will hand out paper guidelines and some topic suggestions well in advance of the deadline.

*Term paper**: For **Grad Students only**. This is a major research paper of **15-20 pages** that takes up a particular issue relevant to the course. You must articulate and evaluate a clear, controversial philosophical thesis. Your topic may, but need not, be something we discuss in-depth during the semester.

*N.B. Grad students who have not had 2 philosophy classes (3xx or above) before this one may talk to me about doing the midterm and final paper in place of the term paper. Similarly, undergrads with at least 3 philosophy classes (3xx or above) and a GPA in the major of 3.5 or higher may talk to me about doing the term paper in place of the midterm and final paper.

Evaluation

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following percentages:

“plus”: $n7.5-n9.4$

“flat”: $n2.1-n7.4$

“minus”: $m9.5-n2$ (for $m = n-1$)

Handing in Assignments

Each assignment is due on a specific day; except as indicated in the schedule below, assignments are due by the end of class on the relevant day. Late assignments will be penalized one grade per school day, **starting at 4:10 p.m. of the due date**. I am not flexible on this policy. In general, the only acceptable reason for failure to complete or submit an assignment on time is physical impossibility or a death in the family. Even in these cases, if at all possible you must communicate with me in advance about your situation. In such dire (and rare!) circumstances, lateness will be excused.

You may hand in assignments on paper or by e-mail. If you submit your paper electronically you must use .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .odt formats **only**. If I can't open the document I have not received it. Also, I have a spam filter so please email me from your U of L account or Blackboard. Also, **always cc yourself** or at least ensure that mail is copied to your “sent” folder and that you don't delete it until after your grade comes back. If there is any confusion about whether or when you sent your paper I will assume that my records are right unless you have the original email with the date stamp attached to prove that you did send it. However you choose to hand in your assignments, please minimize the

amount of extra paper you use, and avoid any adornments. If you cannot hand in your paper in class, leave it in my office mail box – though assignments remain your responsibility until I have them in my hands or on my computer.

Academic Integrity

According to the University of Louisville's *Code of Student Conduct*, Section 5 ("Academic Dishonesty"), "Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution and its students and faculty."

It is your responsibility to know this code and comply with its requirements. If I discover violations of this policy I will pursue the required disciplinary channels. If you have any questions about how to comply with this policy, ask me *in advance*.

Schedule of topics and readings

*Change is possible. Due notice will be given.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Notes
8/26	Introduction & Key Concepts		
9/2	Labor Day		
Part One: Solidarity as <i>fraternité</i>			
9/9	Cosmopolitan World Citizenship	Nussbaum, Introduction, chapter I, choose at least 3 of the essays in chapter II, and then read Nussbaum's reply in chapter III	
9/16	Liberalism and Particularity	Stilz, chaps. 1-4	Wednesday 9/18 is the last day to apply for a degree
9/23	Ethnonationalism	Gans, chaps. 1-4	
9/30	Solidarity without nations	Stilz, chaps. 5-6	Midterm exams distributed
10/7	Fall	Break	No Class
Part Two: Solidarity as Oppositional Collective Action			
10/14	Solidarity as Democratic Politics	Stilz, chap. 7-8	Midterm exams due
10/21	Black Nationalisms	Shelby, chaps. 1-3	
10/28	Making Solidarity Safe for Liberalism	Shelby, chaps. 4-6	Last day to withdraw

11/4	Solidarity Beyond Liberalism	O'Loughlin (BB) and Kolers (BB)	
11/11	Resisting Ignorance	Medina, Introduction and chaps. 1-2	
11/18	Epistemic Responsibility	Medina, chaps. 3-4	
11/25	Epistemic Justice and Solidarity	Medina, chaps. 5-6 and Coda	
12/2	Guest Speaker OR paper workshop		Paper drafts or Thesis worksheets due
12/9	Presentations and paper workshop		
Sat., Dec. 14, 4:15PM			Final/Term papers due