Philosophy 3120: Social and Political Philosophy

(The course syllabus is subject to change by the instructor with sufficient notice to the class.)

Course Information

Professor: Denise Meda-Lambru
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 am -1:00 pm, EESAT 310U, or by appointment

Course Meetings: TTH 3:30 - 4:50 pm
Location: CHEM 235

Course Description

This course explores fundamental questions about the nature of political power and the organization of society. We will examine how different societies are structured, how power is distributed and exercised, social contract, and the role of the State in modern discourses. Students will also learn about cosmological and community based relations. Focusing primarily on the Americas, the course will draw out connections between political power, social oppressions, and social systems in colonial and modern eras.

Course Objectives

- Students are expected to identify the arguments in the readings, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each argument, and synthesize positions on debates.
- Students will be able to identify and critically evaluate different theories of political power, social justice, and the role of the state in early modern political philosophy.
- Students will develop a deeper understanding of how colonialism and its legacy shape contemporary social and political realities in the Americas.
- Students will gain an introductory understanding to some Indigenous cosmologies in the Americas.

Course Readings

This course, class discussions, and student comprehension (as well as grades) require that each student read the assigned material prior to class discussions. All course readings are accessible online. The course schedule lists the readings, and identifies where the student can access them (via *Canvas,* the UNT library, or as otherwise stated on the course schedule).

Assignments

Discussion Boards (2)	20%
Exams (2)	40%
Essay	20%
Attendance	10%
Participation	10%

Attendance

The course is scheduled to meet in person twice a week. You are expected to attend every class on time. However, you are allowed three unexcused absences, without any penalty. After three unexcused absences, a 1% deduction will be applied to the attendance category for each missed class. Please note that attending less than 75% of a single class is considered absent. If you miss a class, contact me immediately to discuss the class material and assignments.

Illness Related Measures

Students who have symptoms of illness should prioritize their health and that of their peers. This may include that one refrain from participating in face-to-face instruction or other measures to minimize exposure.

Participation

Student participation includes discussing the course materials, especially with an understanding of the argument and main claims, critiques, questions, and connections with other course materials. Participation will be evaluated through a variety of opportunities such as in-class quizzes, and class discussion, i.e., asking questions, offering analysis and/or commentary, engagement during small group discussions.

Late Assignments

Late assignments are not generally accepted. However, I understand life happens, so, I do make exceptions for excusable reasons that include your health and a family member's health. Exceptions do not include computer errors, work schedules, or simply forgetting an assignment. After an absence, you should contact me within 48 hours. Students are required to speak with the instructor prior to submitting the assignment so I can determine an alternative submission date.

Classroom Etiquette

This course is going to discuss controversial issues that may challenge our understanding, our patience, and our interactions with one another. In order for us to preserve a space that allows us to investigate and engage critically, students are asked to participate in respectful dialogue.

Given that technology is essential for this course, it is important you utilize it to your advantage and not as a distraction. Continuous disruptions will impact the learning environment and may result in penalties from the student's participation score. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students/

Email Communication*

Check your emails regularly. Your emails to me should follow proper email etiquette:

> A clear title in the subject line, a detailed purpose of the email in the text box, and a closing/student's signature.

I will respond to emails within 48 hours, Monday – Friday.

Course Suggestions

- Check *Canvas* regularly for assignments, readings, and course updates.
- Actively check your grade and attendance throughout the semester. It is easier to address any issues early on rather than at the end of the term.
- Exchange contact information with at least two peers so you can discuss the course material and/or notes if you miss any information or class.
- Use the campus resources to your advantage. For example, the UNT Writing Center is a great place to develop your writing skills and to work through your writing assignments. Another fabulous resource are the UNT libraries for subject related materials.
- Philosophy courses may be challenging, especially at first, so *please* do not hesitate to ask for help. I am happy to serve as a resource.
- Additional philosophy resources:
  Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy- https://iep.utm.edu/
  Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy- https://plato.stanford.edu/

UNT Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. For additional information see the ODA website at https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/.

Non-Academic Responsibilities

You are a student among many other roles you fulfill in life. If our course and other priorities, such as family responsibilities and work schedules conflict, please discuss the challenges with me. I will try to be flexible and accommodate your learning experience and outside classroom responsibilities.