



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 553 – Advanced Topics in Political Philosophy**  
**Lec 01, Topic 01 – “Property and Distributive Justice”**

**Winter Term 2010**

**Course Outline**

**Instructor:** Allen Habib

**Office:** SS 1228

**Phone:** 220-6461

**Email:** [anhabib@ucalgary.ca](mailto:anhabib@ucalgary.ca)

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 1100-1200

**Class Time:** Wednesdays, 12:00-3:00

**Location:** Scurfield Hall, Room 278

**Course Description:**

This is a seminar in the theory of property, in particular private property. We will cover a number of figures in the history of property theory, e.g. Aquinas, Grotius, Pufendorf, Locke and Hume, in addition to contemporary authors like Robert Nozick, G.A. Cohen and Jeremy Waldron. We will survey and assess the answers they give to traditional questions about private property: How is private property ultimately justified? How is the appropriation of un-owned things justified? What are property rights, and what are their limits? What is the nature of the relationship between property rights and justice? Between property rights and the law? Between property rights and the state, or public policy? The class will be taught in a seminar fashion, with an opening lecture on the weekly readings, followed by group discussion. Students will be expected to make assessments and critiques of the weekly readings in discussion.

**Texts:**

Much of the required reading for this course is available via an electronic database (Past Masters, Jstore, etc.) accessible to students through the library. I will post assigned readings and source information on the course's Blackboard link.

**Evaluation:**

Grades will be based on three things:

- 1) A term paper, worth 60% of the final grade
- 2) 10 sort précis of (one of) the weekly readings, worth 20% of the final grade
- 3) A poster presentation, worth 20% of the final grade

There will not be a Registrar-scheduled final exam for this course.

**Students are required to complete all assignments to pass the course.**

*Short Papers:* Students must submit a brief précis (no more than 2 pages) of one selection from the weekly reading. The papers should summarize the most salient parts of the text, and offer some quick analysis. Students are responsible for 10 of these throughout the semester.

*Term Papers:* Term papers must be between 12 and 15 pages (3000 – 4 000 words), with a bibliography. The final draft is due on the last day of class. **Students must submit a rough draft on Friday March 24<sup>th</sup>.**

*Posters:* The poster presentations consist of a short (5-10 minute) in-class talk on a topic, accompanied with some visual aids (powerpoint slides, etc.). The student must submit the text of the presentation (about 1000 words) as well. I expect that student's poster papers will be on the same topic as their term papers, but this is not mandatory. **Students will present their posters in the second to last week of class (April 7<sup>th</sup>).**

**Grades:**

Letter grades will be assigned by the following percentages:

95-100% = A+    90-95% = A    85-90% = A-    80-85% = B+    75-80% = B    70-75% = B-  
65 - 70% = C+    60-65% = C    55-60% = C-    50-55% = D    <50% = F

**Late Work:** Late work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis, with a penalty of one full letter grade per week.

**INTELLECTUAL HONESTY**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test;*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

**STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVE**

The Humanities Representative is Britney Luimes, MSC 251, [humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca) or 220-3913.