Cluster: Morality
Title of course: Social and Political Philosophy
Course Number: PHL 316
Proposing Faculty: Jovan Babic
Cluster Coordinator: 

Cluster Course to New Cluster
Other clusters this course is assigned to: 

Non 'U' course proposed to Cluster Removal: X

UNST Committee: PASS: Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, reason: 

UCC Committee: PASS: Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, reason: 
University Studies
Cluster Course Addition
Adding a previously unapproved course to a cluster

(When addressing questions, please attach a separate sheet)

PHL 316 – SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

PROPOSING FACULTY: Professor Jovan Babic, PhD, Dept. of Philosophy.

1. THE COURSE

A. COURSE TITLE, NUMBER, AND CATALOG DESCRIPTION

PHL 316 – SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

This course is designed to examine the main philosophical theories of the nature and principles of just society. Social and political order, freedom, justice, and happiness are declared to be the principal ends of any society. Philosophical theories describe, explore, explain, and frequently attempt to justify specific social or political arrangements in order to attain these goals. The approach will be historical in focusing on the most important and influential theories, starting with ancient philosophical thought of Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle; then medieval thinkers, (St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas) followed by Machiavelli, Luther and Calvin; to the modern: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and John Stuart Mill. The course will end with a discussion of contemporary political thought (John Rawls, R. Nozick, K. Popper)

B. DEVELOPMENT

Is the course based upon an existing course, or is it a new course under development?

The crucial reason is the need to give to students more information in this part of philosophy and the history of philosophy. Social and political philosophy focuses on a part of philosophy that is in great part neglected, though important. Every philosophy major and everyone interested in practical philosophy should not go without some information on figures like Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel, or John Stuart Mill, philosophers whose most prominent work is in their social and political thought. It should be a course where two approaches meet: history of philosophy and applied ethics. The knowledge acquired by taking this course should give students better general education.

C. AVAILABILITY

With what regularity has the course been—or will the course be—offered?

It is the course that is now offered as Special Studies Phl 399 course. It deserves to be included as a regular course in the philosophy curriculum and in University Studies clusters.

D. PREREQUISITES

List any course prerequisites beyond the cluster Sophomore Inquiry course.

Currently, there are no prerequisites for this course.
2. COURSE OUTLINE.

Provide a detailed outline of the proposed course, also including its preliminary reading list, and the name(s) of instructor(s) committed to teaching the course.

Course Outline:

After the first lecture offering introductory remarks on the nature of the practical reasoning and an overview of the whole course, we will get on with specific issues in the order shown in the this outline.

Weeks:
1-2. Introduction; Ancient Social and Political Thought (Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle)
3-4. Medieval thought, Renaissance, Reformation (Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Luther, Calvin)
8. John Stuart Mill
9-10. Contemporary Theories (John Rawls, his critics, Nozick, Popper)

Requirements: Class Contribution and group reports. Regular attendance is expected. You are expected to contribute to the class discussion, and every student is expected to participate: not only to listen passively, but to be a part of a critical dialogue regarding some of the most important moral issues through our philosophical investigation of the main themes in social philosophy. Class participation will be worth 20% of your course grade.

One mid-term paper, worth 30% of the grade on a topic of your choice covering an issue from the course already discussed in class, 3-6 pages long due in class on end of week 5 (May 1st).

One final term paper 4-8 pages long, worth 50% of the grade, due in class the last day we meet. The papers should be written in the form of critical analysis, must be well-reasoned, and argumentative. Be consistent and careful in your expression; length is not a guarantee of quality.

Writing Standards:
Papers should be written in an organized and coherent form addressing the following questions:
1. What is the issue under consideration?
2. What is your thesis?
3. What is the argument for that thesis?
4. Looking at the paper critically, but with your aims in mind, what should you have done differently? What would have made the paper more effective (plausible, persuasive)? What other questions should be asked about this particular paper?
5. What can we learn from this paper? What should we know or expect about after reading it that we might have not known or thought about before? What do you get, or think to get, from writing and completing the paper? What message are you sending to someone who might read it without having to grade it? Are you satisfied with the paper? (That is most important.)

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS.

A. COURSE CONTENT & SUITABILITY FOR CLUSTER

Discuss the course content in relationship to the thematic focus of the cluster.

The educational purpose is to offer students in Philosophy and other departments an opportunity to learn more about this neglected academic field. This opportunity will be opened up by including Social and Political Philosophy in Junior level university cluster.
B. UNST GOALS

Indicate what materials and assignments will address those University Studies goals appropriate to the course content and cluster theme (the goals are Inquiry and Critical Thinking, Communication, Diversity of Human Experience, and Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility).

**Inquiry and Critical Thinking:**

The readings, classroom discussions, and writing assignments in Social and Political Philosophy are devised in a way that will give students an opportunity to think in a more precise way about some of the most important issues in our life, both everyday life and life at the social and political level. Acquiring the skill of thinking more critically about these topics may contribute not only to a better life, but also to more efficient dealings regarding permanent changes we encounter in contemporary world. The impact of many of those changes may produce a feeling of uncertainty and lack of understanding that possibly may be overcome by better understanding the way societies create their basic institutions and value patterns. In order to acquire skills that will enable students to better evaluate various arguments, attitudes, views, practices, and actions in the area of social and political changes we must first better understand this impact and its significance.

**Communication:**

The course is designed to enhance a student’s ability to communicate in ways which are not covered in other courses. It is designed with the purpose in mind to better understand what is going on regarding various aspects of our daily life: communal, political or at the world scale, especially those having to do with more sensitive social, political, or moral aspects of the phenomena we want to understand.

**Diversity of Human Experience:**

The course deals with topics that explore a variety of possible meanings of theories of social order and justice. Understanding those theories and their implications will enhance and diversify student experience. The diversity of the many possible uses and misuses of knowledge in the field or lack of it has a global character.

**Ethical Issues & Social Responsibility:**

The ethical part is the main point of the subject: the nature and principles of a just society. Social order, freedom, justice, and happiness are the topics that are not only interesting for theoretical investigation but also for enhancing our experience of social and moral responsibility in what we think and do. The gathered knowledge should contribute to developing awareness of the social importance of ethical issues in all different areas of many complex aspects of our life, due to the enormous progress in science producing practices which have not as of yet found their final or proper criteria to apply in ever more complex world. And there is no better way to explore this but by discussing the most far-reaching and accumulated wisdom contained in thought of great philosophers.

C. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Discuss the teaching strategies employed in the course and how they articulate with the student-centered, active-learning strategies characteristic of University Studies courses.

The teaching strategies are partly defined in the previous sections dealing with Course Outline, Requirements, and Writing Standards. The course content will be rich and student-centered, to make room for a creative and fruitful atmosphere to discuss these intriguing and challenging questions.
PROPOSING FACULTY: Jovan Babic

COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER: Social and Political Philosophy PHL 316

****************************************

OBTAIN CHAIR AND CLUSTER COORDINATOR SIGNATURES
BEFORE SUBMITTING TO UNIVERSITY STUDIES OFFICE

DEPARTMENT CHAIR(S): Michael Philips DATE: 4/28/03

_____________________________ DATE: ____________

CLUSTER COORDINATOR: Bryan J. Hams DATE: Nov. 5, 03

All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSU’s Senate Curriculum Committee.

THE ORIGINAL + 12 COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL
MUST BE RECEIVED AT UNIVERSITY STUDIES (CH 163)
BY OCTOBER 31, 2003

****************************************

COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATORS: __________________________ DATE: ____________

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE: __________________________ DATE: ____________