The Just Society:
Race and Modern Political Philosophy
Fall 2010

Instructor: Eric Lambert
Email: elambert@kzoo.edu
2:30—5:30

Office: HH 202
Office hrs: Th

Texts

Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction, 2nd ed., Will Kymlicka

Contract and Domination, Charles Mills and Carole Pateman

Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy, ed. Lewis R. Gordon

Course description
The objective of The Just Society is to survey and become conversant with themes, concepts, and arguments in contemporary political philosophy. While we will look at different approaches to political theory and practice, liberalism remains the most influential political theory, and thus will provide the background against which alternative approaches are examined. But the course is designed and intended as a critique of liberalism, especially liberal conceptions of institutions, social relations, and agency. Many of our readings are therefore critical reflections on liberal social philosophy (i.e., understandings of individuality, equality, freedom, and so on). To this end, we will spend a good portion of time studying Critical Race Theory, a tradition that focuses on the concept of race, forms of racism, and race relations generally; but that does so by drawing on insights from many other traditions such as feminism, existentialism, socialism and liberalism itself. The primary goal of The Just Society is to gain facility with these concepts with a view to critically analyzing and evaluating liberalism, in discussion and in your writing, and especially in connection with contemporary phenomena.

Grading

55% two (2) essays

- Short essay (5-7 pages), worth 20% of final grade
- Final essay (10-12 pages), worth 30% of final grade
- Peer review of rough draft of final paper (typed, min. 3-5 pp.), 5%

30% three (3) short papers (aim for 2-3 carefully written pages), worth 10% each
15% participation

Attendance
Attendance is required. Since there are only ten weeks per quarter, each class session is important. Thus three or more unexcused absences will result in 0.5 points being immediately deducted from a student’s final grade (so if your final grade is 2.7 and you have three unexcused absences, you will receive a 2.3). Lateness should also be avoided. Since tardiness is usually disruptive, excessive lateness (three or more times late) will count as an unexcused absence.

Late papers
Unless prior arrangements are made, late papers will be marked down 0.25 points each day the paper is late. Late papers will not be penalized only if prior arrangements are made, appropriate documentation is provided, and the reasons are consistent with Kalamazoo College policy.
Academic Integrity
Per the Kalamazoo College Honor System: "The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." Simply put, do not plagiarize. If you are not sure what plagiarism consists of, talk to me. Plagiarized work will result (at a minimum) in a failing grade for that assignment, and possibly a failing grade for the course.

Schedule of readings

Week 1
Mon, Sep 20: Kymlicka:
   Chapter 1, Introduction, 1-9
Wed, Sep 22: Chapter 3, Liberal Equality, 53-75
Fri, Sep 24: Chapter 3, Liberal Equality, 88-96

Week 2
Mon, Sep 27: Kymlicka:
   Chapter 6, Communitarianism, 208-228; 244-261
Wed, Sep 29: Chapter 7, Citizenship Theory 284-299; 312-319
Fri, Oct 01: Gordon: Sartre, “Return from the United States,” 83-84

Week 3
Mon, Oct 04: Kymlicka:
   Chapter 8, Multiculturalism, 327-347; 365-370

Week 4
Mon, Oct 11: Kymlicka:
   Chapter 9, Feminism, 377-398

Fri, Oct 15: Gordon: James, “Black Feminism,” 215-224

Week 5
Mon, Oct 18: Kymlicka:
   Chapter 5, Marxism, 166-168; 176-195
Wed, Oct 20: Marx, excerpt from 1844 Manuscripts, on alienation (handout)
Fri, Oct 22: Marx, excerpt from *Capital, v. 1*, on commodity fetishism (handout)

Week 6

Week 7
- Fri, Nov 05: Discussion

Week 8

Week 9
- Mon, Nov 15: Mills and Pateman: “Race, Sex, and Indifference,” 134-164

Week 10
- Wed, Nov 24: Exchange and peer review of rough drafts of final paper

Due dates for papers:

- September 27 the first short paper (2-3 pp.) is due.
- October 11 the second short paper (2-3 pp.) is due.
- October 18 the third short paper (2-3 pp.) is due.
- November 8 the short essay (4-6 pp.) is due.

NOTE: The final paper will be due December 3. Students are to deliver the final paper to Humphrey House 202, no later than 4:00 pm.