Course Description:
The social contract tradition is a foundational pillar of modern political philosophy. Authors in this tradition hold that life without any government (the supposed “state of nature”) would be so problematic that it motivates people to set up a “contract” of sorts with one another that institutes a system of government. This account of the move from the state of nature to government supposedly explains why we have an obligation to obey existing governments. According to this tradition government and laws of some kind are a prerequisite to any minimally just society whatsoever. This is how the tradition differs from philosophical anarchism (another course entirely). Although the social contract tradition is an overarching framework authors within it have very different views on topics such as just and unjust systems of government, consent, the sources and limits of political obligation, property rights, and the supposed right to revolt. We will study this tradition by reading excerpts from Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. We will end the course by reading two contemporary authors, Pateman and Mills, who critique this tradition on the basis of gender and race.

General learning objectives:
By the end of Phil 210, all students are expected to be able to:
- Identify and articulate the fundamentals of and differences between the four classic social contract models,
- Understand the arguments of each author in detail as well as the assumptions that they rely upon,
- Identify and articulate errors or oversights in both individual authors and the social contract framework itself.

We will meet these learning objectives through a combination of readings, pre-class questions that accompany readings, lectures, in-class discussion, and individual assignments (see below).

Expectations: This syllabus will let you know my expectations. I am also interested in knowing about you and what your expectations for class are. Please take a moment to fill out the note card on your desk with the following:
1. Name, year, major (if known) and relevant interests—academic or otherwise.
2. Prior experience in philosophy, political science, formal logic, mock trial, pre-law or debate (if any).
3. (Most important) Your expectations for this class!

Participation and Attendance: Participation is 15% of your grade. For the purposes of evaluation, I consider attendance a necessary yet not sufficient condition for participation (you can’t participate unless you attend, but simply attending does not mean you are fully participating). So, if you miss more than 3 days without advance notice or extenuating circumstances you will automatically loose this 15%. If you must miss a day due to family emergencies or other extenuating circumstances then please e-mail me in advance (if possible). Please also e-mail me whenever you miss class for other reasons. As for participation: you need to be an active participant to get full participation (i.e.: contribute to in-class debate, answer questions, critique an author or a point by a fellow classmate, etc). This means that you should always come to class having thoroughly read the assigned readings. Apart from lecture we will use structured questions and class discussion to analyze the readings; both methods require familiarity with the text and active questioning based on that familiarity.

Paper writing standards: Writing a philosophy paper is different from the paper writing you might do for other classes. Although many of the questions we will discuss have no single “correct” answer there are nevertheless better and worse ways to construct an argument. You will be graded on how well you defend your views (whatever they may be) not the content of your views. For guidance please read Jim Pryor’s essay “How to Write a Philosophy Paper” (required). Even though his writing style can be snarky, it helps: http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html. You should strive to clearly and succinctly express your arguments. This may involve an accurate, short summary of another’s arguments. Please always keep in mind that when writing you need to express yourself very clearly, as I can only grade what you write on the page. Even if you know a theory or argument well in your head, I can only grade what you write (there is no fair way evaluate what someone intends to write but does not clearly or unambiguously express). I write fairly detailed comments on each student’s paper in order to explain why you have earned a certain grade. Comments are meant to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses and to do better on the next paper. If you ever feel that my comments show that I have misunderstood what you wrote then please meet with me and we will go over the paper.

Turning in writing and extensions: All writing assignments are due by 5.00pm on the due date (includes the 3 author summaries, the midterm and the final). Assignments will be counted down 1/3 of a grade (i.e.: A to A-, or B- to C+) for
each day (or part of a day) they are late. This means it is important to turn papers in on time. Please plan so that you are not working on your paper right up until 5:00. Extensions will not normally be granted. However, please let me know if you feel there are *extenuating circumstances* that merit an extension. Turn in paper copies to the clear bin hanging near my office (HH #202). An electronic copy (the same as the paper copy) should also be emailed to me. The paper copy needs to be in by 5:00, but the electronic copy may arrive later in the evening when you have access to email.

**Laptops and cell phones:** This class involves engaged discussion. A distraction-free environment where people can focus on the material is always the best for discussion. Because laptops typically produce a variety of distractions (email, Farmville, etc…) they are not allowed. Also, please do not text during class.

**Discussion questions:** I distribute questions via email each week to help you focus on the most salient issues within the readings (this is why I ask for your K-emails the first day). Although we will discuss some of these questions in class we will not always get to every question. I encourage you to think about the questions we do not get to after class and re-read the material with them in mind. Doing so will help you on assignments and papers. You are also encouraged to come to office hours to discuss any questions that we don’t get to in class or other aspects of the class as well.

**Readings:** Please read the readings **before** class on the day for which they are listed below (except the 1st day). You will need to thoroughly read (not skim) all assigned readings. This course has quite a bit of difficult reading and philosophy texts take time to read. I don’t want anyone to fall behind, so please make sure you set aside enough time in your fall schedule to do the readings. You are encouraged to come to office hours to talk further about the readings. Because Friday classes are only 40 minutes we will primarily use this time for in class discussion and review of the more difficult aspects contained in each respective theory. Readings assigned for Friday are review readings. This means that you should re-read the material (not read it for the first time) before coming to class on Friday.

**Summaries of an author’s views on a given issue:** For each of the 4 classical authors we cover I assign a prompt asking you to summarize the author’s views on a particular issue. Because the prompts will be fairly straightforward, your response should be short: 350-400 words! You only need to complete 3 of the 4 prompts and **you may choose** which 3 to write. But be aware that these prompts are assigned as we go along. This means that if you choose to skip one prompt you must then do all the subsequent ones (i.e.; if you skip Hobbes, you **must** write on Locke, Rousseau and Kant).

**Grading breakdown:**
- Attendance and participation: 15%
- 3 short summaries (350-400 words each) throughout the term: 30% (each worth 10%)
- Midterm paper: 25%
- Final paper: 30%

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**Week 1**
**09/12:** Social contract tradition overview (syllabus review, lecture on social contract tradition & Hobbes)  
**Reading:** Jim Pryor’s online essay “How to Write a Philosophy Paper” (see above for web address)

**09/14:** Beginning Hobbes  
**Reading:** Leviathan, “The Introduction” (pgs.3-5) & chapters 10, 11, 13 & 17

**09/16:** Hobbes in-class discussion and review  
**Reading:** Review Leviathan, particular emphasis on chapters 10,11, 13 & 17

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**Week 2**
**09/19:** The laws of nature and consent in Hobbes  
**Reading:** Leviathan, Chapters 14-15, 20-21

**09/21:** Hobbesian Sovereignty  
**Reading:** Leviathan, Chapters 16, 18-19, 29 (also review chapters 17 & 20-21)  
**Writing:** Hobbes prompt for potential summary distributed (via email).

**09/23:** Hobbes in-class discussion and review  
**Reading:** Review Leviathan, particular emphasis on chapters 17 & 20-21
Week 3
09/26: The state of nature and natural law in Locke
Reading: Second Treatise, Chapters 1-4

09/28: The labor theory of value, the seeds of capitalism and property in Locke
Reading: Second Treatise, Chapters 5 & 13

09/30: Locke in-class discussion and review
Reading: Review Second Treatise, Chapters 5 & 13

Week 4
10/03: Lockeian consent and reasons for leaving the State of Nature
Reading: Second Treatise, Chapters 6-12, 14 (focus on 8-12).
Due Date: Hobbes summary due on 10/03 by 5pm.

10/05: The right to revolt: The difference between commonwealths created by acquisition and by institution.
Reading: Second Treatise, Chapters 16, 17, 19 (focus on paragraphs 175-6, 223-8)
Writing: Locke prompt for potential summary distributed (via email).
Handout: Be sure to pick up the Waldron article for next time!

10/07: Locke in-class discussion and review

Week 5:
10/10: Healthy and unhealthy love-for-self in Rousseau
Reading: Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, Part 1

10/12: The state of nature and the ambiguous effects of civilization according to Rousseau
Reading: Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, Part 2 (focus on pgs. 63-68)
Writing: Midterm paper topics distributed (via email)
10/14: Midterm Break: No class.

Week 6:
10/17: The social contract and the “general will” according to Rousseau
Reading: On the Social Contract, Book I all chapters, Book II all chapters & Book IV chapters 1-2 (in Book II focus on chapters 1-7, especially chapters 3-4)
Due Date: Locke summary due on 10/17 by 5pm.

10/19: Government and society according to Rousseau
Due Date: Midterm paper due on 10/19 by 5 pm.
Writing: Rousseau prompt for potential summary distributed (via email).

10/21: Rousseau in-class discussion and review
Reading: Review On the Social Contract, Book II, all chapters

Week 7:
10/24: External freedom and provisional rights according to Kant
Reading: The Metaphysics of Morals, 6:245-6:270, 6:306-6:308
Handout: Be sure to pick up a copy of “On the Common Saying” reading for next few classes.

10/26: The role of property and welfare in Kant’s ideal state
Reading: Metaphysics of Morals, 6:311-318 & “On the Common Saying” Section II 8:289-297

10/28: Kant in-class discussion and review, Reading: Review Metaphysics of Morals, 6:311-318
Week 8:
10/31: Kant’s views on revolution
Due Date: Rousseau summary due on 10/31 by 5pm.

11/02: Review of Kant.
Reading: To be Determined (readings distributed via email).
Writing: Kant prompt for potential summary distributed (via email).
Handout: Be sure to pick up “Contract and Consent” by Hampton for next time!

Reading: “Contract and Consent” by Hampton and additional readings (via email).
Handout: Be sure to pick up a copy of the Pateman reading for next 2 classes.

Week 9:
11/07: The Sexual Contract: What did the social contract tradition leave out? (part 1)
Reading: The Sexual Contract, chapters 1, 2 & part of 3 (up to pg. 53).

11/09: The Sexual Contract: What did the social contract tradition leave out? (part 2)
Reading: The Sexual Contract, chapter 4.

11/11: Review of Pateman
Reading: Review above excerpts from The Sexual Contract.

Week 10:
11/14: The Racial Contract: What did the social contract tradition leave out? (part 3)
Reading: The Racial Contract, introduction and chapter 1 “Overview”
Due Date: Kant summary due on 11/14 by 5 pm.
Writing: Final exam topics distributed (via email).

11/16: The Racial Contract: What did the social contract tradition leave out? (part 4)
Reading: The Racial Contract, chapter 2 “Details”.

11/18: Review of Mills
Reading: Review above chapters from The Racial Contract.

FINAL PAPER DUE on 11/21 by 11.00am.