

Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approval I = Information*

Course Number PHIL451 Philosophy and Social Justice or Degree Plan(s) _____

State the requested change and reason. A memo may be attached if more space is necessary.

Request: Add PHIL451 - Philosophy and Social Justice to the menu of courses that satisfy the university requirements for all bachelor's degrees with respect to the general education criteria for social science credit.

Rationale: This course fits the criteria set forth in the *Social Science Criteria* document.

See the attached narrative to see how this courses objectives meet the criteria for general education social science courses.

Circle the number that corresponds to the requested change. Degree plan changes are on the second page.

					COUNCIL**					
	Change to a Course	Dept./School	College Academic	Deans	UGEC	UAC	GRAD	Provost	Faculty	President
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I			I	--	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I			I	--	I
3.	Content (substantive change)	A	A	A	I			A	--	A
4.	Number of hours (lecture, lab, contact)	A	A	A	A			A	--	A
5.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I			I	--	I
6.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A			A	--	A
7.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I			I	--	I
8.	Course fee(s)	A	--	A	--			A	--	I
9.	From U to G <i>or</i> G to U	A	A	A	A			A	--	A
10.	Cross list with another dept: U or G level	A	A	A	A			A	--	A
11.	Department of record	A	A	A	A			A	--	A
12.	Open or close a course	A	A	A	A			A	--	A
13.	New course — See Adams Center for packet. This change includes combining or splitting a course(s).	A	A	A	A			A	--	A

* Councils may request additional information about "Information" items. These items are approved as "Consent Agenda."

** In most cases, approval by only one council is necessary.

Note: When an academic unit does not have a council, the UGEC and/or UUAC will serve as its academic council, depending on the nature of the issue.

PHIL451 – Philosophy and Social Justice

Catalog Description.

PHIL451 Philosophy and Social Justice (3-0-3), fall, even years. This course considers the contributions of major contemporary philosophers to understanding distributive social justice on a national and international level. The class will explore the consistency of various positions with the teachings of Jesus about social justice. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

Rationale for upper level number: All of us who teach philosophy courses agree that we want the courses to be more than intellectual exercises, we want them to have existential importance for each student. [“What is the meaning of life?”] Philosophy differs from the *true* social science offerings in that our emphasis is on the normative as opposed to the descriptive or explanatory; when the social sciences do deal with the normative, they are engaging in philosophy. Dealing with the normative requires a degree of sophisticated/abstract thinking that is usually not necessary for understanding the descriptive/ explanatory. Because of the existential emphasis, we would like the students to be as mature as possible; we would like for them to have some previous experience with thinking through some difficult issues, especially in Bible classes. This class has the rigor of an advanced class.

Objectives:

- i The students will learn various historical views of:
 - 1 Justice - What do we owe each other, if anything?
 - 2 Liberty and Autonomy.
 - 3 Equality – How are we equal when we are so obviously not?
 - 4 Responsibility – To what degree are we responsible?
- ii The students will learn the philosophical bases and implications of the following political philosophies:
 - 1 Libertarianism
 - a Free-market
 - b Self-ownership
 - 2 Egalitarian Liberalism
 - 3 Socialism
 - 4 Conservatism (Burkean)
 - 5 Communitarianism
 - 6 Feminism (“Ethic of Care”)
- iii We will explore national and world-wide social problems, e.g., poverty, oppression (racism, sexism), child mortality, and distribution of resources to/in Third World countries.
- iv We will raise and examine the question of Jesus and justice in this world.

The written criteria from the Social Science Criteria document are shown in BLUE font.

- 1. Disciplines - *Philosophy* is one of the listed disciplines.
- 2. Definition - The numbers in brackets {} indicate the lecture numbers applicable to that particular topic as indicated on the course calendar in the syllabus. Each class period is one hour and twenty minutes.
 - a. At the individual level, this course may involve the study of behavioral factors such as cognition, memory, language, perception, personality, emotion, motivation, and others.

This course primarily deals with human interaction but at the level of the individual we delve into the questions of liberty and autonomy {4}, responsibility {21}, and empathy {28}. We

look at how we arrive at difficult moral and political decisions, focusing on the technique known as *reflective equilibrium* {2, 3}.

- b. At higher levels of aggregation, this course may involve the study of social variables such as the structure and dynamics of small groups (e.g., couples, families, work groups, etc.); institutions and organizations (e.g., schools, religious organizations, etc.); communities (defined by geography or common interests); and larger demographic, political, economic, and cultural systems.

The two levels of aggregation that we explore are at the nation-state and the global. We explore the governmental structure (or lack thereof) suggested by the various political theories in (ii, 1-6) {5-10, 12-17}. We take each one of these political philosophies and see how they respond to questions of justice, liberty/autonomy, equality {18, 19}, responsibility {20, 21}. We then move to investigate how each of the philosophies responds to *brokenness* in the system – sexism {16}, racism {22, 23}, and poverty {24, 25}.

- c. This course may involve the study of the interactions within and between these levels of aggregation, such as the influence of sociocultural factors on cognitive processes and emotional responses or the reciprocal influence between small groups and larger communities.

There are two smaller aggregations within the nation-state that we examine: (1) the family {16 among others} and (2) the church {27 among others}.

3. Course Content:

- a. Introduce students to a particular discipline within the social sciences, with an emphasis on its basic methods of inquiry, significant research findings, influential theories, key concepts and terminology, and the major topics common to the discipline.

This is the primary approach of the course, emphasizing philosophical analysis and focusing on the most important political philosophies of the last forty years.

- b. Introduce students to a particular period of history with an emphasis on event timelines, historical biographies, and the critical debates associated with their interpretation.

I do try to produce some kind of historical consciousness by constantly referring to events that relate to the topics and philosophies that we are considering. We do focus in this course primarily on the period from the 1960s to the present and I do try to keep them aware of the timeline.

PHIL451.01 - Philosophy and Social Justice

Fall 2010
1:30-2:50 PM
CBS 128

College of Arts and Sciences
Abilene Christian University

Paul Morris, Ph.D.

Professor of Physics and Philosophy

Office: Foster Science Building 317C, 674-2165, morrisp@acu.edu

Home: 665-5375 [Before 10:30 PM]

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00, 3:30-5:00 MW, 3:00-5:00 R and by appointment

Relationship of the course to institutional mission:

The purpose of this course fits squarely into the mission of Abilene Christian University to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world; the mission of the Academic Division of Abilene Christian University to plan, organize, and implement academic programs that focus on educating students for Christian leadership throughout the world; the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences to educate students for worldwide Christian service and leadership through programs of study and other learning experiences that blend a liberal arts education with professional and career education and the mission of the Philosophy Program to provide a program of study that will challenge students to explore the meaning of their lives and to give a foundation for flourishing as a Christian in the world.

Course Audience:

This course is designed as a social science elective for undergraduate students and to enrich the philosophy minor offerings.

Catalog Description:

This course considers the contributions of major contemporary philosophers to understanding distributive social justice on a national and international level. The class will explore the consistency of various positions with the teachings of Jesus about social justice.

Course Overview:

How is social justice achieved in a national context? This course will deal with contemporary philosophers and their approaches to distributive social justice. We will begin with John Rawls and his *Theory of Justice*. All political theorists dealing with justice since 1970 have started with Rawls' ideas. We will then move to Robert Nozick's libertarianism, the first thoroughgoing response to Rawls. We will then move to the communitarian critique with Michael Sandel from the center/left and Alasdair McIntyre from the right. We will then examine the feminist idea of 'the ethic of care' to replace the *masculine* language of rights. How is social justice achieved in an international context? We will look at a global perspective and relationships with third world countries and problems of poverty, child mortality, and distribution of resources. Philosophers here would include Martha Nussbaum, Amartya Sen, Peter Singer, T.M. Scanlon, Thomas Nagel, and Peter Unger.

Throughout the class we will ask which positions are or are not consistent with the teachings of Jesus about social justice.

Objectives:

- i The students will learn various historical views of:
 - 1 Justice - What do we owe each other, if anything?
 - 2 Liberty and Autonomy.
 - 3 Equality – How are we equal when we are so obviously not?
 - 4 Responsibility – To what degree are we responsible?
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 - 6 Feminism (“Ethic of Care”)
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- iv We will raise and examine the question of Jesus and justice in this world.

Course Format:

This course will follow a format that combines reading, lecture, discussion, essay writing, and reflection to engage students in their learning and development. Reading diverse philosophical literature will challenge students to think deeply about the many facets of social justice. The writing of essays will provide the opportunity for in-depth reflection and communication of ideas.

Teaching philosophy:

The philosophy of the professor is for the students to know of various attempts to deal with distributive social justice at both the national and international levels. I hope the students will develop both empathy for and an active sympathy for the plight of people around the world who are oppressed, whether by other human beings or the downside of the lottery of moral luck. I want the students to have a deeper appreciation for the teachings of Jesus in the ‘golden rule’ and the ‘second great commandment.’

Texts: *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Robert Nozick (Basic Books, 1974).
 Political Philosophy (2nd edition), Adam Swift (Polity, 2007).
 E-Packet [BLACKBOARD entries and class handouts reading packet] (EP)

Criteria for grading written papers and oral presentations:

- *A - Professional quality*: The project is concise yet comprehensive, tightly reasoned in argument, well organized, easily understood, and virtually error free. The student demonstrates excellent knowledge of the topic. It fulfills the assignment guidelines with authoritative, current information and insightful analysis.
- *B - Good quality*: The student manages to communicate knowledge of the topic without gross errors. The argument is generally logical and is supported with solid information.
- *C - Mediocre quality*: Errors in information and incomplete knowledge of the topic distract or interfere with the argument or presentation. The coverage is spotty with few or less than solid sources. The argument contains invalid components.

- D - *Unacceptable quality*: The topic coverage is watered-down and disorganized, with major errors in the project. Significant holes exist in the argument.
- F - *Failing quality*: The student does not communicate understanding of the topic. It is undeveloped with many grammar errors and is unharmonious. The student did not do the assignment according to the guidelines.

Course assignments and evaluation:

Written Project	28%
Oral Presentation of Project	7%
Class Preparation, Participation, Short Essays	35%
Final Exam	30%
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	below 60

Project Assignment:

Each student will produce a written project 1800-2200 words in length. The student will select a social justice topic that is of interest to her/him. This should be a fairly narrow topic. If you are having difficulty selecting a topic please consult with me. The written project should have at least three main parts:

- I A discussion of the problem – what it is, its history, and why you are interested in the problem.
- II We (will) have studied several political positions – Rawlsian liberalism, various forms of libertarianism, conservatism, and feminism. Select two of these, with which you disagree, and explain how you think they might respond to the problem. Critique their responses.
- III Select either the position you agree with or one we have not discussed and describe how you would approach solving the problem. Respond to some possible objections that might be aimed at your solution.

Option: You can turn in a rough draft on or before November 12 and I will look at it, make, suggestions, and you can emend your paper. Your final paper will be due on December 2.

You will be required to make a 6-8 minute oral presentation to the class on the day the Final Exam is scheduled. This should focus on Part III of your written project.

Criteria for grading participation and attendance:

More than 3 unexcused absences will result in the FINAL COURSE GRADE being lowered one letter. More than 6 absences will result in being dropped from the course with a WF. It is expected that students will be on time to class. Three tardies will be counted as an absence. With an excused absence, papers and presentations will be accepted late within one week of the period of the excuse. With no excused absence, the grade will be dropped five points for each class day late.

Cell phones are not to go off in class! Grades will be reduced if they do. If you expect an important call, tell Mrs. Reed and direct the call to her at 674-2165 or give her your phone. She will then relay the message to you. As you enter the classroom check to see that your phone is OFF!

Laptops or any other electrical device (iPhone, iPod, cell phone, etc.) are not to be in hand, on desk, or otherwise in use in class! If this use is discovered, you will be counted absent or the day.

Academic Integrity:

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in our own lives. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost's website (acu.edu/campusoffices/provost) and in the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of student life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life and academic departments.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

ACU complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodation for qualified students with a disability. If you have an established disability as defined in the ADA and would like to request accommodation, please see me as soon as possible. You may also contact ACU's Alpha Academic Services concerning disability accommodations at 674-2667.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1 (August 24)	Introduction
2 (August 26)	Short History of Justice – Plato, Aristotle, and Utilitarianism.
3 (August 31)	Exercise in Reflective Equilibrium – “Should Gay Unions Be Legalized?": Think about how you came to your position. Write out a narrative (not more than one page) on how you arrived at the position. [This is not a question about the morality of homosexual acts, but about whether the unions should be legalized, but how you came to your view probably was affected by your moral view.]
4 (September 2)	“What Are Human Rights?” – Origin and Nature of Human Rights; “What Is Liberty?”
5 (September 7)	John Rawls – <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (Liberalism).
6 (September 9)	John Rawls – <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (Liberalism).
7 (September 14)	John Rawls – <i>A Theory of Justice</i> (Liberalism).
8 (September 16)	Robert Nozick – <i>Anarchy, the State, and Utopia</i> (Rights Libertarianism).
9 (September 21)	Robert Nozick – <i>Anarchy, the State, and Utopia</i> (Rights Libertarianism).
10 (September 23)	Friedrich Hayek & Capitalism (Free Market Libertarianism).
11 (September 28)	Taxation.
12 (September 30)	Right Communitarianism – Alasdair McIntyre.
13 (October 5)	Center-Left Communitarianism – Michael Sandel and Michel Walzer.
14 (October 7)	Conservatism.
15 (October 12)	Conservatism.

16 (October 14)	Feminism – Sexism and Family.
17 (October 19)	Feminism – “Ethic of Care”.
18 (October 21)	Egalitarianism.
19 (October 26)	Egalitarianism.
20 (October 28)	Moral Luck and Moral Distance.
21 (November 2)	Responsibility.
22 (November 4)	Cosmopolitanism and Racism.
23 (November 9)	Racism.
24 (November 11)	Global Poverty – Causes and Responses.
25 (November 16)	Global Poverty – Causes and Responses.
26 (November 18)	The Environment and Justice: Rough drafts (if wanted) of projects are due today or tomorrow.
27 (November 23)	Social Justice, <i>The Bible</i> , and Jesus. Rough draft of projects returned.
(November 25)	Thanksgiving
28 (November 30)	Social Justice, Jesus, and Empathy. Project due. Final Exam will be passed out.
29 (December 2)	Summation
FINAL EXAM DAY	Presentations. Final Exams due.