

**Social Structure, Public Policy, and Ethics**  
**Carnegie Mellon University**  
**Spring 2016**

**Instructor:** Aidan Kestigian  
**Office:** Doherty Hall 4301 B  
**Email:** akestigian@cmu.edu  
**Office hours:** Monday 11:30-1:30, and by appointment

**Course number:** 80-136  
**Course location:** Scaife Hall 219  
**Time:** MWF 1:30 – 2:20 a.m.

**Course Description:**

The course will consider ethical questions surrounding social structure and public policy. It will analyze the role of political institutions and individual citizens in dealing with some of the greatest challenges facing our world, in particular with respect to democracy and democratic representation. Some of the questions we will consider include: What does it mean to be “equal” as citizens? What do representatives owe their constituents? How can we ensure equality and justice in a multicultural world? The course uses ethical and political theory, case studies, and empirical evidence to consider these questions.

Philosophical inquiry is pursued via writing, speaking, and reading. Throughout this course, students will be asked to read primary source texts, write short responses, and participate in classroom discussions. Written work will typically involve a summary of one or more philosophers’ arguments, followed by an original critique or defense of those arguments. No philosophical background is required for this class. However, if you are having difficulty with the readings or essays, please make an appointment to meet with the instructor.

**Text:**

There is no required text. All readings will be available on the Blackboard site.

**Learning Expectations**

By the end of this course, students should have a general understanding of core contemporary theories of political equality, and be able to apply those theories to the topics of global justice and democratic representation. In particular, students should be able to:

- Read philosophical articles critically, and be able to summarize the main points of those articles in a classroom discussion.
- Generate thoughtful discussion questions in response to readings.
- Summarize the political theories of equality discussed in class in both short blog posts and medium-length essays.

- Explain clearly how the theories of equality discussed in class would apply to both domestic and international policy problems.
- Read and respond to peers' work by critiquing or providing further justification for their peers' claims.
- Review one's own work in light of instructor feedback and explain how one can improve essay and blog content and writing style in future work in a short response piece.

## **Grading**

Participation & Attendance 25%

### *Blog Posts*

Main Blog Posts	10%
Response Blog Posts	10%
Conclusion Blog Posts	5%
Blog Group Presentation	10%

### *Papers*

Paper 1	15%
Paper 1 Response	5%
Paper 2	20%

## **Participation & Attendance**

Students will be evaluated on their preparedness for the day's discussion. In order to be successful, a student must have completed the reading and come prepared with any questions or comments. Participation will be graded based on each student's performance on discussion questions. Please see the "Discussion Questions" assignment below.

Attendance is required for this course and will be recorded each class. Each student is allowed two "freebies." Every class missed after the first two will result in a five-point deduction from your participation & attendance grade. Five or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. You can improve your participation & attendance grade by taking advantage of office hours. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what notes or assignments you missed. I am willing to excuse additional absences due to illness or job events (job fairs, interviews, etc.), but only if I am told about the absence *before* the missed class.

Additional deductions to the attendance & participation grade will be made if the student fails to participate (which includes listening to others, looking actively engaged, etc. in addition to speaking) in daily discussions.

## Course Assignments

### Discussion Questions

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to submit two clarification or discussion questions on the blackboard site before a select number of class meetings. You will be graded on (1) having completed the assignment and (2) your demonstration of having read the material. Your performance on these questions will constitute your initial participation grade. In order to get credit for a day's discussion questions, students must attend the class meeting that day. Please see the assignment instruction sheet for more details.

### Blog Posts

The second written assignments for this course are in the form of blog posts. You will belong to a group of three students who must all contribute to a blog throughout the semester. The posts will be structured as follows. Your group will select one real-world ethical issue that is a topic of discussion in this year's U.S. presidential election. The first eight weeks of the semester will focus on a domestic policy issue, while the second eight weeks will focus on an issue of foreign policy. Every two weeks, one member of your group will write a blog entry about your chosen topic. The blog entry can, for example, highlight a news article from that week about your topic and explain how it relates to the ethical frameworks discussed in our course, or explain how one of the readings from the course (ideally from the previous two weeks of class) relates to your topic. The goal is to have you continuously connect your chosen topic to the work we are doing in class. Once that entry is posted, it is the responsibility of one group member to respond. You will discuss your posts with your group in class, and one member will record a summary of your discussion as a conclusion post. *If you are absent for a blog group discussion, you will receive a 15 pt. deduction from your blog post grade for that week.* In addition to the blog posts, the group will be responsible for leading a class discussion on the ethical implications of the policy you've chosen and its relevance to the presidential election. Please see the assignment instruction sheet for more details.

### Course Papers

In addition to discussion questions and blog posts, students will be asked to write two papers in which they must apply the ethical theories discussed in class to real-world issues. These papers will be approximately six to eight pages in length. Following paper 1, students will be asked to write a 1-2 page response piece in which they explain how they can improve their essay writing in paper 2. Please see the assignment instructions for more information.

## Course Policies

### Late Work

All work handed in late will receive a deduction, starting the minute after assignments are due. Late work will receive a 10-point deduction for every day late. Assignments that are more than four days late will not be accepted.

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

I take very seriously the university's policy on plagiarism and cheating. In all original work, you *must* cite every source you use. Please use a consistent, standard system of citation unless otherwise noted. MLA and APA are common formats in the humanities and social sciences. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the student in question will receive a failing grade for both the assignment and the course. In addition, the university will be notified of the student's misconduct.

A short excerpt from the Carnegie Mellon *Policy on Academic Integrity* is listed below:

“In any manner of presentation, it is the responsibility of each student to produce her/his own original academic work. Collaboration or assistance on academic work to be graded is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor(s). Students may utilize the assistance provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q) unless specifically prohibited by the course instructor(s). Any other sources of collaboration or assistance must be specifically authorized by the course instructor(s).”

In all academic work to be graded, the citation of all sources is required. When collaboration or assistance is permitted by the course instructor(s) or when a student utilizes the services provided by Academic Development, the Global Communication Center, and the Academic Resource Center (CMU-Q), the acknowledgement of any collaboration or assistance is likewise required. This citation and acknowledgement must be incorporated into the work submitted and not separately or at a later point in time. Failure to do so is dishonest and is subject to disciplinary action”

For more information, please read the full *Policy on Academic Integrity*, found at the following link: <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Academic%20Integrity.html>

### Statement on Disabilities

I strive to make the classroom environment as inclusive as possible. If you would like to request accommodations for a disability, please contact me (the instructor) and the Office of Disability Resources at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu) as soon as you are able. You can read about the Office of Disability Resources services here: <https://www.cmu.edu/hr/eos/disability/index.html>.

## Daily Schedule

### Part 1 (Weeks 1-8): American Democracy and Equal Representation

#### Week 1: Introduction to Democratic Theory

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) January 11	Introduction	
(W) January 13	What is Democratic Theory?	Cristiano, <i>Philosophy &amp; Democracy</i> , "Introduction"
(F) January 15	Blog Topic & Presentation Selection	<b>Blog Post 1 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>

#### Week 2: Democracy as Voting

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) January 18	<b>No Class (MLK Day)</b>	
(W) January 20	Voting as a Social Choice	Downs, <i>An Economic Theory of Democracy</i> , Ch. 1 & 3 <b>Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.</b>
(F) January 22	Problems with Social Choice	Riker, <i>Liberalism Against Populism</i> , Ch. 5 Part A

#### Weeks 3: Democracy as Deliberation

Date	Topic	Reading
(M) January 25	Deliberative Democracy	Mansbridge, <i>Against Adversary Democracy</i> , Ch. 1 <b>Primary Post 2 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(W) January 27	Deliberative Democracy	Gutmann & Thompson, <i>Why Deliberative Democracy?</i> P. 1-21 <b>Response Post 2 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(F) January 29	<b>Blog Discussion</b>	<b>Conclusion Post 2 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>

#### Week 4: Equality & Democracy

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) February 1	Equality as Citizens	
(W) February 3	Equality & Democracy	Verba, "Political Equality," part I <b>Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.</b>
(F) February 5	Equality & Democracy	Saunders, "Democracy, Political Equality, and Majority Rule," part A

### **Week 5: Equality & Representation of Competing Interests**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/ Assignment Due</b>
(M) February 8	Recap	Fill Out Reading/Discussion Poll <b>Primary Post 3 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(W) February 10	Minorities & Majority Rule	Christiano “Persistent Minorities” <b>Response Post 3 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(F) February 12	<b>Blog Discussion</b>	<b>Conclusion Post 3 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>

### **Week 6: Democratic Representation in the U.S.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
(M) February 15	Constitutional Voting Rights	U.S. Constitution, excerpts
(W) February 17	Apportionment	Balinski & Young, <i>Fair Representation</i> , Ch. 1-3 <b>Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.</b>
(F) February 19	Apportionment	Balinski & Young, Ch. 4&5.

### **Week 7: Gerrymandering & Redistricting**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
(M) February 22	What is Gerrymandering?	Washington Post, “How to Steal an Election: A Visual Guide” <b>Primary Post 4 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(W) February 24	Gerrymandering & Equality – A Game	No reading - Bring laptop/tablet to class <b>Response Post 4 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(F) February 26	<b>Blog Discussion</b>	<b>Conclusion Post 4 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>

### **Week 8: Campaign Finance Reform**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
(M) February 29	History	Washington Post, “A Brief-ish History of Campaign Finance Reform” <b>Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.</b>
(W) March 2	Finance & Free Speech	Sustein, “Political Equality and Unintended Consequences”
(F) March 4	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Paper 1 Due at 5:00 p.m.</b>

### **Week 9: Spring Break**

## Part 2 (Weeks 10-16): Global Democracy & Equality

### Week 10: Global Political Equality

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) March 14	Global Equality	
(W) March 16	Global Equality	Bohman, "International Regimes and Democratic Governance"
(F) March 18	<b>Blog Discussion</b>	<b>Blog Post 5 Due</b>

### Week 11: Multiculturalism

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) March 21	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism Handout <b>Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.</b>
(W) March 23	Multicultural Rights	Laborde, "Which Multiculturalism Has Failed?"
(F) March 25	<b>Presentation 1</b>	<b>Paper 1 Response Due</b>

### Week 12: Presentation Set 1

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) March 28	<b>Presentation 2</b>	<b>Primary Post 6 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(W) March 30	<b>Presentation 3</b>	<b>Response Post 6 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>
(F) April 1	<b>Blog Discussion</b>	<b>Conclusion Post 6 Due 5:00 p.m.</b>

### Week 13: Global Human Rights

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
(M) April 4	Human Rights	U.N., "Declaration of Human Rights"
(W) April 6	Rights & Capabilities	Nussbaum, "Capabilities and Human Rights" <b>Discussion Questions Due 8:00 a.m.</b>
(F) April 8	<b>Presentation 4</b>	

**Week 14: Presentation Set 2**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
(M) April 11	<b>Presentation 5</b>	<b>Primary Post 7 Due</b>
(W) April 13	<b>Presentation 6</b>	<b>Response Post 7 Due</b>
(F) April 15	<b>Carnival- No Class</b>	<b>Conclusion Post 7 Due</b>

**Week 15: Global Democracy**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading/Assignment Due</b>
(M) April 18	History of Topic	Goodin, "Global Democracy: In the Beginning" <b>Primary Post 8 Due</b>
(W) April 20	Global Democracy & Equality	Cohen & Sabel, "Global Democracy?" <b>Response Post 8 Due</b>
(F) April 22	<b>Blog Discussion</b>	<b>Conclusion Post 8 Due</b>

**Week 16: Conclusion**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Notes</b>
(M) April 25	Course Recap	
(W) April 27	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Open Office Hours 9-12</b>
(F) April 29	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Open Office Hours 9-12</b>
(M) May 2		<b>Paper 2 Due at 5:00 p.m.</b>