

Ohio State University
Philosophy, Politics, and Economics 3001
Economy, Polity, and Community
11:10-12:30 TTh Fall 2023

Sahar Heydari Fard
372 University Hall
heydarifard.1@osu.edu
Office hours: Th 9:30-10:30 am or by appt.

Eric MacGilvray
2026 Derby Hall
macgilvray.2@osu.edu
Office hours: T 1:30-2:30 pm or by appt.

Overview

This course examines three models of human nature, each of which captures something important about social and political life, and each of which has significant blind spots. The first model sees human beings as rational actors who seek to maximize the satisfaction of their preferences. The second model sees human beings as citizens with public responsibilities that orient them toward the pursuit of the common good. The third model sees human beings as members of communities that provide an identity and a set of values that enable them to navigate the social world. We use these models to explore two fundamental social and political questions: first, the question of what makes a society a “good” society, and second, the question of whether and to what extent a good society should rely on individualistic or collective processes – markets or politics – to organize its affairs.

Readings

All of the required readings have been posted on Carmen.

Course requirements

Assignment	Due date	Weight
First essay (~1500 words)	Uploaded to Carmen by midnight on Monday, September 25	15%
Midterm exam	Tuesday, October 10 (in class)	25%
Second essay (~1500 words)	Uploaded to Carmen by midnight on Monday, December 4	15%
Final exam	Monday, December 11, 12:00-1:45 pm	30%
Participation	Ongoing	15%

Policies and procedures

Academic misconduct. Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that students complete all assignments with fairness and honesty. The Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, unauthorized use of generative AI, and possession of unauthorized materials during an exam. If we suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, we are obligated by University rules to report our suspicions to COAM. If COAM determines that you have committed academic misconduct, sanctions could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

Mental health services. As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766), and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Disabilities. The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let Student Life Disability Services (SLDS) know immediately so that you can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, they may request that you register with SLDS. After registration, make arrangements with your instructors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue. Students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process (slds.osu.edu/covid-19-info/covid-related-accommodation-requests), managed by SLDS.

Grading and assessment

Grading scale. Final grades will be determined using the standard university conversion chart:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-79
D	60-66
E	0-60

Class participation. Participation involves active engagement with the course material, listening attentively to classmates, and contributing to class discussion by offering opinions about the readings and responding constructively to the views of others.

Some questions to ask yourself before each class: (1) What is the author trying to accomplish? (2) Against whom or what is the author arguing? (3) What are the main concepts and arguments in this reading? (4) How does this reading connect to other readings in the course?

Participation grade guidelines

- A The student *excels* by contributing significantly to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting excellent preparation, and attending regularly.
- B The student *does well* by contributing occasionally to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting good preparation, and attending regularly.
- C The student *does a fair job* by contributing infrequently to class discussion, listening respectfully but seldom engaging other students, exhibiting limited preparation, or attending irregularly.
- D-E The student *does poorly* by contributing rarely to class discussion, disrupting class, exhibiting little or no preparation, or attending infrequently.

Late work. Each student will be granted one extension on a paper of your choice, no questions asked, which entitles you to hand it in any time before midnight on Friday following the due date without penalty. You don't need to tell us in advance that you're taking the extension, and a second extension will be granted only in extreme circumstances. Late essays will be penalized one full grade. Essays will not be accepted more than one week after the extension date without approval.

Schedule of readings & assignments

I. What is the good society?

The market model

- Tuesday 8/22 Robert L. Heilbroner, “The Economic Revolution”
- Thursday 8/24 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (selections)

Market society

- Tuesday 8/29 Milton & Rose Friedman, “The Power of the Market”
- Thursday 8/31 Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (selections)

Rationality & autonomy

- Tuesday 9/5 Gary S. Becker, “The Economic Way of Looking at Behavior”
Albert O. Hirschman, “Against Parsimony” (selections)
- Thursday 9/7 Richard H. Thaler & Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge* (selections)
- Tuesday 9/12 Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy*, chapter 1

Freedom & capabilities

- Thursday 9/14 T. H. Green, “Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract”
- Tuesday 9/19 Martha C. Nussbaum, *Creating Capabilities*, selections
S. Charusheela, “Social Analysis and the Capabilities Approach”

Social capital

- Thursday 9/21 Robert Putnam, “The Strange Disappearance of Civic America”
Danielle Allen, “The Road from Serfdom”

Monday 9/25 FIRST ESSAY DUE AT MIDNIGHT

- Tuesday 9/26 Richard G. Wilkinson & Kate E. Pickett, “The Enemy Between Us”
Thomas Piketty & Emmanuel Saez, “Inequality in the Long Run”

Equality

- Thursday 9/28 Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?”
- Tuesday 10/3 Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” (continued)
- Thursday 10/5 Exam review

Tuesday 10/10 MIDTERM EXAM

II. Power, property & purposes

Property

- Tuesday 10/17 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chapter 5
Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, selection
- Thursday 10/19 John Stuart Mill, selected writings on property
- Tuesday 10/24 Karl Marx, “Estranged Labour”; “The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society”

Inequality & Black Americans

- Thursday 10/26 Charles W. Mills, “Racial Justice”
- Tuesday 10/31 Bernard Boxill, “Black Reparations” (selections)
Nikole Hannah-Jones, “It Is Time for Reparations”
- Thursday 11/2 NO CLASS (national PPE Society conference)
- Tuesday 11/7 Adolph Reed, Jr., “Marx, Race, and Neoliberalism”

Markets in everything?

- Thursday 11/9 Michael J. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy* (selections)
- Tuesday 11/14 Debra Satz, “Noxious Markets”

Private power & public purposes

- Thursday 11/16 Emma Saunders-Hastings, “Plutocratic Philanthropy”
- Tuesday 11/21 Elizabeth Anderson, *Private Government*, chapter 2
- Tuesday 11/28 Philippe Van Parijs, “Basic Income”
Oren Cass, “The Working Hypothesis”
- Thursday 11/30 Concluding discussion

Monday 12/4 SECOND ESSAY DUE AT MIDNIGHT

Tuesday 12/5 Final exam review

Monday 12/11 FINAL EXAM, 12:00-1:45 pm