

Global Perspectives on Society – Fall 2013

Syllabus

Course Description

In this two-semester course, we will explore a set of timeless questions about how society is, or should be, organized, as those questions have been explored by serious writers from different times and different cultures.

Each week, students will meet once in recitation sections with Global Postdoctoral Fellows, twice in writing workshops with Writing Faculty, and once as an entire class with Professors Lehman and Romer.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

The course will introduce students to writings that help to define what it means to be “well educated.” By engaging those writings, students will reflect repeatedly on several overarching questions, including how it is we know things to be “true,” whether ethical duties are universal or defined by context, and why it is certain texts have come to be thought of as “great.”

Over the course of the semester, students should enhance their abilities to read carefully and thoughtfully, to consider questions from more than one perspective, to participate in respectful and serious intellectual explorations of difficult questions, and to write essays that make effective and appropriate use of the ideas of others as they present the students’ own ideas to different audiences of readers.

Grading

50% of the grade will be determined by the Global Postdoctoral Fellows, and Professors Lehman and Romer, as follows: 15% will depend upon the first midterm examination, 15% upon the second midterm examination, and 20% upon the final examination. Examinations will be “in-class” and “open book.” Grades will reflect how well students are able to integrate an understanding of the readings and the general course themes into their responses to short-answer and essay questions.

50% of the grade will be determined by the writing faculty, as follows: 25% will depend upon writing exercises, and 25% upon essay assignments. Grades for essay assignments will reflect an evaluation of each draft as well as an evaluation of the final essay.

Students will be penalized in their grades if they fail to attend the large class, recitation sections, or writing workshops, or if they present the ideas or words of others as their own without proper attribution.

Weekly Assignments

(NOTE: Questions will be posted on NYU Classes the preceding Thursday)

1. Strangers and Strangers (9/4)
 - a. “37 Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call the Police” (*The New York Times*, Mar. 27, 1964)
 - b. “China’s Bystander Effect” (*The New Yorker*, Oct. 18, 2011)
 - c. “The Murder They Heard” (Milgram & Hollander, *The Nation*, June 15, 1964).

2. Strangers and Strangers (9/11)
 - a. Plato, *Laws* (c. 360 BC) ¶¶ 949-951.
 - b. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), §§ 4:420-4:433.
 - c. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1859) Ch. VI.

3. Strangers and Strangers (9/18)
 - a. Mozi, “Universal Love” (c. 400 BC).
 - b. Mencius, “No Man is Devoid of a Heart Sensitive to the Suffering of Others” (c. 300 BC).
 - c. Xunzi, “Human Nature is Evil” (c. 250 BC).
 - d. Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) ¶¶ I.I.1-5, III.I.43-56, VII.II.72-92.

[Midterm 1]

4. Property, Labor, and Economic Exchange (9/25)
 - a. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), Second Treatise, Ch. V, ¶¶ 27-35.
 - b. Sima Qian, “The Biographies of the Money Makers” (c. 100 BC).
 - c. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), pp. 505-15 (Kramnick ed.).

5. Property, Labor, and Economic Exchange (10/9)
 - a. Plato, *The Republic* (c. 380 BC), ¶¶ 420a-421d
 - b. *The Analects of Confucius* (c. 400 BC), “No Worry for Little, Yet Worry for Uneven Apportionment.”
 - c. Karl Marx, *Wage Labor & Capital*; and *Capital, Vol. I* (1867), pp. 203-18, 351-61 (M-E Reader).
 - d. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) Ch. IX.

6. Property, Labor, and Economic Exchange (10/16)
 - a. Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), ch. 4.
 - b. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy State & Utopia* (1974), pp. 149-182.
 - c. Wang Ruoshui, “On the Problem of Alienation” (1981).
 - d. Deng Xiaoping, “Excerpts from Talks Given in Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shanghai” (1992).

7. Sovereignty and Law (10/23)

- a. Zisi, "The Doctrine of the Mean" (c. 420 BC).
- b. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (c. 330 BC) Book VIII, Ch.s 9-10.
- c. Jean Bodin, *Six Livres de la Republique* (1576), Book I, Ch. 8.
- d. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), vols. I and II.

[Midterm 2]

8. Sovereignty and Law (10/30)

- a. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), ch. XIII.
- b. Feofan Prokopovich, *Truth About the Monarch's Will* (1722).
- c. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762) Book 1, Ch.s 6-8.
- d. Woodrow Wilson, "Fourteen Points" (1914).

9. Sovereignty and Law (11/6)

- a. Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace* (1625), Book I, Ch. 1.
- b. Liang Qichao, "On Rights Consciousness" (1902).
- c. Robert Ellickson, *Order Without Law* (1991), Chs. 7-8.

10. Races, Ethnic Communities, and Nations (11/13)

- a. Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" (1882).
- b. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), pp. 145-169.
- c. Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963).
- d. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983 2d ed.), Ch. 10.

11. Races, Ethnic Communities, and Nations (11/20)

- a. Li Jing, "The Customs of Various Barbarians" (c. 1300).
- b. Wang Fuzhi, "The Preservation of Chinese Political and Cultural Integrity" (c. 1670).
- c. Kang Youwei, "Abolishing National Boundaries and Uniting the World" (1935).

12. War, Collective Violence, and International Relations (11/27)

- a. Sun Zi, *The Art of War* [selections] (c. 500 BC).
- b. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1274), Part 2, Q. 40.
- c. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832), Ch. 1.

13. War, Collective Violence, and International Relations (12/4)

- a. Mozi, "The Condemnation of War" (c. 400 BC).
- b. Leo Tolstoy, "Letter to a Noncommissioned Officer" (1898).
- c. Mohandas Gandhi, "On Passive Resistance" (1938).

14. Concluding Session (12/11)

[Final]