

LYDIA DU BOIS  
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE**

Political Philosophy (contemporary)

This is a proposed design for a course and not one I have already taught. It is to be adapted to suit nature of particular class and to be in line with the relevant department goals and guidelines.

Course description: This course aims to familiarize students with some of the main theories, concepts, and arguments in contemporary political philosophy. Questions concerning equality and opportunity, as well as different approaches to answering those questions, and different attempts to apply those answers will be addressed throughout the semester. One aim of this course is, however, for students to gain an understanding of how closely issues of distributive justice and the role of the state are tied up with issues concerning war and freedom. When we try to understand and evaluate theories of justice and how society should be arranged, we must not forget that most of these theories assume the existence of a sovereign state - a notion historically tied up with conflict. We will apply our understanding of these debates and theories to the complicated and historically significant case of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. Students will notice that rather than addressing topics in turn, we will move back and forth between topics, making connections between political reconciliation, freedom, democracy, representation, and justice. We will always try to keep in mind the role that broad theories in political philosophy have in the societies we live in and the conflicts we try to resolve.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
	Introduction and philosophers' toolkit
What is your political relationship to others? What makes something political?	Selections from: Cornell, Drucilla (2000) <i>Just Cause: Freedom, Identity, and Rights</i>
Justice	Allais, Lucy (2011) "Restorative Justice, Retributive Justice, and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission" <i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i> 32 (3): 331-363
Equality and opportunity	Selections from: Nozick, Robert (1974) <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>
Equality and opportunity	Selections from: Wright, Levine, and Sober (2003) <i>Marxism and Methodological Individualism</i>
Justice	Etieyibo Edwin. (2011) "Political Reparationists and the Moral Case for Reparations to Africa for Colonialism," <i>Africa Insight</i>

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Equality and opportunity	Selections from: Rawls, John (1985) <i>Justice as Fairness</i>
Equality and opportunity	Selections from: Nussbaum, Martha. (2001) <i>Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach</i>
War and freedom	Selections from: Cornell, Drucilla (2004) <i>Defending Ideals: War, Democracy, and Political Struggles</i>
War and freedom	Card, C. (2003) "Genocide and Social Death" 18 (1) 63-79
Justice	Mamdani, Mahmood (2002) "Amnesty or Impunity? A Preliminary Critique of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa" <i>Diacritics</i> 34 (4): 32-59
Equality and opportunity	Sen, Amartya. (1985) "Dewey Lectures" <i>The Journal of Philosophy</i> 82 (4) - Selection
Revisiting questions	Further selections from: Cornell, Drucilla (2000) <i>Just Cause: Freedom, Identity, and Rights</i> and Nozick, Robert (1974) <i>Anarchy, State, and Utopia</i>
Revisiting questions	Further selections from: Rawls, John (1985) <i>Justice as Fairness</i> and Wright, Levine, and Sober (2003) <i>Marxism and Methodological Individualism</i>
	Conclusion

<b>Component</b>	<b>Portion of Grade</b>
Short paper 1	20%
Short paper 2	20%
Long paper (with topic proposal and draft)	30%
Attendance and completion of ungraded in-class assignments and homework	15%
Mini-research project	15%