

PHIL 219: Social and Political Philosophy  
Christian Brothers University

Course description

From the course catalog: "Social and Political Philosophy" is "a philosophical investigation into basic questions of politics and society and the moral foundations of human social existence. Topics may include human rights, equality, distributive justice, authority, punishment and coercion, and the nature of the good or just society."

This course will be taught as an introduction to contemporary social and political philosophy, though we will touch on a bit of ancient thought. Since the focus of the course will be on contemporary thinkers in the philosophical tradition, the emergence of and controversies around political liberalism will be central to the curriculum. Major thinkers to be discussed will include Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Rawls, Fraser, and Habermas.

The course is organized around the following five questions: (1) what is the foundation of law, (2) on what grounds can the existence of the state be justified, (3) who should rule, (4) what is the role of and what are the limits of liberty, and (5) how are goods to be distributed in the state?