Philosophy 491: Independent Study of Spinoza's Political Philosophy

Course description and goals: Together, we will read critically Antonio Negri’s *The Savage Anomaly*, calling on those parts of Spinoza's *Ethics* that are required for understanding Negri’s famous account of that work. Through writing and presenting a paper each week, you will become more proficient in identifying, clarifying, criticizing, and defending significant philosophical positions.

Required texts:


Recommended texts:


Schedule of readings and assignments:

*Week of September 14:* Introduction and syllabus planning.
*Week of September 21:* The Dutch Anomaly
*Week of September 28:* The Utopia of Spinoza’s Circle
*Week of October 5:* First Foundation
*Week of October 12:* The Ideology and Its Crisis

FALL BREAK

*Week of October 19:* Interruption of the System
*Week of October 26:* The Savage Anomaly
*Week of November 2:* Second Foundation
*Week of November 9:* The Constitution of Reality
*Week of November 16:* Difference and the Future

THANKSGIVING BREAK

*Week of November 30:* Conclusion
*Week of December 7:* Conclusions, suggestions for further reading
**Evaluation:** Your grade in the course will be based on your weekly written assignments and oral presentations, including one rewritten paper to be discussed during the week of 30 November and submitted at or before the time scheduled for the final exam.

**Policies:**

Do not submit for credit in this course work completed for another course. When you attack or defend someone else's idea—whether Negri’s, Spinoza's or one from the secondary literature—always cite your source.

Weekly papers should be about 300–500 words, and you should prepare to present each. If you wish to read it aloud, that is acceptable, but in that case you should print two copies so I can follow along.

All assignments must be word-processed and free of spelling and grammatical errors. It is always a good idea to visit the Writing Center with a draft of your paper, *far enough in advance that criticism received can be taken into account*. For your own protection, always keep a copy of your assignments.