

## Politics 3334e Contemporary Political Theory 2018-9.

Instructor: R. Vernon: SSC 4216, [ravernon@uwo.ca](mailto:ravernon@uwo.ca). Office hours Mondays 1-2.45, other times by arrangement.

“Contemporary Political Theory” is a large and very diverse field and any course on the topic must be selective. Rather than examining famous contemporary theorists, or “isms” such as “liberalism” etc., this course introduces some of the prominent recent *debates* on the meaning of three central ideas: liberty, equality, and community. (The French Revolution introduced “liberty, equality, fraternity” into modern discourse -- but “community”, an ungendered term, is preferable to “fraternity”.)

The emphasis throughout is on *the critical evaluation of arguments*. How are important political positions supported? In our weekly discussions we will examine the arguments put forward in the readings and consider whether or not they are persuasive. Generally the two readings for the week put forward conflicting views, thus inviting us to make decisions about which has the better argument. (It is taken for granted that we may not all reach the same conclusion.) In preparation for the discussion, you must provide a one-page (typed single-spaced) report on the readings, to be handed in at the end of the class; the report should concisely state what you take to be the main claims in the two readings and what you take to be the best reasons for accepting and rejecting them. In your essays and in the final exam you will be asked to explain and weigh the arguments for and against a position.

Evaluation:

Two term papers, 25% each. Due on the last day of classes in each term. Essay topics will be provided well in advance. The essays should be 10-12 pages long. Late essays are not accepted (except of course for medical or compassionate reasons, which must be discussed with the Academic Counsellors). However, you have five “grace days” that you may use as you wish during the year.

Final exam (date set by the Registrar), 25%: 2 hours, essay type exam. It will draw on both terms’ work.

Participation: 25%. *The mark will be based on the consistency and helpfulness of your contributions to discussion.* If you let more than two weeks go by without participating your participation mark will be disappointing. One mark will be deducted from your participation mark for each missed weekly report.

Topics and readings. (The OWL file title containing the readings – e.g. “Berlin&Taylor” -- is listed after the title of the week’s discussion)

Sept. 4: introduction to the course.

### ***Part I: Understanding Liberty.***

Sept. 11. Two liberties or one? (Berlin&Taylor)

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" [abridged], in David Miller ed., *Liberty*.

Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty" in Alan Ryan ed., *The Idea of Freedom*.

Sept. 18. Is any liberty absolute? (Dershowitz&Luban)

Alan Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works*, chapter 4.

David Luban, "Liberalism, Torture, and the Ticking Bomb", *Virginia Law Review* 91 (2007) 1425-52 only.

Sept. 25. Is paternalism objectionable?" (Dixon&Dworkin)

Nicholas Dixon, "Boxing, Paternalism and Legal Moralism", *Social Theory and Practice* 2001, 323-44.

Ronald Dworkin, "Can a Liberal State Support Art?" *A Matter of Principle*, chapter 11.

Oct. 2: Can paternalism be libertarian? Should it be? (ThalerSunstein&Conly)

Cass Sunstein and Robert Thaler, *Nudge*, New York: Penguin, 2008, Introduction

Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, chapter 1

*Oct 9 – reading week.*

Oct. 16. Is there freedom of speech? Two case studies.

Bhiku Parekh, "The Rushdie Affair", *Political Studies* 1990, 695-709.

Dale Miller, "J.S.Mill and Charlottesville," *Civil American* 2 (2017).

*Note:* you would find it helpful to refresh your memory of Mill's *On Liberty* chapter 2 – posted on OWL site under "Mill."

Oct. 23. Freedom of movement: Immigration policy. (Carens&Miller)

Joseph Carens, "Migration and Morality," in Brian Barry and Robert Goodin eds., *Free Movement*, 25-47

David Miller, "Immigration: the case for limits", in Andrew Cohen and Christopher Wellman eds, *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, 2005.

Oct. 30. Should people be free to procreate? (Benatar&LaFollette)

David Benatar, *Better Never to have Been*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 2

Hugh LaFollette, "Licensing Parents", in Peg Tittle ed, *Should Parents be Licensed?* 2004.

Nov. 6. Is there a conflict between liberty and democracy? (Waldron&Holmes)

Jeremy Waldron, "Rights and Majorities", in his *Liberal Rights*, chapter 16.

Stephen Holmes, "Precommitment and the Paradox of Democracy", in Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad eds., *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, chapter 7 [parts]

**Part II: Understanding Equality.**

Nov. 13 . Equality vs liberty? Rawls and Nozick. (Swiftchapter)

Adam Swift, *Political Philosophy*, Part I (up to p. 48)

Nov. 20. The scope of equality. ((Cohen&Okin)

Susan Okin, *Justice, Gender and the Family*, chapter 5.

G.A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?*, chapter 8.

Nov. 27. Equality and equal treatment: The origins of the debate on Affirmative Action (Dworkin&Simon)

Ronald Dworkin, *A Matter of Principle*, chapter 14.

Robert Simon, "Preferential Hiring," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. 3 (1974), 312-20

*Winter break.*

Jan 8. Equality and children: Should children vote? (Shrag&Lau)

Frances Shrag, "Children and Democracy", *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* 2004, 365-79.

Joanne C. Lau, "Two Arguments for Child Enfranchisement," *Political Studies* 60 (2012), 860-76.

Jan. 15 Should equal concern extend beyond national borders? (Singer&Miller)

Peter Singer, *One World*, chapter 5.

David Miller, "Reasonable Partiality Towards Compatriots", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 2005, 63-81

Jan. 22. If all humans have rights, what are they rights to ? (Cranston&Jones)

Maurice Cranston, "What Are Human Rights?" in D.D. Raphael, *The Rights of Man*

Charles Jones, "A Human Right to Subsistence?" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 30 (2013) 57-72

Jan. 29. Extending respect and concern: Beyond *human* rights. (Scruton& Rachels)

Roger Scruton, "The Moral Status of Animals," in Rosalind Hursthouse ed., *Ethics, Humans and Other Animals*, 2000, 209-28

James Rachels, 'Do Animals Have Rights' in *Does Ethics Provide Answers?* 1997

**Part III: Understanding community.**

Feb 5. Patriotism and morality. (Keller&MacIntyre)

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" in Ronald Beiner ed., *Theorizing Citizenship*, 1995, 209-228

Simon Keller. "The Case Against Patriotism", in Kleinig et al, *The Ethics of Patriotism*, 2015.

Feb. 12. Defining the boundaries of community: the ethics of secession. (Beran&Buchanan)

Harry Beran, "A Liberal Theory of Secession", *Political Studies* 32

Allen Buchanan, "Theories of Secession", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 26

*Feb 19 – reading week*

Feb. 25. Taking culture seriously (Kymlicka&Kukathas)

Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Oxford University Press 1979, chapter 8.

Chandran Kukathas, "Are There Any Cultural Rights?" *Political Theory* [part only]

Mar 4. May parents transmit their cultural values to their children? (Sparrow&Hannan)

Robert Sparrow, "Defending Deaf Culture", *Journal of Political Philosophy* 2005, 135-52.

Sarah Hannan and Richard Vernon, "Parental Rights: A Role-Based Approach", *Theory and Research in Education* 2008, 173-89.

March 11. Is multiculturalism ... bad? (Okin&Casal)

Susan Okin in Joshua Cohen ed., *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, 7-24.

Paula Casal, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Animals?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11 (2003), 1-22

March 18. Do minority *religious* communities have special claims? Headscarves and Minarets. (Galeotti&Miller)

Anna E. Galeotti, *Toleration as Recognition*, 2002, chapter 4

David Miller, "Majorities and Minarets", *British Journal of Political Science* 2016

March 25. Does community include past generations? (Thompson&Vernon)

Janna Thompson, "Historical Obligations," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 78 (2000), 334-45

Richard Vernon, *Friends, Citizens, Strangers*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005, chapter 11.

April 2. Does community include future generations? (Beckerman&Baier)

Annette Baier, "The rights of past and future persons," in Ernest Partridge ed., *Responsibilities to Future Generations*, 1980, 171-86.

Wilfred Beckerman, "The Impossibility of a Theory of Intergenerational Justice," in J.C. Tremmel ed., *Handbook of Intergenerational Justice*, 2006, 53-71.

April 9. Ecological community? (Taylor&Williams)

Taylor "Ethics of Respect for Nature", in John O'Neill et al eds., *Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, 2001. 348-69.

Bernard Williams, "Must a Concern for the Environment be Centred on Human Beings?" in his *Making Sense of Humanity*, 1995, 233-40

**APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility**

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

**Essay course requirements**

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

**Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")**

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning.

Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

**Security and Confidentiality of Student Work** (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar* (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>))

"**Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams** - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

**Duplication of work**

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

**Grade adjustments**

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

**Academic Offences**

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

## **Submission of Course Requirements**

**ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.**

**THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.**

## **Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

EXAMINATIONS/ATTENDANCE (Sen. Min. Feb.4/49, May 23/58, S.94, S.3538, S.3632, S.04-097) A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

## **Medical Policy, Late Assignments, etc.**

Students registered in Social Science should refer to

[http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/having\\_problems/index.html](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/having_problems/index.html) for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

## **University Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct**

**Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

**Plagiarism Checking:** "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> )."

**Multiple-choice tests/exams:** "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html)

## PLAGIARISM\*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

**A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.**

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

**B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.**

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

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Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

**Accessibility at Western:** Please contact [poliscie@uwo.ca](mailto:poliscie@uwo.ca) if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Registrar's office can be accessed for Student Support Services at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here) can be reached at:  
<http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western  
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.