

Politics 3334e Contemporary Political Theory 2014-5.

Instructor: R. Vernon: SSC 4126, ravernon@uwo.ca. Office hours Mondays 1-3, other times by arrangement.

Contemporary Political Theory is a large and diverse field and any course on the topic must be selective. This course introduces some of the prominent recent debates on the meaning of three central ideas: liberty, equality, and community. Finally it turns (briefly) to two views that maintain that the field's conventional boundaries need to be expanded.

The emphasis throughout is on the critical evaluation of arguments. In our weekly discussions we will examine the arguments put forward in the readings and consider whether or not they are persuasive. (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, and you should be prepared to give a brief presentation on the readings if asked. 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 December 3 and April 8. Essay topics will be provided well in advance. The essays should be 10-12 pages long. Late essays are not accepted (unless an extension has been granted by 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.

Participation: 25%. The mark will be based on the consistency and helpfulness of your contributions to discussion. One mark will be deducted for each missed weekly report.

Topics and readings.

Sept. 9: introduction to the course.

Part I: Understanding Liberty.

Sept. 16. Two liberties or one?

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 23. How valuable is autonomy?

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

Sarah Conly, *Against Autonomy*, 2013, chapter 1,

Sept 30. Is there freedom of speech? Two responses to a formative event.

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

Peter Jones, "Respecting beliefs and Rebuking Rushdie," in John Horton ed., *Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration*, 1993, 114-38.

Oct. 7. Freedom of movement: Immigration policy.

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. 14. Is any liberty absolute? The case of freedom from torture.

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

David Luban, "Liberalism Torture and the Ticking Bomb", *Virginia Law Review* 91 (2005), 11425-52 only.

Oct. 21. Liberty vs democracy?

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.

Oct. 28. Equality vs liberty? Rawls and Nozick.

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

Nov. 4. The scope of equality.

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.11. Equality and equal treatment: Two classic papers on Affirmative Action!

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

Judith Jarvis Thomson, *Rights, Restitution and Risk*, chapter 9.

Nov 18. Should children vote?

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

Nov.25. Does equality extend beyond national borders?

Peter Singer, *One World*, chapter 5.

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

Part III: Understanding Community.

Jan 6 . Patriotism and morality.

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

Martha Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" and "Reply," both in Joshua Cohen ed., *For Love of Country*, 1996, 2-20 and 131-44

Jan 13. Taking culture seriously

Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, chapter 5.

Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, chapter 4.

Jan 20. May parents transmit their values to their children?

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.

Jan. 27. Is multiculturalism bad for women?

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

Jeff Spinner-Halev, "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," *Ethics* 112 (2001), 84-113.

Feb. 3. Does religion give a community special claims?

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

Sonu Bedi, "What is so Special about Religion?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 2007, 235-49.

Feb. 10. Does community exclude individual rights?

John Hardwig, "Should Women Think in Terms of Rights?" *Ethics* 94 (1984), 441-55

Michael Meyer, "Rights between Friends," *Journal of Philosophy* 89 (1992), 467-83

[Feb 17: Reading Week]

Part V: Beyond "presentism" and "humanism"?

Feb. 24.. Justice for past people

George Pitcher, "The Misfortunes of the Dead", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1984, 183-88.

Paul Bahn, "Do Not Disturb? Archaeology and the Rights of the Dead", *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 1984, 213-25.

March 3. Historical redress?

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. [Available as e-book through the Weldon catalogue.]

March 10. Justice for future people (1): Should they exist?

David Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been*, Oxford University Press 2006, chapter 2.

Christine Overall, *Why Have Children?* MIT Press 2012, chapter 6.

March 17. Justice for future people (2)

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.

March 24. Justice for nonhuman animals

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

James Rachels, *Can Ethics Provide Answers?*, 1997, chapter 6.

March 31. The moral status of the natural world

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

Tim Hayward, "Anthropocentrism: A Misunderstood Problem", *Environmental Values* 6 (1997) 49-63.

April 7: spare – essay consultations.

**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/handbook/appeals/scholoff.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.

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

Students registered in Social Science should refer to <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/> <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp> 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.

## Plagiarism

"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/handbook/>

### **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**

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.