

Politics 2237E: Introduction to Political Theory
Fall/Winter 2020 (Online)

Instructor: E. Finneron-Burns (efinnero@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: Fridays 1pm (on Zoom in OWL)

TAs: Jacob Allin, Caleb Althorpe, Elise Brown, Jon Taylor

Course Outline

This course is a survey of a very diverse field. Rather than a chronological history of political thought, we will be approaching the field topically. The first term will address several big questions: (i) what is the purpose of the state? (ii) what does it mean to be free and what are the limits of liberty? (iii) what is equality and should we pursue it? (iv) what is justice and how is it best achieved? The second term takes what you have learned in the first term and applies it to relevant contemporary political issues including multiculturalism, race and gender, global justice, climate change, and immigration, to name just a few. The focus will be on developing an understanding of how to develop your own views of these matters: what do *you* think and, more importantly *why*? The emphasis throughout the course will be on critical review of the arguments provided in the readings and by your fellow students.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- (i) Understand the major concepts, questions, and themes in the area of political theory.
- (ii) Read, understand, analyse, and evaluate academic articles in political theory.
- (iii) Formulate your own considered opinion about various issues in political theory and express it coherently in writing and orally.

Readings

There are two required textbooks for the course:

Issues in Political Theory by McKinnon, Jubb, and Tomlin

Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students by Vaughn & McIntosh

Assessment

Term 1

Weekly Reading Quizzes – 5%

Article Analysis – 5%

Tutorial Participation – 5%

Fall Term Essay – 15%

December Exam – 20%

Weekly Reading Quizzes (5%)

You are required to complete 10 weekly multiple choice reading quizzes. The quizzes must be completed **by midnight every Sunday** and can be found on OWL. If you choose to complete more than 10 each term, the best 10 marks will be counted.

Article Analysis (5%) – due **October 2, 2020 at NOON**

You will choose a reading from the list provided on OWL and analyse it in approximately 500 words. Your analysis should include a summary of the argument (including an identification of the premises and conclusions of the argument) and your own evaluation of the strength of the argument.

Term Paper (15%)

Approximately 2500 words due on **November 9 at NOON**. Essay topics will be posted on the course website but you may also choose your own topic with help from your TA. The essays are research projects meaning that you are expected to read beyond the scope of the syllabus. Essays should be submitted electronically through OWL.

Tutorial Participation (5%):

Each week, students will be expected to participate in tutorial discussions. Effective participation involves actively contributing to class exercises and discussions generated by both the TA and fellow classmates. Participation will be evaluated according to whether students have thought critically about the weekly readings and lectures, responded critically and respectfully to fellow tutorial members' points, and show an openness and willingness to consider the opinions of others and potentially change their own opinion.

December Exam (20%):

December 2020 – date set by Registrar. Will be held online. The exam will cover material from the readings, videos, and other content on the course website.

Late Submission of Work

Late work will incur a penalty of 5% per day or part thereof¹ and will not be accepted after one week. In extenuating circumstances, extensions may be granted, but only if arranged in **advance** of the due date. Please note that computer problems do not constitute extenuating circumstances—you are strongly advised to back up your work. If you think you may need an extension, please be in touch as early as possible.

Inclusivity

The course tackles topics that may be controversial and personal to some students. Members of this class are from a variety of different academic backgrounds, races, religions, etc., so whilst robust debate is encouraged, it must be done respectfully. If there are circumstances that might affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss strategies to accommodate your needs. This includes discussing whether some topics on the syllabus are particularly sensitive for you.

Workflow

Each week's readings, lectures, and other materials will be posted on the OWL site under the Course Content tab and further divided by week.

The videos do not necessarily cover the same material that is in the readings. They are supplementary and designed, in some cases, to further explain reading material, and in some cases to provide additional information. Each week you should make sure you watch the videos *and* do the readings. The December exam will cover all assigned material from this term.

¹ This means that if the assignment is due at 11:00am on January 1, submitting it at 11:01am January 1 and 10:59 January 2 will receive a 5% penalty. It also means that submitting it at 11:01am January 2 incurs a 10% penalty.

Tutorials

Tutorials will be held synchronously in the 'Tutorials' tab on OWL. Please note that because tutorials are scheduled for Mondays, you will actually be discussing the previous week's material in your groups.

Readings

All readings are listed in the relevant week's page on OWL. Links are provided for all readings that are not in the textbooks.

Week of September 7

Issues in Political Theory, p. 1-5
Reflective Equilibrium (on OWL)
Writing Philosophy, p. 6-9, ch. 2

Week of September 14

Issues in Political Theory, ch. 1
Plato, *Crito* (on OWL)

Week of September 21

Contemporary Political Philosophy, ch. 7 (on OWL)
Issues in Political Theory, ch. 3

Week of September 28

Issues in Political Theory, ch. 11

Week of October 5

Issues in Political Theory, ch. 2
Waldron, Jeremy, "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom" (on OWL)
Bird, Colin, "Oppression" (on OWL)

Week of October 12

Mill, J.S. *On Liberty*, ch. 2
Heinze, Eric "10 arguments for and against no platforming" (on OWL)
Rauch, Jonathan "The Cancel Culture Checklist" (on OWL)

Week of October 19

Boonin, David, *Should Race Matter?* ch. 6-7 (on OWL)
Writing Philosophy, ch. 3, 5-7
Writing Philosophy, ch. 8-9 – OPTIONAL

Week of October 26

Issues in Political Theory, p. 117-126
Swift, Adam, *Political Philosophy*, part 3
Kymlicka, Will, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, p. 75-87

Week of November 2 – READING WEEK

Week of November 9

Anderson, Elizabeth, "What is the Point of Equality?" p. 312 onwards
Fourie, Carina, *What is Enough?* Ch. 1

Week of November 16

Utilitarianism: A Very Short Introduction, p. 65-74 and 85-104

Week of November 23

Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 7-22, 60-65, 75-90, 136-142, 150-161

Week of November 30

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, ch. 7

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

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 https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.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.

https://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.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

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 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 www.registrar.uwo.ca
- Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here) can be reached at:
<https://westernusc.ca/your-services/>
- Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://sdc.uwo.ca/>
- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Procedures for Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes: Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;

- For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in order to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are **not** an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- must communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration **is not** normally intended for students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability. These students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic

Accommodation for Students with Disability.

Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). These students should access support through Student Health and Wellness and Learning Skills Services in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Form

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the **online Self-Reported Absence portal**. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities **within 48 hours or less**.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances: Students will be allowed:

- a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April;
- a maximum of one self-reported absence between May and August.

Any absences in excess of the number designated above, regardless of duration, will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

- The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
- The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30 am on the day following the last day of classes each semester regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- Self-reported absences **will not be** allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period;
- Self-reporting **may not be** used for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.
- students must be in touch with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a medical absence not covered by existing Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation, will be required to provide documentation in person to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in the form of a completed, signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Non-Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence will be required to provide appropriate documentation to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration where the

conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.