

Politics 2538G: The Just Society

Fall 2024

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TA: Sam Routley (sroutley@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: Thursdays 10-11. During these hours, I am in my office (SSC 7211) available to meet with you to discuss the course, your progress, questions, the meaning of life, or anything else really. No need to make an appointment; just drop by!

Course Outline

This course explores the question: what makes a society just? Must a society ensure equality in order to be just? What kind and for whom? The course attempts to answer these questions in the context of contemporary political issues including racism, sexism, global justice, historic injustice, immigration, and climate change. The focus will be on developing an understanding of the different answers to these questions, but also 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 lectures.

Learning Outcomes

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

- i. Understand and critically analyse key arguments with regard to theories of justice and equality
- ii. Read, understand, analyse, and evaluate academic literature in political theory.
- iii. Formulate your own considered opinions about various contemporary issues in political theory and express them coherently in writing.

Lectures will generally be high-level overviews of the topic of the week and introduce you to a variety of different views and arguments. This can be difficult at first since there are no right or wrong answers. Please reach out if you are struggling in any way.

Textbook

Katherine Smits, *Applying Political Theory*

Textbook is available at the UWO Bookstore.

Assessments

Assessments are selected in order to let you demonstrate your mastery of all the learning outcomes in the course. Therefore, students must complete (not necessarily pass) each component of the course to be eligible to pass the course. This means that even if you obtain a mark of 50% or higher on all other components, failure to submit an assignment or write an exam (without academic consideration) precludes you from passing the course.

In-Class Tests (20% and 30%) - October 22 and December 3

Short/medium answer tests based on the readings and lectures. Test 1 will cover material from September 17 - October 8 and Test 2 will cover material from October 29-November 26. **Test 2 is not eligible for absence without documentation.**

Essays (40%) - Due October 11 and November 19. No penalties for late work until October 14 and November 21 respectively.

You must submit **two** papers of 1000 words each. There are two assignment options and you can select whether you want to do two of the same, or one of each. Regardless of what option you select, the papers must be on different topics. **Because of the flexible submission deadline, these papers are not eligible for the absence without documentation.**

Option 1: Policy Paper

The government has finally realised that they need a political philosopher on staff. You are that person! Select a debate studied in the course (e.g., open/closed borders, exemptions for minorities, pornography as empowering/degrading) and write a 1000 word recommendation about what they should do (e.g., open borders immediately, enact helmet exemptions for Sikhs, ban pornography). Your paper should briefly outline the debate, state your recommendation, and defend it with solid reasons. You must directly reference course material (e.g., lectures, readings). This can take the form of referencing the lecture itself, or reading the papers discussed in the lecture and referencing them directly. See the professor or TA if you have any questions about what constitutes sufficient referencing.

Option 2: Issue Analysis

Select an issue that is in the news and analyse it with reference to course material in 1000 words. For example, you might analyse whether Russia's war in Ukraine meets the criteria of just war theory, whether Canada's crackdown on temporary foreign workers is justifiable (morally speaking), or whether Gypsy Rose's imprisonment was justifiable given the purposes of purposes. These are just examples - the world is your oyster. But it is highly recommended that you run your idea past the instructor or TA. You must directly reference course material (e.g., lectures, readings). This can take the form of referencing the lecture itself, or reading the papers discussed in the lecture and referencing them directly. See the professor or TA if you have any questions about what constitutes sufficient referencing.

Reflection Paper– Due December 5 (10%) No penalty for late papers but I cannot accept submissions after December 8 due to marks submission deadline.

You will reflect on an issue or question about which you have changed your mind due to learning more about political theory. You can pick any topic/question covered in the course (or POL2537 if you have taken/are taking it). It could be that you have come to completely change your opinion, or maybe you have the same opinion but for different reasons. Either way, in the assignment, you should:

1. Explain what opinion you held before and why;
2. Explain how it has changed and why;
3. Give specific examples from the course material (lectures, readings, etc.) and why you found it persuasive enough to change your view.

Your reflection can take a variety of formats so be creative (if you want to - essays are also fine). Previous students have done:

1. A 750 word essay
2. A 5min video
3. A 5min audio recording
4. A GRWM video
5. A cartoon

Late Submission of Work

If you require an accommodation for medical, compassionate, or exam conflict reasons, you must contact academic counselling. You will only get an extension if it is approved by student counselling, and it will be for however many days they approve. For example, if the essay is due on the 20th, and you have an extension from the 20th to the 22nd, your essay will be due on the 22nd. If you are accommodated by academic counselling, you do not need to email me because instructors are sent an automatic notification from the counsellors.

Students who have the “flexibility with assignment deadlines” accommodation from Accessible Education do NOT need to email me. You must contact academic counselling to have an extension approved and it will be for a maximum of 3 days. Longer extensions will not be granted (unless the counsellors see fit). Having the “flexibility with assignment deadlines” accommodation does not apply to the date you write the tests.

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from lectures, or who fails to submit assignments, will be reported to the Chair of the Political Science department and may be barred from writing the final examination (after due warning has been given).

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.

SCHEDULE

September 10 – Intro to the Course

September 17 - **Global poverty & inequality**

Applying Political Theory, ch. 11

[Global Justice, ch. 3 and 4](#)

September 24 – **Immigration & Refugees**

[Global Justice, ch. 6](#)

[Ethics and World Politics, ch. 20](#)

October 1 – **Is war ever justified?**

[Global Justice, ch. 9](#)

Applying Political Theory, ch. 12

October 8 – **Crime and Punishment**

Jonathan Wolff, *Ethics and Public Policy*, ch. 5

Catriona McKinnon, *Issues in Political Theory*, ch. 3

October 15 – READING WEEK

October 22 – **Midterm Test**

October 29 – **Multiculturalism, Religion & Politics**

Applying Political Theory, ch. 3

This is Political Philosophy, ch. 5

November 5 – **Race & racism**

[W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Conservation of the Races”](#)

Applying Political Theory, ch. 4

November 12 – **Reparations for historic injustice**

[Oxford Handbook of Political Philosophy, ch. 17](#)

November 19– **Sex & sexism**

Jonathan Wolff, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ch. 9

Applying Political Theory, ch. 5

November 26 – **Future Generations & Climate Change**

Axel Gosseries, What is Intergenerational Justice? ch. 3 & 4

December 3 – Test 2 in Class

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.

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Counselling office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Note: Missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

Accommodation and Accessibility

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the

Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic Accommodation_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

Academic Policies

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

During exams/tests/quizzes, no electronic devices (e.g. a phone, laptop, iPad) are allowed and must be powered down and stored out of reach.

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.

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>).

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

If a course uses remote proctoring, please be advised that you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including

some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of a course with remote proctoring will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at:

<https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Support Services

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/academic_counselling/)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning-skills counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

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.

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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