

## ***Politics 2537F: Foundations of Political Theory***

Fall 2024

### **Instructor:**

Dr Elizabeth Finneron-Burns ([efinnero@uwo.ca](mailto:efinnero@uwo.ca)). Office hours Thursdays 10-11am in SSC 7211)

### **Teaching Assistants:**

Michelle Hanna ([dhanna26@uwo.ca](mailto:dhanna26@uwo.ca)) - Groups 7 and 10

Philip Zuidema ([pzuidema@uwo.ca](mailto:pzuidema@uwo.ca)) - Groups 6 and 9

Farah Rana ([frana9@uwo.ca](mailto:frana9@uwo.ca)) - Groups 5 and 8

Kim Albanes ([kalbanes@uwo.ca](mailto:kalbanes@uwo.ca)) - Groups 4 and group 11

### **Course Outline**

This course is an introduction to the study of political theory. We 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 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 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.

## Textbooks

Clark Wolf and Alan Tuckness, *This is Political Philosophy*

Hard and e-copies are available at the UWO Bookstore.

## Assessment

### **Essay (30%) – Due November 14, NOON.**

See 'Assessments' tab on the course website for details on the essay assignment. Penalties for late submission (5% per day) will begin on November 18 at 9am. **Given this flexible deadline, this assignment is not eligible for "absence without documentation"** and any further extensions must be obtained by submitting documentation to Academic Counselling. The use of ChatGPT or similar is an academic offence.

### **Essay Proposal (5%) - Submissions open until November 7 NOON**

Get your proposed essay topic approved by your TA. This can be done through seeing them in their office hours or through email--there is no need to submit anything through OWL. This is a pass/fail assignment and everyone who completes it will earn the full 5%. This is in your interest to ensure that you are on the right track with the assignment. No extensions will be given for this task.

### **Midterm Exam (20%) - October 10**

The exam will occur in-person during the scheduled class time. **This assessment is not eligible for the absence without documentation system.** All requests to write the make-up exam must go through academic counseling only and be for medical or compassionate reasons and not for workload issues. Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time must register with Accessible Education as soon as possible. If you miss their registration deadline, you will have to write the exam with the rest of the class.

### **Tutorial Participation (10%) - Ongoing**

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. **If you miss a tutorial and have an accommodation, email your TA directly to let them know. If you don't have an accommodation, you don't need to email.**

### **December Final Exam (35%) - Date set by the registrar**

The exam will be multiple choice and short answer and cover material since the midterm.

### **Optional Extra Credit (2%) - December 6**

Create and email me a meme/cartoon that has something to do with the course content.

## **SCHEDULE**

September 12 – **What is political theory and how do we do it (well)?**

[Jonathan Floyd, \*What's the Point of Political Philosophy?\* Ch. 3](#)

September 19 – **Political obligation & resistance**

*This is Political Philosophy*, ch. 6

[Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)

[Katherine Smits, \*Applying Political Theory\*, ch. 10](#)

September 26 – **What does it mean to be free?**

*This is Political Philosophy*, ch. 2

[Jeremy Waldron, "Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom"](#)

October 3 – **When should freedom be curtailed?**

[J.S. Mill, \*On Liberty\*, ch. 2 \(any version found online or hard copy is also fine\)](#)

[Katherine Smits, \*Applying Political Theory\*, ch. 8](#)

October 10 – MIDTERM

October 17 – READING WEEK

October 24 – **What should we try to equalize and why?**

*This is Political Philosophy*, ch. 3

[Will Kymlicka, \*Contemporary Political Philosophy\*, p. 75-87](#)

November 7 – **No class**

November 14 – **Is the goal of government to make people happy?**

*This is Political Philosophy*, ch. 1

November 21 – **What is a just distribution of goods?**

*This is Political Philosophy*, ch. 4

[Applying Political Theory](#), ch. 2

November 28 – **Feminist & racial critiques of Rawls**

[Charles Mills, \*Black Rights/White Wrongs\*, ch. 9](#)

[Susan Moller Okin, "Justice and Gender"](#)

December 5 – **Justice for everyone, everywhere? Review/Q&A Session**

## **Course Policies**

### ***Late or Missing Work***

Late work will incur a penalty of 5% per day or part thereof<sup>[1]</sup>.

In order to pass the course, students must submit (but not necessarily pass) the essay and sit both exams. This means that if you do not submit (for example) the essay, but do very well on both exams, you will still not pass the course. This is because you will not have been assessed on each of the learning outcomes.

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from lectures or tutorials may be barred from writing the final examination (after due warning has been given).

### ***Extensions/Make Up Exams***

No extensions or missed exam accommodations will be granted by the course instructor. If you require an accommodation for medical, compassionate, or exam conflict reasons, you must contact student 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 exams.

### ***Grade Appeals***

All grade appeals must go through the TAs first by email and NOT in-person. You must email your TA a list of the reasons why you believe your assignment deserves a better grade (not why you need a better grade). No appeals will be considered more than 1 week after the assignment was returned or made available for return. If the student is not satisfied with the TA’s explanation of the 4 grade/new grade, they can ask for it to be marked by a second reader (either another TA or the course instructor). If this option is approved, and the second reader assigns a grade that is 5% higher or lower than the original grade, the original grade will stand. If the second marker assigns a mark that is more than 5% higher or lower than the original grade, then the final grade will be the average of the two grades, whether or not this is higher or lower.

### **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.

## **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.

## **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](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](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://www.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](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](mailto: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](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](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