



**Raphael: The School of Athens**

## **Introduction to Political Theory**

Political Science 2237E

Dr. Sara MacDonald

Lecture: Tuesday 11:30-1:30 – HUC A1

Tutorials: Wednesday 9:30-10:30 and 2:30-3:30 – HUC W17

## **POLS 2237E: Introduction to Political Theory**

**Dr. Sara MacDonald**

Office: A217

Office Hours: Tuesday: 1:30-2:30, Wednesday 10:30-11:30 (or by appt.)

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### **Course Description**

In *The Politics*, Aristotle describes human beings as political animals, for, unlike other animals, he believed that humans alone have the capacity to debate questions concerning the good and the just. All political actions and communities are grounded in an understanding of justice, even if it is unspoken or unrecognized. (Some even say that all activities are political. So next time you are brushing your teeth, please realize the role that dental hygiene plays in your account of justice). In this course, we will read some of the most important philosophic texts in the western world, seeking to discern the nature of the just, whether and how we might be free, and if there is any legitimate way that one person or group of people might claim to have power over us. We will have the luxury of spending our fall deep in the ancient world, reading, debating, and growing to love (or hate) arguments about human excellence as the foundation of justice. When winter turns its bleak face towards us, we will be immersed in the riot of philosophic thought that erupts after the enlightenment. Winter may seem absolute, but, as with these thinkers, we will know ourselves as free of arbitrary authority. Authors to be read will include, Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Hegel, Arendt, and Weil. Oh and the films of the Coen Brothers will make all of these books crystal clear and too funny to imagine just yet.

More simply-through an exploration of primary texts in political theory we will examine the central themes and issues in the history of political thought from ancient to modern times.

(Prerequisite: Political Science 1020E.)

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Students learn to read and think critically about political ideas.
2. Students gain the ability to analyze ideas and situations, make considered decisions and form coherent, reasoned and fact-based judgements.
3. Students become familiar with a selection of the writings of the past's great political philosophers, and acquire an understanding of the key components of the western political tradition and the debt our present political arrangements owe to the ideas expounded by philosophers in the past.
4. Students learn how to be clear and concise writers.
5. This course will prepare students for all senior political theory courses.

## **Lectures and Tutorials**

Lectures. Two hours per week: 11:30-1:30 Tuesday. Tutorials. 9:30-10:30 and 2:30-3:30 Wednesday

**Note:** Students must attend the tutorial to which they are assigned (limit of 20 students in each tutorial). Note: The use of computers in the classroom is not advisable in this course. See <https://t.co/tfAhaE5MZz?ssr=true>

## **Required Texts for First Semester**

Euripides, *The Bacchae and Other Plays*, Oxford Classics ISBN: 0199540527

Plato, *A Plato Reader*, Hackett Publishing, ISBN: 0199540527

Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Hackett Publishing, ISBN: 978-1-62466-117-4

## **Required Texts for Second Semester**

Aquinas, *Treatise on Law*, Hackett

Machiavelli, *The Prince*. University of Chicago

Hobbes, *The Essential Leviathan*

Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Hackett

Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Right*, Hackett

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Oxford World Classics

**Note:** Students are required to buy these editions of the texts and the text under discussion must be brought to class.

## **Evaluation**

4 Essays (2000 words) (2 per term) 12.5% each

December and Final Exam 10% each

Participation and Attendance 10%

Debate 10%

Short Assignments, including 1 page responses, quizzes, etc. 10%

## Class Format

### "Lectures"

This will be a text-based course, which means we will be learning from Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and hopefully, each other. The assigned book will be required for each class. While I will lecture, I also will look for active participation from you. I'll ask you questions, sometimes directly, and you can do the same to me. Feel free to raise alternative perspectives or interpretations of the text. The content for each class will come from the books we are studying.

### Tutorials

In the tutorials we will look at specific issues raised by the text, talk about any problems or questions you might have and we will have debates.

### Tentative Schedule of Classes

Date	Class Type	Reading	Assignments Due	Debate Topic
Sept. 11	Lec.	Class Intro.		
Sept. 12	Tut	The Bacchae		
Sept. 18	Lec.	The Bacchae		
Sept. 19	Tut.	The Bacchae		<b>Bacchic Frenzies are inevitable.</b>
Sept. 26	Lec.	Alcibiades		
Sept. 27	Tut.	Alcibiades	<b>Essay 1 Assigned</b>	<b>Being Good is Advantageous. Really.</b>
Oct. 2	Lec.	Crito		
Oct. 3	Tut.	Crito		<b>I'd Stay in Jail Too</b>
<b>Reading Week</b>				
Oct. 16	Lec.	Republic	<b>Essay 1 Due</b>	
Oct. 17	Tut.	Republic		<b>Might Makes Right</b>
Oct. 23	Lec.	Republic		
Oct. 24	Tut.	Republic		<b>I Can Love The City as Much as Much as My Mom</b>
Oct. 30	Lec.	Republic		
Oct. 31	Tut.	Republic	<b>Essay 2 Assigned</b>	<b>We Should Leave People in the Cave</b>
Nov. 6	Lec.	Republic		
Nov. 7	Tut.	Republic		<b>Democracy Kicks Butt</b>
Nov. 13	Lec.	The Ethics		

Nov. 14	Tut.	The Ethics	<b>Essay 2 Due</b>	<b>Ethics? There Should be a Law About That</b>
Nov. 20	Lec.	The Ethics		
Nov. 21	Tut.	The Ethics		<b>Justice is Math</b>
Nov. 27	Lec.	The Ethics		
Nov. 28	Tut.	The Ethics		<b>The Wise Guys Die Young</b>
Dec. 4	Lec.	The Ethics		
Dec. 5	Tut.	The Ethics		<b>Aristotle Never Had Fun.</b>
January 8	Lec.	<b>Second Term Intro</b>		
January 9.	Tut.	BibleAquinas		
January 15	Lec	Aquinas		
January. 16	Tut	Aquinas		<b>Mercy is Justice</b>
Jan. 22	Lec.	Machiavelli	<b>Essay 3 Assign.</b>	
Jan. 23	Tut.	Machiavelli		<b>It's Better to be Loved Than Feared</b>
Jan. 29	Lec.	Machiavelli/ Hobbes	<b>Essay 3 Due</b>	
Jan. 30	Tut	Hobbes		<b>It's Better to be Meat in Motion</b>
Feb. 5	Lec	Hobbes		
Feb. 6	Tut	Hobbes		<b>Dr. MacDonald Should be the Leviathan</b>
Feb. 12	Lec.	Locke		
Feb. 13	Tut.	<b>Movie Maddness</b>	<b>Essay 4 Assign.</b>	
<b>Reading Week</b>				
Feb. 26	Lec.	Locke		
Feb. 27	Tut	Locke	<b>Essay 4 Due</b>	<b>To Be Free I Need Shoes</b>
March 5	Lec.	Rousseau		
March 6	Tut.	Rousseau		<b>I'd Rather be a Rabbit</b>
March 12	Lec.	Hegel		
March 13	Tut	Hegel		<b>I Can Be Free in My Head</b>
March 19	Lec.	Hegel		
March 20	Tut.	Hegel		<b>Things are Getting Better</b>
March 26	Lec.	The Tempest		
March 27	Tut	The Tempest		<b>Justice is ...</b>
April 3	Lect.	The Tempest		
April 4	Tut	<b>The Tempest</b>		
April 9	Wrap Up			

## **COURSE GUIDELINES**

### **GRADING OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All written assignments will be graded on the basis of two equally crucial components: (1) appropriate and adequate substantive content, describing and discussing the issue, idea or theory under consideration; and (2) the student's evaluative judgement employed in the critical assessment of the issue, idea or theory.

### **LATE POLICY**

There is a late penalty of 2 marks applied for each day past the deadline for the submission of papers, weekends included. *Papers more than two weeks late will not be accepted.*

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory for both lectures and tutorials, students who miss more than 3 unexcused sessions per term, will lose 2% of their grade for each additional class.

### **PAPER SUBMISSION**

Essays must be emailed to the instructor [sara.macdonald@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:sara.macdonald@huron.uwo.ca) by midnight the day they are due. All other written assignments must be handed to the instructor directly in class or placed in the essay drop-off box outside the FASS Office, A15, in the Administrative Building at Huron.

### **ESSAY DOCUMENTATION**

Students must use standard social science reference, footnoting and bibliographic form. Whenever you use the words or the ideas of someone else, you must give a footnote, endnote or reference, or else you are committing an act of plagiarism (see Plagiarism and Other Academic Offences below). Each note or reference must include the name of the author/editor, the complete title of the book (or the complete title of the essay/chapter if an edited collection or journal article, and then the name of book/journal in which it appears, plus volume number), the name of the publisher and the place and date of publication, and a page number. Subsequent references to the same source should appear in short form in the notes.

### **CITING INTERNET SOURCES**

All information obtained through the Internet must be cited in footnotes and bibliographies. Internet citations must include all of the same information that is provided when citing a book or article. This includes the name of the author, name of the organisation that has posted the website, the title, the date that the website was consulted, and the complete website address.

### **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A.+ 90–100%
- A 80–89%
- B 70–79%
- C 60–69%
- D 50–59%
- F below 50%

### **ESSAY GUIDELINES**

- (1) **Grade for essays.** Students write two essays each term. The essays are each worth 10% of the final grade.
- (2) **Submission of essays.** Email your essays to [sara.macdonald@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:sara.macdonald@huron.uwo.ca).

- (3) **Title page.** The title page of the essay must clearly identify by number which question is addressed in the essay. See the list of essay topics above.
- (4) **Essay format.** A clear introductory paragraph stating the issue or question to be addressed, and the key elements of the discussion in your paper, and conclusions reached. The essay must explain the philosopher's position(s) and main arguments, employing quotations where appropriate, and should include a **critical analysis** of the philosopher's ideas. For example: Are there any problems of logic or coherence? Do the ideas make sense? Are there different possible interpretations of what the philosopher has written? Are there any issues related to the feasibility of the ideas? A brief concluding paragraph summarizing your interpretation, principal arguments, and conclusions.
- **Note.** Please consult Professor MacDonald if you require any further assistance with the research, formatting or organization of your essays.
- (5) **What makes a good political theory essay?** A clearly stated thesis. A solid grasp of the theory/ideas under consideration. Appropriate use of quotations, illustrations, and arguments. Quotations should be integrated into sentences so that the whole sentence reads grammatically. A thoughtful analysis of the theory/ideas. The essay should be well structured with a smooth transition between points/paragraphs, and it should be well-written (properly structured sentences, with appropriate terminology, grammar and punctuation).
- (6) **Endnotes or Footnotes.** Footnotes/endnotes are needed for all quotations and for ideas that are borrowed or paraphrased from texts. The first footnote/endnote citation of a text must include the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to. Succeeding citations to the same text should be rendered in short form.
- (7) **Bibliography.** Essays must conclude with a bibliography of all sources used in the writing of the essay, including the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to. See the *Complete Publication Details* in the guide on pp.13–14 below.
- (8) **Page numbering.** The pages of the essay should be consecutively numbered.
- (9) **Italicize or underline the titles of books or pamphlets.** The titles of articles or chapters should not be italicized, but enclosed by quotation marks.

(10) **Secondary sources.** No Secondary sources are to be used.

## GUIDE FOR CITATIONS IN ESSAYS FOOTNOTES/ENDNOTES and BIBLIOGRAPHIES

### 1. Bibliography.

**1.1.** Must include all works used in the research for the essay, not only those works expressly cited or quoted. **1.2.** *Complete publication details* must be given for every item included in the bibliography and endnotes or

footnotes.

### 2. Footnotes or endnotes.

**2.1.** Either footnotes or endnotes are to be used for citations, not citations in brackets within the body of the

essay. Citations in brackets are only acceptable in tutorial reports.

**2.2.** Sequential Arabic numbers for footnotes/endnotes: 1, 2, 3, etc.

**2.3.** In the first citation in a footnote/endnote *complete publication details* must be given (as per the bibliography),

together with the specific page(s).

**2.4.** Subsequent citation of a work for which you have already given complete publication details in a previous

footnote/endnote, should be rendered in short form. "Ibid." may be used (meaning the same as before, ie. the work cited in the previous footnote/endnote, plus the page number).

### 3. Examples of Citations in a Bibliography and in Footnotes or Endnotes

**Complete publication details:** Plato, "Crito," in *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. John M. Cooper, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001).

**Short form:** Plato, "Crito," in *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, p.20.

#### Complete publication details Machiavelli

**Complete publication details:** Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1513–16), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008). **Short form:** Machiavelli, *The Prince*, in *Modern Political Thought*, ed. Wootton, p.12.

**Complete publication details:** Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten books of Titus Livy* (ca. 1517), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008). **Short form:** Machiavelli, *Discourses*, in *Modern Political Thought*, ed. Wootton, p.67.

**Complete publication details:** Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008).

**Short form:** Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *Modern Political Thought*, ed. Wootton, pp.176–77.

### Debates

Students will participate in a debate each term with another student during tutorials. Students will sign up for a debate topic at the first of term and be assigned to either the yay or nay side of the issue. Each student will have 10 minutes to make the argument for their side of the debate. Your argument should be persuasive, concise and be drawn from the text in question with evidence for your position. After both presenters have made opening remarks, they will have an additional two-three minutes to rebut any of the arguments made by the other side. They will then take questions from the audience.

You will be graded on the substance of your argument, the degree to which your argument shows an understanding of the text in question and the issue being addressed.

At the end of each debate, the rest of the class will choose the winner, who will be awarded a small prize for their great victory.



**The Appendix to Course Outlines will be posted on the OWL course site.**