

POLITICAL STUDIES 250

Introduction to Political Theory

Course Instructor – Professor Colin Farrelly

(Mac-Corry: Room 405)

Office Hours: TBA

Head Teaching Assistant (main contact for questions about the course): Karla Schulz
(email: k.schulz@queensu.ca)

Course Description

An examination of some of the most important thinkers in the history of political thought. The course will survey and examine key thinkers in Western political thought including Plato, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx and Mill. Issues addressed include justice and democracy, life in the “state of nature”, the general will, conservatism, communism and the harm principle. Students will be introduced to a variety of ideas and theories which have shaped liberal democratic institutions and culture. And students will be expected to demonstrate both a comprehension of the material covered in the course and the ability to critically evaluate that material.

Format: There is a weekly evening lecture (2 hours) and bi-weekly tutorials.

Lectures: Mondays at 6:30 pm in CHE-AUD.

Fall term

Plato (427-347 B.C.)
Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)
Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)
John Locke (1632-1704)
David Hume (1711-1776)
Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Winter Term

Edmund Burke (1729-1797)
Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 -1797)
Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
Georg Hegel (1770- 1831)
Jeremy Bentham (1748- 1832)
John Stuart Mill (1806- 1873)
Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Requirements: Each term there are two in-class tests, a critical review essay and final exam. The breakdown of the marking scheme for the full year is as follows:

Test #1 Monday, October 24th (no re-sits) (10%)
Test #2 Monday, November 14th (no re-sits) (10%)
Test #3 Monday, TBA (no re-sits) (10%)
Test #4 Monday, TBA (no re-sits) (10%)

The lowest grade, or a missed test, will be dropped and the 3 highest grades will count for a total of **30% of the final mark.**
(* see below)

Critical Review Essay #1, due in class Monday November 28th (10%)
Critical Review Essay #2, TBA (10%)

Mid-year exam in December (25%)
Final exam (covering second half of course only) (25%)

* **please note:** students are strongly advised not to abuse the test marking flexibility by simply deciding not to write a test (especially in the first term). As this is a full year course, falling behind in the beginning of term can seriously jeopardize your chances of passing the course.

Required readings: All of these are available either in the course textbooks or under the "readings" section on the Moodle page for the course.

Fall Term

Plato, *The Republic*, in textbook *Great Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 139-197.
Plato, *The Apology*, in textbook *Great Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 502-531.
Plato, *Crito*, in textbook *Great Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 532-48.
Martha Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (course textbook)
John Rawls, "Civil Disobedience" [Moodle]
Andrew Sable "Looking Forward to Justice" [Moodle]
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (**Book I only**, which is pages 1-32) and *Politics* (**Book I only**, which is pages 1-26) [Moodle].
Josiah Ober "Natural capacities and Democracy as a Good-In-Itself" [Moodle]
Elizabeth Dunn, "Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness" [Moodle]
Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* chapters 13-21, in textbook *Modern Political Thought*, pp. 158-193.
Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* [excerpt on Moodle]
John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, in textbook *Modern Political Thought*, pp. 285-299.
Cara Nine, "A Lockean Theory of Territory" [Moodle]
David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* III, pt. 2, 1-2. [Moodle]
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and *The Social Contract* in textbook *Modern Political Thought* pp. 371-487.

Winter Term TBA

Please note: Even though the course is designed around political thinkers, I shall emphasise common themes/issues (e.g. the state of nature, private property, freedom, human happiness, etc.) that these thinkers have addressed. It is thus important that students know not only what one particular thinker says on a topic but how that compares and contrasts with what others argue. In order to thread these common links together **students must regularly attend the lectures, do the required readings and attend and participate in tutorials.**

Critical Review Essay (Fall Term)

Due date: at **the start of the lecture on Monday, November 28th**

Your TA's name must be on the essay and you are to give your essay to your TA at the lecture.

Late penalty: after the deadline late papers will receive a -5% penalty **per day**, including weekends. Also, late papers will only receive a grade, no critical feedback will be provided. So please be sure to hand the paper in on time.

The purpose of requiring students to write these critical review essays are three-fold: (1) they allow students to examine a few topics from the course in much greater detail than what is covered in the lectures; (2) the topics have been purposely chosen to integrate themes from the history of political thought with topical practical issues; and (3) they help develop and refine a variety of important skills (e.g. independent study, critical analysis) .

You will write a 1,500 (min.) - 2, 000 (max.) word critical review essay on **one** of the following topics. *The topic you are to write on is assigned on the basis of the first letter of your surname.*

#1. Civil disobedience [Surnames beginning with letters A-H]

Target article: Andrew Sable "Looking Forward to Justice"

Supplementary readings:

Plato's *Crito*

Rawls's "Civil Disobedience"

Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Prison"

OR

#2. Democracy and Happiness [Surnames beginning with letters I-N]

Target article: Josiah Ober "Natural capacities and Democracy as a Good-In-Itself"

Supplementary readings:

Aristotle, *Politics*

Antony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy"

James Fowler and Christopher Dawes, "Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout"

OR

#3. Property Rights [Surnames beginning O-Z]

Target article: Cara Nine, "A Lockean Theory of Territory"

Supplementary readings:

Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*

John Christman, "Can Ownership be Justified by Natural Rights?"

John Simmons, "Makers' Rights"

Each topic has a **target article** which should be the central focus of the critical review essay. There are also some supplementary readings that might be helpful and could be incorporated into your discussion/analysis of the target article.

7 Steps To Writing a Strong Critical Review Essay

Step #1. Read the target article and all the supplementary readings for your assigned topic (**be sure you do the topic assigned to your surname letter**).

Step #2. Read the target paper over again, making a note of the central arguments, points, etc. that the author makes. You should also note things you think are particularly interesting, contentious, problematic, compelling, etc.

Step #3. Make a plan for your review article. Which specific issues or parts of the target article do you want to focus on? You cannot (and **should not aspire** to) address *everything* in the article. So be sure you focus on important and interesting things. Re-read the relevant sections of the article *again*. And re-read parts of the supplementary readings that you plan to integrate into your review and analysis.

Step #4. Think about your critical analysis (going to tutorials and participating in discussions will help)- **what do you want to argue in your essay?** Feel free to meet with your TA during his/her office hours to discuss your ideas.

Step #5. Write the review (this is obviously an important step!)

Step #6. Re-read your paper, making any necessary changes, correcting spelling mistakes, etc.

Step #7. Re-read your paper **again**. If you are happy with it... you are done!

Here are some more specific guidelines:

Introductory paragraph: what is the “big picture”? In other words, what is the main conclusion/argument of the target article? What particular issues are you going to address in your critical review. **What are you going to argue.** So you need a *thesis statement* and you should state this in your introduction. This opening paragraph is very important as it will set the tone for the paper. It should tell the reader what your critical review is going to be about. Be selective, direct and concise. You do not have space in a paper of this size to set the context for a discussion of all of the issues that arise in the target article.

Some exposition: Before jumping into your critical assessment you want to provide some background details to help set the stage for your critical analysis. In other words, you want to provide some *context* for your analysis. You do this by succinctly summarizing the author’s position and/or the issues you are going to address from the article. You may also want to utilize insights from the supplementary readings. While **some** exposition is necessary avoid providing too **much exposition**. You only have 2, 000 words maximum and the bulk of the paper should be a **critical assessment** of the article.

Critical analysis: This is the hardest part of writing your critical review. Once you have a clear sense of what the target author is arguing you need to ask yourself: do you agree or disagree with what they argue? And why? Is there some particular issue you think they resolve in a compelling fashion or something they overlook? Perhaps you want to take issue with some more specific assumptions they make or moves in their argument. Whatever you decide to focus on, you *must* develop an analysis that supports the thesis statement you make in the introduction. This is not something you can just pull out of the air at the last minute. You will need to **critically reflect** upon the issues, discuss these topics in your tutorials, consider the supplementary readings, etc. So don’t leave things to the last minute!

This is How Your Critical Review Essay will be Graded

Introduction: 3 marks

You should outline what you will address in your critical review and state a clear and concise *thesis statement*. This should be something that one could reasonably defend in a paper of this size and it should be linked to issues that arise in the paper you are considering.

Exposition: 7 marks

How accurate is your presentation of the author's arguments? How relevant is your exposition to the argument you intend to develop in the main part of your paper?

Critical Analysis: 10 marks

How insightful and convincing is your critical analysis? Do you raise interesting questions/insights from the article? Do you make a compelling case for your thesis statement? How uniform and concise is your analysis?

In each of these three sections your writing style, structure, spelling etc. will influence your mark. So if you have countless spelling mistakes and no structure throughout the paper, you will lose marks in each category.

POLS 250 Tutorials

Queen's University, Fall/Winter 2011-12



The purpose of the tutorials is to give students the opportunity to consider some of the course material in a smaller, more interactive context than the lectures alone can provide.

The tutorials also give you the opportunity to delve more deeply into some of the issues. The tutorials are bi-weekly and will be invaluable in helping you prepare your critical review essays (as well as tests and exams). I **strongly encourage** you to attend and participate in the tutorials for the course.

Tutorials begin in week 2 (the week starting Monday, Sept. 19th) and meet every two weeks thereafter. If you are unable to make a tutorial meeting for a particular week it is OK to attend a different tutorial group meeting (provided there is room in the classroom).

Tutorial Schedule and Topics for Fall Term

#1: Introduction and Plato [week #2, starting Sept 19th]

Read *The Republic*, in textbook *Great Dialogues of Plato*, pp. 139-197

#2: Democracy and Education [week #4, starting October 3rd]

Read all of Nussbaum's book *Not For Profit*

#3: Civil Disobedience [week #6, starting October 17th]

Read Andrew Sable "Looking Forward to Justice" on Moodle

#4: Democracy and Happiness [week #8, starting October 31st]

Read Josiah Ober "Natural capacities and Democracy as a Good-In-Itself" on Moodle

#5 Property Rights [week #10, starting Nov. 14th]

Read Cara Nine, "A Lockean Theory of Territory" on Moodle

#6. Review [week #12, starting Nov. 28th]

Students are advised that incomplete standing will be granted only with the permission of the chair of undergraduate or graduate studies (as appropriate) and only where there is a clear demonstration of need. Applications for "Incomplete" standing must be made in the first instance to the instructor on the form available in the General Office. The simple fact of nonsubmission of work does not constitute an application and will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

Students who feel that there are reasons to have their grades reviewed should follow the steps set out in the Faculty of Arts and Science's Regulation 13, "Review of Grades and Examinations."

Academic Integrity : *Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (as articulated by the Centre for Academic Integrity, Duke University; see www.academicintegrity.org) all of which are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University. Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff therefore all have ethical responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. See <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/AcadInteg.html>. The Arts and Science Undergraduate Society (ASUS) provides important academic resources at www.queensasus.com*

The Arts and Science Undergraduate Society (ASUS) provides important academic resources at www.queensasus.com

"This material is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in POLS250. This material shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in POLS250. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate's Academic Integrity Policy Statement."