

# COSMOPOLITANISM AND ITS CRITICS

POLSCI 758 / GLOBALST 758

Term 2, Winter 2020

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**Seminar:** Thursdays, 8:30-11:20 a.m.

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## **Course Description**

Since its invention some 2500 years ago, cosmopolitanism has come and gone in Western thought, and can be discovered in other intellectual traditions as well. While its meaning has varied considerably, its central proposition, embedded in its etymology, is that one is, or can and should be, a citizen of the world. Cosmopolitanism thus expresses the fact, possibility, or imperative of a certain universality, an actual or potential oneness of humankind. At the same time, as the word's second half indicates, it has never ceased to be a political idea. It points out, recommends, or demands not merely that one is or should be part of the world or some larger whole (the *kosmos*) – a child of the universe or some such notion – but a *citizen* (*politēs*), a *Weltbürger*. Here we encounter the idea's central difficulty, for, as Hannah Arendt points out, “[n]obody can be a citizen of the world as he is the citizen of his country.” The world is not, never has been, and shows no immediate prospect of coming to be organized such that one could be a citizen of it in any straightforward way. What, then, is the meaning of this insistence on the *political* nature of this relation to the world – an insistence that, despite its myriad difficulties, has persisted over two and a half millennia? And how should we understand it today?

While casting a glance back to the classics as well as to Immanuel Kant and the founding of a distinctly modern cosmopolitanism, in this course we will focus on contemporary debates, exploring the idea in its political, moral, and cultural aspects. In particular, we will consider how the imperative of thinking politics from a global, universal, ‘human,’ and even ‘cosmic’ perspective puts pressure on traditional political concepts and vocabularies. We accordingly begin by examining some dominant, often taken for granted understandings of ‘politics,’ consider the distinct ways in which leading figures in the history of western political theory have considered politics especially with regard to cosmopolitan and global themes, and conclude with contemporary challenges to traditional notions of the political.’

## **Course Objectives**

Students will develop their ability to:

- carefully and critically read complex theoretical texts in political theory and related disciplines;
- understand, articulate, and contest different approaches within political (as well as social, historical, and moral) theory;
- articulate arguments, in oral and written form, on issues in advanced political theory;
- engage in independent scholarly research and writing;

- critically reflect on the variability and instability of historical and contemporary notions of 'politics.'
- consider how a global view might impact one's view of political issues and priorities and on the nature of politics itself.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

All course materials will be made available via Avenue or in class.

## **Class Format**

This course is a graduate seminar. Regular attendance, careful preparation, and active participation are essential. Students are expected to prepare for discussion by carefully reading the assigned material and by participating in the online forum in advance of classroom discussion. They are expected to post to the online forum consistently throughout the term, and to divide their posts between engaging directly with the readings and their fellows' interpretations, comments, and questions. Seminar discussion will thus place on the basis not only of student presentations of the readings, but also the online discussions.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Attendance and participation – 15%
2. Online discussion – 15%
3. Reading presentations – 20%
4. Paper proposal (due March 8) – 10%
5. Research paper presentation (April 2) – 10%
6. Term paper (due April 12) – 30%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Attendance and participation (15%)**

This is an advanced seminar and so you are expected to attend all class sessions and participate in the discussions. You are expected to complete the required readings, think carefully about them before coming to class, and take an active part in the seminar. The quality of your questions and comments will be valued more than their quantity.

### **Online discussion (15%)**

TEN short response posts are required over the course of the semester, at least five of which must respond to other students' posts. Initial posts are due by midnight the Sunday before class; responses will be accepted until 6pm on Wednesday. You are responsible for posting 10 responses over the 12 substantive sessions; late posts will not be counted. No more than one post and one reply from any week will count toward

your grade, though of course you are welcome to post more often; your highest grades will count toward your final grade. Start early!

Each post should deal with a text from the week's reading, focusing on questions that relate to larger themes in the course. You should focus on trying to understand the authors' arguments.

### **Reading presentations (20%)**

You are required to make TWO short presentations on texts we have read, not to exceed 10 minutes each. You should prepare a one-page (maximum) handout for your classmates. The aim of these presentations should be to summarize the main points of the reading as clearly and succinctly as possible, and to raise question and issues for discussion.

### **Research Paper Proposal (10%), due March 8**

To help prepare for researching and writing the research paper for this course (see below), you will submit a proposal. It should include a title, a concise thesis sentence, a one-paragraph abstract, and an annotated bibliography of 6-12 books and/or articles (total 2-3 pages).

### **Research Paper Presentation (10%), April 2**

The last class will be devoted to research paper presentations. Each student will prepare a 15-minute presentation – its subject, central ideas, and (perhaps still tentative) argument. Revised proposals, outlines, or drafts must be posted in advance to the appropriate discussion forum on Avenue. The presentation is meant to ensure that you have made substantial progress on the paper by the end of classes and to provide an opportunity for questions, constructive criticism, and suggestions.

### **Research Paper (30%), due April 12**

The second paper will be a 3000-4000-word essay (12-16-page) on a topic of your choice related to or inspired by materials or themes covered in the course. Topics should be developed through consultation with the instructor.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Jan 9) Introduction**

### **Week 2 (Jan 16) Politics and the Political**

Readings:

Carl Schmitt, "The Concept of the Political," in *Concept of the Political*, ed. George Schwab (Chicago, 2006), 60-38.

Jeremy Valentine, "The Political," *Theory Culture & Society* 23:2/3 (2006): 505–11.

Elizabeth Frazer, "Political Theory and the Boundaries of Politics," in *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*, ed. Leopold (Oxford 2008), 171–95.

### **Week 3 (Jan 23) Diogenes and the Ancients**

Readings:

Francis Wolff, "polis, politeia," *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. Barbara Cassin (Princeton 2014), 801–3.

Diogenes Laertius, "Diogenes," *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. 2, Harvard University Press, 1925, 23-85.

Barry Hindess, "'The Greeks Had a Word for It': The Polis as Political Metaphor," *Thesis Eleven* 40.1 (1995): 119–32.

Anthony Pagden, "Stoicism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Legacy of European Imperialism," *Constellations* 7.1 (2000): 3–22.

### **Week 4 (Jan 30) Kant and Liberal Internationalism**

Readings:

Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" and "Perpetual Peace" in Reiss, ed., *Kant: Political Writings* (Cambridge 1991).

James Tully, "The Kantian Idea of Europe: Critical and Cosmopolitan Perspectives," in *The Idea of Europe From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge 2002), 331-58.

Inés Valdez, "Perpetual What? Injury, Sovereignty and a Cosmopolitan View of Immigration," *Political Studies* 60.1 (2012): 95–114.

### **Week 5 (Feb 6) Arendt, Worldly Politics, and Human Rights**

Readings:

Hannah Arendt, "Karl Jaspers: Citizen of the World?." *Men in Dark Times* (Harcourt, Brace & World 1955), 81–94.

Ayten Gündoğdu, "Human Rights as Politics and Anti-Politics," *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights* (Oxford 2015), ch. 2.

Robert Fine, "Cosmopolitanism and the Modern Revolutionary Tradition: Reflections on Arendt's Politics," *Critical Horizons* 17.1 (2016): 8–23.

Annabel Herzog, "Political Itineraries and Anarchic Cosmopolitanism in the Thought of Hannah Arendt," *Inquiry* 47.1 (2004): 20–41.

## **Week 6 (Feb 13) Marx and the Politics of Revolution**

Readings:

Shannon Brincat, "Emancipation and the Limits of Marx's Cosmopolitan Imaginary," *Communism in the 21st Century*, ed. Brincat (Praeger 2014), 130–60.

Stathis Kouvelakis, "Marx's Critique of the Political: From the Revolutions of 1848 to the Paris Commune," *Situations* 2 (2007): 81–85.

Mario Tronti, "Towards a Critique of Political Democracy," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 5.1 (2009): 68–75.

Jason Read, "Man Is a Werewolf to Man: *Capital* and the Limits of Political Anthropology," *Continental Thought & Theory* 1.4 (2017): 616–35.

rec.: Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" and "Manifesto of the Communist Party," pts. 1–2.

## **Week 7 (Feb 20) Winter mid-term recess, NO CLASS**

## **Week 8 (Feb 27) Foucault and the Politics of Government**

Readings:

Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, Vol. III*, ed. James Faubion (New Press 2000), 201–224.

Sandro Mezzadra, "Beyond the State, Beyond the Desert," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110.4 (2011): 989–97.

Ben Golder, "Foucault's Critical (Yet Ambivalent) Affirmation: Three Figures of Rights," *Social & Legal Studies* 20.3 (2011): 283–312.

Emily Zakin, "Crisscrossing Cosmopolitanism: State-Phobia, World Alienation, and the Global Soul," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 29.1 (2015): 58–72.

## **Week 9 (Mar 5) Universalism?**

Readings:

Étienne Balibar, "Ambiguous Universality" in *Politics and the Other Scene* (Verso 2002), 146–76.

Stefan Jonsson, "The Ideology of Universalism," *New Left Review* 2.63 (2009): 115–26.

Cinzia Arruzza, "Capitalism and the Conflict Over Universality: A Feminist Perspective," *Philosophy Today* 61 (2017): 1–16.

Massimiliano Tomba, "1793: The Neglected Legacy of Insurgent Universality," *History of the Present* 5.2 (2015): 109–36.

**Notes:** Research Paper Proposal due Sunday, March 8.

### **Week 10 (Mar 12) Postcolonialism**

Readings:

Walter D. Mignolo, "The Many Faces of Cosmo-polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism," *Public Culture* 12.3 (2000): 721-48.

Rahul Rao, "The Elusiveness of 'Non-Western Cosmopolitanism'," in *Politics and Cosmopolitanism in a Global Age*, ed. Sonika Gupta and Sudarsan Padmanabhan (Routledge 2014).

Megan Cole Paustian, "A Postcolonial Theory of Universal Humanity: Bessie Head's Ethics of the Margins," *Humanity* 9.3 (2018): 343–62.

Marisol de la Cadena, "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond 'Politics'," *Cultural Anthropology* 25.2 (2010): 334–70.

### **Week 11 (Mar 19) Climate Change and a New Planetary Humanism**

Readings:

Bruno Latour and Timothy Lenton, "Extending the Domain of Freedom, or Why Gaia Is So Hard to Understand," *Critical Inquiry* 45 (2019): 559–680.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Planet: An Emergent Humanist Category." *Critical Inquiry* 46 (2019): 1–31.

Geoffrey Mann and Joel Wainwright, "Climate Leviathan," *Antipode* 25.1 (2013): 1–22.

Erik Swyngedouw, "Depoliticized Environments: The End of Nature, Climate Change and the Post-Political Condition," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 69 (2011): 253–74.

### **Week 12 (Mar 26) Posthumanism and Politics Beyond Politics**

Readings:



Giorgio Agamben, *From the State of Control to a Praxis of Destituent Power* (Anarchist Library 2013).

Isabelle Stengers, "Including Nonhumans in Political Theory: Opening Pandora's Box?," *Political Matter: Technoscience, Democracy, and Public Life*, ed. Sarah Whatmore (Minnesota 2010), 3–33.

Elizabeth Povinelli, "The Ends of Humans: Anthropocene, Autonomism, Antagonism, and the Illusions of Our Epoch." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116.2 (2017): 293–310.

Donna Haraway, "Making Kin: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene," *Staying with the Trouble* (Duke 2016), chs. 3-4.

### **Week 13 (Apr 2) Paper Presentations**

**Notes:** Research Paper due April 12 – DUE IN COURSE DROPBOX

### **Course Policies**

#### **Submission of Assignments**

The final exam is to be submitted as a single .doc, .docx, or .pdf file to the appropriate dropbox on the course Avenue site.

#### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
0-69	F

#### **Late Assignments**

Late Avenue posts for the online discussion activity will not be considered. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 3.3% off the paper grade per day.

#### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Unexcused absences will result in a 1% penalty on your overall grade, up to a maximum of 10% (the entire Attendance & Participation grade).

## **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

## **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.