

POLITICAL AUTHORITY
20TH-CENTURY POLITICAL THEORY
POLSCI 3CC3
Winter 2023, Term 2

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Course Description

This course considers political theory in the twentieth century, with a special focus on the conditions for legitimate political authority, concepts of freedom and obligation, and questions about the nature of power and human relations in modern society.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Discuss the key themes and concerns of 20th century theory and illustrate how they are dealt with by different theorists of this period;
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical approach as well as their implications for how we should conduct our political and social lives;
- Identify the associations and influences between different theories and suggest how they might relate to pre-20th century theory; and
- Analyze contemporary events in light of the theories covered in the course.

Required Materials and Texts

The majority of your course readings are available in the Avenue to Learn site for this course. Please remember that Avenue is sometimes down, so access the readings well in advance.

Remaining readings are from the following text, which has been ordered into the bookstore (although you might find other editions online).

- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2009 [1889]). *The Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Class Format

Lecture & discussion

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Interlocutor exercise (20%), due date to be assigned
2. Midterm (30%), Feb 28
3. Major paper (40%), due April 11
4. Participation (10%), ongoing

Course Evaluation – Details

Interlocutor exercise (20%) Due date to be assigned

Students will be assigned to small groups (~ 5 or 6) who will be responsible for preparing questions on the week's readings for Discussions on Thursday (2:30-

3:30pm). Students should post a minimum of five questions to the Avenue site for the course under the “Interlocutor Archive” section of the discussion groups no later than **midnight on the Wednesday before their assigned Discussion date**. They should be prepared to lead the class discussion by posing these questions to the class as well as being ready to offer their own interpretations as appropriate (or follow-up questions as appropriate).

The assignment will be evaluated based on discussion preparation & participation, meeting required deadlines for posting questions and peer review, the quality of questions, and the productiveness of class discussion as a way to get into the readings. A good question is one that is focused on the content of the reading and a thinker’s arguments, and doesn’t go off topic to focus on related issues that could create confusion about a thinker’s contribution. See the interlocutor guide posted on Avenue for tips on how to develop strong questions.

Midterm (30%) Feb 28

A series of short answer questions. Those who miss the midterm will not be rescheduled without documentation that provides appropriate grounds for accommodation. Accommodation may include sitting a new midterm, sitting a supervised midterm on zoom, or distributing the grade among other course assignments (participation, major paper, etc.)

Major paper (40%), due April 11

The assignment is to write a clear and compelling essay question and answer it in 5-6 pages. The question should be short (no longer than three lines max.) and should be clearly indicated, in bold, at the top of the opening page of the paper and/or on the cover page. It is advisable to discuss your question in advance to make sure it is appropriate. Please note the paper cannot be on Nietzsche as he is a nineteenth century thinker.

The paper should focus closely on the writings of one or two of the theorists addressed in the course and illustrate important insights or lapses in their thinking. Contemporary issues may be used as a lens through which to explore a thinker’s ideas, but the paper should not get side-tracked into a case analysis or heavy empirical research. This is a theory paper and the best theory papers rely on conceptual argument and close reading of theory texts. Please see the “writing tips” guide in Avenue for more information on how to write a strong theory paper.

Papers should be uploaded in the **pdf** format.

Late penalties will increase exponentially as follows:

April 13	10% penalty
April 15	20% penalty

April 17 40% penalty
April 19 80% penalty
April 20 100% penalty

Participation (10%), ongoing

This evaluation will be based on class attendance and participation in lecture discussion and weekly interlocutor discussions. It also reflects being well informed on class requirements and keeping up to date on course readings.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Jan 10 & 12) - INTRODUCTION

Jan 10

Course introduction

Jan 12

No discussion session

Week 2 (Jan 17 & 19) - NIETZCHE & END OF MORALITY

Jan 17

Friedrich Nietzsche (1998 [1889]). *The Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 3-82.

Jan 19

Nietzsche discussion

Week 3 (Jan 24 & 26) - WEBER & RATIONALISM

Jan 24

Max Weber (1958 [1904]). "Introduction" and "The Spirit of Capitalism." In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner's Sons. Pp. 13-31, 47-78.

Jan 26

Weber discussion

Week 4 (Jan 31 & Feb 2) – MARCUSE & CRITICAL THEORY

Jan 31

Herbert Marcuse (1964). "New Forms of Control" and "The Closing of the Political Universe." In *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 1-55.

Feb 2

Marcuse discussion

Week 5 (Feb 7 & 9) – FOUCAULT & POST-MODERNISM

Feb 7

Michel Foucault (1984). “Truth and Power” and “The Birth of the Asylum.” In *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow (ed). New York: Pantheon Books. Pp. 51-75, 141-167.

Feb 9

Foucault discussion

Week 6 (Feb 14 & 16) – DE BEAUVOIR & FEMINISM

Feb 14

Simone De Beauvoir (1968 [1952]). “Woman’s Situation and Character” and “Conclusion.” In *The Second Sex*. New York: Modern Library. Pp. 597-628, 716-32.

Feb 16

De Beauvoir discussion

Week 7 (Feb 21 & 23) – MIDTERM RECESS No classes

Week 8 (Feb 28 & Mar 2) – MID-TERM & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Feb 28

MIDTERM

Mar 2

Hannah Arendt (1993 [1961]). “Tradition and the Modern Age.” In *Between Past and Future*. New York” Penguin Books. Pp. 17-39.

Week 9 (Mar 7 & 9) - ARENDT & REPUBLICANISM

Mar 7

Hannah Arendt (1989 [1958]). “Action.” In *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 175-237.

Mar 9

Arendt discussion

Week 10 (Mar 14 & 16) - OAKESHOTT & CONSERVATISM

Mar 14

Michael Oakeshott (1977 [1962]). “Political Education” and “On being Conservative.” In *Rationalism in Politics*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. Pp. 3-36, 168-196.

Mar 16

Oakeshott discussion

Week 11 (Mar 22 & 23) - BERLIN & PLURALISM

Mar 21

Isaiah Berlin (2002). "Two Concepts of Liberty." In *The Proper Study of Mankind*, Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (eds). New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. Pp. 191-240.

Mar 23

Berlin discussion

Week 11 (Mar 28 & 30) - RAWLS & LIBERALISM

Apr 4

John Rawls (1971) "Justice as Fairness" and "The Principles of Justice," (selections). In *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press. Pp. 3-22, 60-65.

John Rawls (1985) "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14:3 (Summer): 223-51.

Apr 6

Rawls discussion

Week 12 (Apr 4 & 6) - SAID & IDENTITY THEORY

Apr 4

Edward Said (1979) "Introduction," "Knowing the Oriental" & "Imaginative geography and its representations," in *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books. Pp. 1-73.

Apr 6

Rawls discussion

Apr 4

John Rawls (1971) "Justice as Fairness" and "The Principles of Justice," (selections). In *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press. Pp. 3-22, 60-65.

John Rawls (1985) "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14:3 (Summer): 223-51.

Apr 6

Rawls discussion

Week 13 (Apr 11) – COURSE CONCLUSION

Apr 11

Reflection & Wrap-up

Notes: Major paper due Apr 7.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Unless otherwise indicated assignments should be submitted through Avenue to Learn, by midnight on the due-date.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

- Late penalties of 10% per day (including weekends) will be assigned to work that arrives after the assignment deadline.
- Grade appeals should be made no sooner than 24 hours after the work is returned. If sufficient grounds exist, an assignment will be re-evaluated. Please note that re-evaluation may also result in a grade being lowered.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Courses With An On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this

disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

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 details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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 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.

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. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

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.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make

arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

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.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.