

# POLITICAL SCIENCE 2O06A: POLITICAL THEORY

## DRAFT – SUBJECT TO REVISION

Fall 2020

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**Lecture:** posted weekly on A2L  
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## **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to western political theory, which investigates the concepts and values employed throughout the rest of political science – their advantages and disadvantages, their origins and implications, and how to use and think about them critically. It is designed to provide a background for the various Level III and Level IV courses in political theory; it is also a required course for all honours Political Science students.

The course is roughly divided into three parts. In the first part, we investigate the political-philosophical outlook of classical (Greek) thought by considering Plato's ideal approach to politics, Aristotle's naturalist approach, and, more broadly, the relationship between politics and ethics in ancient political thought. The second section of the course examines the transition from the classical to the modern era, focusing on the shifting foundations of political authority in Machiavelli's 'realist' political theory and Hobbes' skeptical defense of political absolutism. The third part of the course, in the second semester, follows this debate into the modern period with John Locke's social contractarianism, turns to the radical critique of society and politics with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx, considers Edmund Burke's conservative reaction against Enlightenment radicalism, and concludes with Max Weber's 'realistic' alternative, which set the terms for modern social and political science.

## **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of a wide range of crucial concepts and themes in a number of leading political theories; to enhance students' ability to read carefully and critically complex theoretical texts; and to further develop the capacity to formulate both orally and in writing an understanding of the concepts and themes of these theories in a conceptually rigorous and systematic fashion.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

### **Term 1**

- Plato, Republic, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett)
- Aristotle, The Politics, ed./trans. Ernest Barker (Oxford)
- Niccoló Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago)
- Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Penguin)

### **Term 2**

- John Locke, Second Treatise of Government (Broadview)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Basic Political Writings (Broadview)
- Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (Oxford)
- Karl Marx, Selected Writings (Hackett)
- Max Weber, The Vocation Lectures (Hackett)

Course texts are to be obtained via the social reading platform Perusall, via the link on the class Avenue page. Students wishing to use OSAP to obtain the texts can buy a code to do so from the campus bookstore.

## **Class Format**

This course combines online and virtual elements. Lectures will be posted to Avenue weekly on Saturdays, with each set covering the coming week's readings and concluding with study questions (also posted online). Students are expected to prepare for their scheduled tutorials by watching or listening to the lectures and carefully reading the assigned chapters. They will engage with the readings using Perusall, which allows them to identify important or difficult passages as well as to ask, up-vote, and respond to questions with their peers. They will then discuss key points as well as the posted study studies in tutorials.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Social Reading (10%): Annotate readings online via Perusall.
2. Tutorial Participation (20%): Participate in weekly tutorials via Zoom.
3. First Semester Papers (first paper 10%, second paper 15%).
4. Second Semester Paper (outline 5%, paper 20%).
5. Cumulative Final Exam (20%).

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Social Reading (10%)**

In this course you will get credit for doing the readings using the online system Perusall. You are asked to engage with the assigned reading in advance of each tutorial, highlighting certain sections and adding comments or questions. Highlights, comments, and questions will be shared within your tutorial section, allowing you to learn from, and respond to, your colleagues. You can also flag statements that interest or confuse you, which can then be taken up in tutorials. You will receive credit for engaging seriously and consistently with the texts, and for the constructiveness of your contributions.

### **Tutorial Participation (20%)**

Scheduled tutorials are required and will be conducted via Zoom, focusing on the texts and study questions. Your participation grade will be gauged by attendance as well as active and informed participation. You will be expected to have completed the readings and be ready to discuss them. The main business of the tutorials will be to develop answers to the study questions posed at the end of each lecture. The questions will be randomly assigned to break-out groups within the tutorial, with the section as a whole posting their answers to a class-wide Avenue Discussion board at the end of the tutorial. The section will also post one or two questions from their Perusall discussion onto Avenue. The next set of lectures will begin with answers to these questions.

**Papers (first semester: 10% + 15%; second semester: 5% + 20%)**

Over the course of the year, you will write three papers. The first semester essays assignments are to be approximately 4-5 pages in length (1250-1500 words), typed, double-spaced, with standard margins and footnotes. They will be graded on grammar, clarity of writing, organization of argument, understanding of the material, and rigor of the argument. Term I essay topics, along with detailed instructions, will be provided at least three weeks ahead of the deadline. **Essays are due by the end of Sunday Oct. 18 and Sunday Dec. 6. The essays must be uploaded to the designated Dropbox folder on the course's Avenue website by those times and dates.** Term II topics, instructions, and due dates will be provided in Term II.

**Final Exam (20%)**

The final exam will cover the whole year's work and will be held online or in person, depending on circumstances, during the normal examination period in April 2021.

**Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

**Week 1 (Sept. 8-12)**

**Introduction: Politics in the ancient world**

No reading

**Week 2 (Sept. 13-19)**

**Plato: What is justice?**

Reading: *Republic*, Books I-II.

**Week 3 (Sept. 20-26)**

**Plato: Constructing the ideal city**

Reading: *Republic*, Books III-IV.

**Week 4 (Sept. 27-Oct. 3)**

**Plato: A question of knowledge**

Reading: *Republic*, Books V-VI.

**Week 5 (Oct. 4-10)**

**Plato: The city/justice in thought**

Reading: *Republic*, Books VII-IX.

**Week 6 (Oct. 11-17)**

**NO CLASS – MID-TERM RECESS**

**Week 7 (Oct. 18-24)**

**Aristotle: A political animal**

Reading: *Politics*, Book I, chs. 1-7, 12-13; Book II, chs. 1-5.

Note: First essay due Sunday, Oct. 18.

**Week 8 (Oct. 25-31)**

**Aristotle: Citizens and constitutions**

Reading: *Politics*, Book III, chs. 1-13, 16; Book IV, chs. 1, 11.

**Week 9 (Nov. 1-7)**

**Machiavelli: Politics in the real world**

Reading: *The Prince*, Intro., chs. 1-13

**Week 10 (Nov. 8-14)**

**Machiavelli: Princes and Peoples**

Reading: *The Prince*, chs. 14-23; *Discourses on Livy*, Book I, chs. 9-10 (available on Avenue).

**Week 11 (Nov. 15-21)**

**Hobbes: Materialism and Human Nature**

Reading: *Leviathan*, Introduction-Ch. 12.

**Week 12 (Nov. 22-28)**

**Hobbes: From Natural Law to the Social Contract**

Reading: *Leviathan*, Chs. 13-20.

**Week 13 (Nov. 29-Dec. 5)**

**Hobbes: The Life and Death of Commonwealths**

Reading: *Leviathan*, Chs. 21, 26, 29.

## **Week 14 (Dec. 6-9)**

### **Semester conclusion/review.**

Notes: Second paper due Dec. 6.

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Essay assignments must be submitted electronically by uploading them to the relevant Dropbox folder on the course's Avenue website.

### **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-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the due date without an extension granted by the instructor prior to the due date will be penalized 3% per day (including Saturdays and Sundays).

### **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".

### **Avenue to Learn, Zoom, and Perusal**

This course uses on-line elements. 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](#).

### **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](#).

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 Avenue2Learn 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](mailto: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.