

POLITICAL THEORY

Winter 2020

Instructor: James Ingram

Email: ingramj@mcmaster.ca

Lectures: Wed/Thurs 1:30-2:20

Classroom: MDCL 1105

Office Hours: Thurs. 11:30-1:20

Office: KTH-537

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Course Description

This continues the introduction to political philosophy or political theory. 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.

Having been introduced to classical Greek thought and the political bases of modern politics and the state in the first semester, in the second semester we will read political thinkers who respond to the distinctive challenges of modernity. We will consider the development of the liberal-democratic model and some of its radical critics and challengers, as well as the social, moral, and political problems that arise in societies in a period of rapid and unprecedented change.

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

- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Hackett)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Fundamental Political Writings* (Broadview)
- Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Hackett)
- Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* (Hackett)

Class Format and Expectations

There are two hours of lectures and one hour of tutorials each week. Students are expected to prepare for lectures and tutorials by carefully reading the assigned material. Although there is some time in the lecture periods to raise and discuss issues, the tutorials provide the main opportunity for this.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Term I assignment 1—12.5%
2. Term I assignment 2—12.5%
3. Term II outline—5%
4. Term II assignment—20%
5. Final examination—30%
6. Tutorial participation—20% (10% per semester)

Course Evaluation – Details

Term II Essay Outline (5%), due Sunday, March 1

Outlines are to be approximately 1 page in length. They should be in point form, indicating your thesis, the points you wish to make in order, and some of the evidence you will use to make them.

Term II Essay (20%), due Sunday, March 15

Essays are to be 6-8 pages in length (approximately 1500-2000 words), typed, double-spaced, with proper margins and citations. Essays will be marked on grammar, clarity of writing, understanding of the material, and organization and rigor of the argument. Topics and instructions will be provided before Reading Week.

Final Exam (30%), April 2019

The final exam will cover the whole year's work and will be held during the normal examination period in April.

Tutorial Participation (10% per semester)

The tutorial participation grade will be gauged by consistent attendance, and by active and informed participation. Students will be expected to have completed the readings and be ready to discuss them. The tutorial aims to provide an opportunity for students to address the material in greater depth, clarify points of confusion, and explore ideas drawn from the texts. All of these things require not only your attendance, but your active engagement; students will be expected to make constructive contributions to the tutorial discussion.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 8 and 9)

Introduction/Locke: Liberalism and Freedom

Readings:

Second Treatise of Government, Preface, chs. 1-4/pp. 5-18.

Week 2 (January 15 and 16)

Locke: Property and Natural Rights

Readings:

Second Treatise of Government, chs. 5-9/pp. 18-68.

Week 3 (January 22 and 23)

Locke: Limited Government, Popular Sovereignty, and Consent

Readings:

Second Treatise of Government, chs. 10-19/pp. 68-124.

Week 4 (January 29 and 30)

Rousseau: The (Re)Birth of Radical Criticism in the Modern World

Readings:

Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, Preface, Letter, Part I (plus notes)/pp. 87-135, 163-192.

Week 5 (February 5 and 6)

Rousseau: Two Social Contracts

Readings:

Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, Part II (plus notes)/pp. 135-162, 192-195;
On the Social Contract, Book I /pp. 205-221.

Week 6 (February 12 and 13)

Rousseau: The General Will and the Challenge of Autonomy

Readings:

On the Social Contract, Books II, III: 1-4, 10-18, IV: 1-2, 8/pp. 222-258, 272-291, 308-319.

Week 7 (February 19 and 20)

READING WEEK – No Class

Week 8 (February 26 and 27)

Marx: The Limits of Political Emancipation

Readings:

“On the Jewish Question.”

Week 9 (March 4 and 5)

Marx: Alienation and Historical Materialism

Readings:

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, pp. 56-68; *The German Ideology*, pp. 103-132, 98-101; “Theses on Feuerbach,” pp. 98-101.

Week 10 (March 11 and 12)

Marx: Capitalism, Revolution, Communism

Readings:

“The Communist Manifesto.”

Week 11 (March 18 and 19)

Weber: Disenchantment and Social Science

Readings:

“Science as a Vocation.”

Week 12 (March 25 and 26)

Weber: Politics in the Age of Mass Democracy

Readings:

“Politics as a Vocation,” pp. 32-43, 76-94.

Week 13/14 (April 1 and 2)

Review

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:

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

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

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Extensions for submitting an assignment will only be granted for medical reasons or on grounds of a disability. In order to obtain an extension, you must submit a request in writing to the instructor prior to the due date and be prepared to submit supporting evidence for the extension to your Faculty/Program Office. Please note, however, that it is only the instructor, not your Faculty/Program Office who has the authority to grant an extension of the due date.

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 plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, 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 behavior 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 behavior 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:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. 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. 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.