

**POLITICAL THEORY**  
**POLSCI 2006B**  
**WINTER 2023**

**Instructor:** Inder S. Marwah  
**Email:** marwahi@mcmaster.ca  
**Lecture:** Wed/Fri 9:30-10:20, TSH B128

**Office:** KTH 540  
**Office Hours:** Wed/Fri 10:30-11:30 or  
by appointment

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## **Course Description**

This continues the introduction to political theory. It is designed to provide a background for the various Level III and Level IV courses in political theory and is a required course for all honours Political Science students.

Having been introduced to classical Greek thought and to the bases of modern politics 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 liberal-democratic politics and some of its critics and challengers, as well as the social, moral, and political problems that arise in societies in periods of rapid and unprecedented change.

## **Course Objectives**

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

- carefully and critically read complex theoretical texts
- understand key concepts and themes from major texts and arguments from across the history of western political thought
- summarize these ideas clearly and concisely
- formulate both orally and in writing an understanding of these concepts and themes in a conceptually rigorous and systematic fashion
- interpret and discuss the implications of these ideas and concepts
- recognize cogent arguments, formulate theses, and support arguments with textual evidence
- compare and contrast the ideas of different thinkers, recognize their underlying assumptions, and comparatively evaluate them

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Broadview)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings* (Broadview)
- Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Hackett)
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Penguin)
- Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford)

## **Class Format**

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.

This course has been designed as an in-person class, and regular in-person attendance is expected. However, at the discretion of the instructor and in accordance with the University and provincial authorities, online elements may be introduced through the course of the semester. Any changes to the format of the course will be announced as far in advance as possible in person, by email, and via the course A2L page. Attendance and participation expectations will remain the same however the course is delivered.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. First semester papers – first paper 10%, second paper 15%.
2. Second semester paper – outline 5%, third paper 20%.
3. Cumulative final exam – 30%.
4. Tutorial participation – 20% (10% per semester).

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Second Semester Papers (5% + 20%)**

In the second semester, you will submit

- an essay outline (5%), due Tuesday, March 7 by 5 pm, and
- an essay (20%), due Tuesday, March 21 by 5 pm.

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. 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. Essay topics, along with detailed instructions, will be provided at least three weeks ahead of the deadline. The essays must be uploaded to the designated “Assignment” folder on the course’s A2L website by the times and dates indicated above.

### **Cumulative Final Exam (30%), exam period April 2023**

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 2023.

### **Tutorial Participation (20%; 10% per semester)**

The tutorial participation grade will be gauged by consistent attendance and active and informed participation. Students will be expected to have completed the readings and be ready to discuss them. Tutorials aim to provide an opportunity for students to address the material in greater depth, clarify points of confusion, and explore ideas drawn from the texts and lectures. They require not only attendance, but active

engagement; students will be expected to make constructive contributions to the tutorial discussion.

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

### **Jan. 11: Introduction: What do we Mean by Modernity?**

No reading

### **Jan. 13, 18: An Inconvenient Freedom: Preserving Life, Liberty, and Property**

Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 1-9.

### **Jan. 20, 25: Consent, Constitutions, and the Limits of Government**

Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, Ch. 10-19.

### **Jan. 27, Feb. 1: Running into their Chains: The Fraudulent Social Contract**

Reading: Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*.

### **Feb. 3, 8: Changing Human Nature: Social Freedom and Citizenship**

Reading: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Books 1-2.

### **Feb. 10, 15: Preserving Republican Governments**

Reading: Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Books 3-4.

### **Feb. 17: Little Better than Flies of a Summer: Burke vs. Enlightenment**

Reading: Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 83-195, 275-285 (please note: this is all the reading for Burke, including material that will be covered in lectures following the midterm recess).

### **Feb. 22, 24: NO CLASS – MID-TERM RECESS**

### **Mar. 1, 3: Little Better than Flies of a Summer: Burke vs. Enlightenment (cont.)**

Reading: Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 83-195, 275-285.

**\*Essay outline due Mar. 7\***

### **Mar. 8, 10: History and Materialism**

Reading: Marx, *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (p. 3-6), *Society and Economy in History (Marx to P. V. Annenkov)* (p. 136-142), *Theses on Feuerbach* (p. 143-145), *The German Ideology: Part I* (p. 146-175).

**Mar. 15, 17: Alienation and False Consciousness**

Reading: Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (p. 70-81), *Alienation and Social Classes* (p. 133-135), *On the Jewish Question* (p. 26-46), *German Ideology* (continued, p. 186-193).

**\*Essay due Mar. 21\***

**Mar. 22, 24: Politics and Revolution**

Reading: Marx, *Speech at the Anniversary of the People's Paper* (p. 577-578), *German Ideology* (continued, p. 193-200), *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (p. 473-500).

**Mar. 29, 31, Apr. 5: Democracy and Conformity, Liberalism and Empire**

Reading: Mill, *On Liberty* (total), "A few words on non-intervention", available here: <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/mill-the-collected-works-of-john-stuart-mill-volume-xxi-essays-on-equality-law-and-education>.

**Apr. 12: Semester conclusion/review.**

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

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

### **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](http://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](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.