

POLITICAL AUTHORITY: 20TH-CENTURY POLITICAL THEORY

Fall 2019

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Course Description

This course focuses on the major themes in political theory from the turn of the century until the appearance in 1971 of Rawls' A Theory of Justice. This period was characterized by a concern with the conditions for legitimate political authority as well as with questions about the nature of power and human relations in modern society. The course will begin with Nietzsche's account of the end of morality. It will then examine theories concerned with rationality and knowledge (Weber), neo-Marxism (Marcuse), post-modernism (Foucault), and feminism (de Beauvoir). It will also consider republican (Arendt), conservative (Oakeshott), and pluralist (Berlin) style theories that attempt to address the issues raised by these early theories, and will finally arrive at the renewal of the liberal project under Rawls.

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

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Avenue to Learn (AVENUE) class archive – 10%
2. Mid-term test – 20%, in class October 23
3. Short paper – 30%, due November 14
4. Participation – 10%
5. Take home test – 30%, due November 27

Course Evaluation – Details

Avenue to Learn (AVENUE) class archive – 10%, signup by Sept 11

Students are required to post a minimum 500 word comment on a reading from our course to a “class archive” discussion group in AVENUE. You must sign up for a particular thinker by the signup deadline. Those who have either failed to sign up by the deadline, or who fail to post their comment on the assigned date, without proper documentation to account for this omission, may forfeit this portion of their grade. The aim is to comment directly on the original writings of a twentieth century theorist in a way that will help your colleagues in the class. The archive will be framed by guided discussion questions/topics as outlined in the avenue discussion post introducing the assignment (10% of grade).

Mid-term test – 20%, in class October 23

Students are advised to arrive on time, and will not be excused from the test until the time is up (20% of grade). Note: if you miss the test, do not assume a re-write will be possible. Instead, if adequate documentation is provided for your absence, your grade may be redistributed among other assignments. There is no guarantee of this accommodation and assessment will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Short paper – 30%, due November 14

The assignment is to write a clear and compelling essay question (of the kind that might appear on your final exam for this course) and answer it in 5 pages (30% of grade). 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. It is advisable to discuss your question in advance to make sure is appropriate. The paper cannot be on Nietzsche because he is a nineteenth century thinker. There is an unusual due-date system for this paper, designed to make you responsible for your own time-management decisions, by placing responsibility for the outcome of the assignment process on your own shoulders. It works as follows:

- Papers are due **November 14**. Papers received by this date will be:
 - graded with detailed comments on your performance,
 - include recommendations for improving future work, and
 - will be returned before the take-home test.

This is by far the best way to go... however...

- Late Papers.... which means anything arriving after the official due date
 - will be graded without comments or feedback, and
 - will not be returned or graded before the final assignment.
- Extreme lateness penalties will apply as follows:
 - November 27, 30% penalty

- November 28, 40% penalty
- December 2, 50% penalty

Anything later requires you to speak to advisors in the Faculty Office (Social Science) to request permission to submit your work, note that permission is not always granted.

Participation – 10%

The participation grade reflects in class discussion and participation, which may include spot quizzes on that week's readings as a way to assess preparation. It is also influenced by participation in AVENUE and its discussion groups, and whether a student has kept up to date on course requirements and announcements (10% of grade). Tips to maximize participation include:

- 1) Come to class with the readings done and questions in mind;
- 2) Signup for the Archive post by deadline;
- 3) Compose postings that have the hallmark of originality;
- 4) Read and follow discussion posts;
- 5) Contribute to the discussion of an Archive post or to a discussion thread;
- 6) Start an original discussion thread related to course issues, life at Mac, or life in the Political Science program;
- 7) Post additional resources (related readings, recommendations etc);
- 8) Stay up to date on course announcements;
- 9) Check your Avenue email regularly.

Take home test – 30%, due November 27

3 of 5 essay questions (30% of grade). Handed out November 21, due back November 27. For your convenience, completed tests will also be accepted without late penalty if submitted in class November 28. Note that anything handed in later than the beginning of class on November 28 will count as late and penalties of 20% per day will be applied.

Expectations

- 1) Students are expected to attend scheduled classes, and to arrive prepared to discuss the week's readings. An environment of mutual respect among students is to be maintained.
- 2) Students are expected to complete the assignments on schedule, except in cases of illness or immediate personal emergency. Please note that coinciding assignments in other courses is not grounds for an extension, so prepare accordingly.
- 3) Students are expected to provide legible copies of the assignments. Submission by e-mail is not acceptable unless specifically requested by the instructor or TA.
- 4) Online assignments are due by midnight on the due date. Late penalties of 10% per day (including weekends) will be assigned to work that arrives after

- the date indicated as the assignment deadline for the archive post. Late penalties for the take-home are 20% per day, and late penalties for the short paper start at 30% on November 27.
- 5) Grade appeals can be made no sooner than 24 hours after the work is returned. Assignments returned for appeals must be accompanied by a one page statement setting out the grounds for re-evaluation, and must be submitted in writing. If sufficient grounds exist, an assignment will be re-evaluated. Please note that re-evaluation may also result in a grade being lowered.

Evaluation

In the absence of established requirements for accommodation, course assignments should:

- Conform to standard submission requirements (i.e., paper should be double-spaced, single-sided, letter-size paper, with a separate cover page indicating course title, instructor, date of assignment, student name and student number).
- Demonstrate a clear writing style, grammar competency, and correct word-usage.
- Demonstrate knowledge in the areas covered by the course and course readings, show that a student grasps the issues raised in the course, and reflect an effort to address these issues constructively and with original thought.
- In the name of conservation I am happy to accept assignments on reused paper that has already been printed on the other side. Just make sure that a) the text is fully legible on the side with your assignment, and b) there is no room for confusion between which side is the assignment. Adding a header or footer to your assignment is one way to do this.
- Adequate citations are a must. Know that citation software built into word processing programs are not necessarily designed for academic papers and may let you down. I recommend the [Chicago in-text](#) (also known as the author-date system) as the most appropriate for Political Science students. Note that most of these examples use page citations. Proper documentation, including page citations, is what separates scholarly work from mere opinion. This is true of any course in political science, but it is especially true in political theory, where the specific words of a theorist are the central evidence of the discipline. A paper written for this course that has no page citations therefore falls well below the standard of work expected of students at this level and lacks meaningful evidence of having mastered the materials. Authors of such work should expect their grade to reflect this weakness. Please also note that the reading list does not follow the Chicago author-text system, so cutting and pasting from the reading list will not meet the requirements for a reference list.

- I recognize that students in the humanities or other disciplines may be familiar with other systems. If you use another citation system, indicate on your paper the system you used, and I will evaluate your work against that system. If there is no alternate system identified I will evaluate your citations against the Chicago author-date in-text system and any differences will register as errors.

E-mail guidelines

- Please put the course number in your subject line if you email me. I will be checking this e-mail regularly, although you should allow several days for a response.
- If you have a question, and are thinking of e-mailing me, please take the following steps:
 1. First, check the syllabus and reading list – is the answer there?
 2. If the answer is not clear from the syllabus or website, ask yourself whether this question can wait until our next class meeting, so everyone can benefit from the answer.
 3. If it just can't wait or is not of general interest, then feel free to e-mail me through Avenue.
 4. If I feel your question could also help other students, I may post the question (anonymously) on the discussion portion of the Avenue website.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Sept 4 & 5) - INTRODUCTION TO TWENTIETH CENTURY THEORY

Sept 4

Course introduction

Sept 5

Readings:

David E. Cooper (1996). "Modern European Philosophy." *In The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, Nicholas Bunnin and E.P. Tsui-James (eds). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. Pp. 702-21.

Gunnar Skirbekk and Nils Gilje (2000). "Nietzsche and pragmatism." *In A History of Western Thought*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 354-64.

Week 2 (Sept 11 & 12) - NIETZCHE & THE END OF MORALITY

Sept 11

Readings:

Friedrich Nietzsche (1998 [1889]). *The Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 3-42.

Sept 12

Readings:

Friedrich Nietzsche (1998 [1889]). *The Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 43-82.

Week 3 (Sep 18 & 19) - WEBER & RATIONALISM

Sept 18

Readings:

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

Sept 19

Readings:

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

Week 4 (Sept 25 & 26) - MARCUSE & CRITICAL THEORY

Sept 25

Readings:

Herbert Marcuse (1964). "New Forms of Control." In *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 1-18.

Sept 26

Readings:

Herbert Marcuse (1964). "The Closing of the Political Universe." In *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 19-55.

Week 5 (Oct 2 & 3) - FOUCAULT & POST-MODERNISM

Oct 2

Readings:

Michel Foucault (1984). "Truth and Power." In *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow (ed). New York: Pantheon Books. Pp. 51-75.

Oct 3

Readings:

Michel Foucault (1984). "The Birth of the Asylum." In *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow (ed). New York: Pantheon Books. Pp. 141-167.

Week 6 (October 9 & 10) – DE BEAUVOIR & FEMINISM

Oct 9

Readings:

Simone De Beauvoir (1968 [1952]). "Woman's Situation and Character" In *The Second Sex*. New York: Modern Library. Pp. 597-628.

Oct 10

Readings:

Simone De Beauvoir (1968 [1952]). "Conclusion." In *The Second Sex*. New York: Modern Library. Pp. 716-32.

Week 7 (Oct 14-18) - Mid-term Recess

No classes

Week 8 (Oct 23 & 24) – MID-TERM & PAPER WRITING

October 23 – Mid-term

Readings: None

Oct 25 – Paper-writing

Readings:

David A. Rasch and Meechan Rasch (2013) "Overcoming Writer's Block and Procrastination for Attorneys, Law Students and Law Professors," *New Mexico Law Review* 193 (Spring): 193-239

Week 9 (Oct 30 & 31) - THE ART OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

47pp

Oct 29

Readings:

Leo Strauss (1957) "What is Political Philosophy" *The Journal of Politics* 19(3): 343-68.

Nov 1

Readings:

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

Week 10 (Nov 6 & 7) - ARENDT & REPUBLICANISM

102pp

Nov 6

Readings:

Hannah Arendt (1989 [1958]). "Action." In *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 175-207.

Nov 7

Readings:

Hannah Arendt (1989 [1958]). "Action." In *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 220-236.

Week 11 (Nov 13 & 14) - OAKESHOTT & CONSERVATISM

Nov 13

Readings:

Michael Oakeshott (1977 [1962]). "Political Education." In *Rationalism in Politics*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. Pp. 3-36.

Nov 14

Readings:

Michael Oakeshott (1977 [1962]). "On being Conservative." In *Rationalism in Politics*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. Pp. 168-196.

Notes: Short paper due

Week 12 (Nov 20 & 21) - BERLIN & PLURALISM

66pp

Nov 20

Readings:

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- 216.

Nov 21

Readings:

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. 216 -240.

Notes: Take-home handed out.

Week 13 (Nov 27 & 28) - RAWLS & LIBERALISM

Nov 27

Readings:

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.

Notes: Take home due.

Nov 28

Readings:

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

Week 14 (Dec 4)

Dec 4 – Class cancelled

Course Policies

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+

MARK	GRADE
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

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.

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.