

PHIL 2517 WDE Social and Political Philosophy
Winter 2023 January 9 - April 11

Instructor: TBD

E-mail: TBA

Class Hours: NA, WEB-BASED

Office Hours: TBA

Course Goals

Understanding contemporary political issues involves understanding the Western political tradition, for many of these issues are a result of tensions that exist between different strains of this tradition, and even if the issues are of external origin, how our society deals with these issues will be rooted in the Western political tradition.

This course seeks to provide a significantly detailed introduction to a range of major political theorists and issues in the Western tradition. No attention is given to other traditions, but students who are interested can take my fourth year course on ancient Asian political thought.

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Show improvement in their existing philosophical skills of interpretation, analysis, critical reflection; and in the case of beginners, to demonstrate an acquisition of these skills
- Correctly apply the basic terminology of social-political and ethical philosophy to classical and new situations
- Formulate questions regarding contemporary issues in a manner that reveals the political dimension of the phenomenon, including which strains of the Western tradition have given rise to are most appropriate for dealing with the issue
- Formulate defenses and criticisms of these issues in accord with the rules of formal and informal logic
- Conceptually unpack and critically evaluate specific terms used in arguments
- Identify and critically assess major trends and arguments regarding themes looked at in the course, as well as place them in and show an appreciation for their historical context
- Write a university-level essay that articulates and defends a position on one or more of these issues

How to Proceed with this Course

This, like all university courses, is ultimately a self study course. The course outline provides you with a structured path to follow in terms of readings, and the posted notes which will in turn guide you through these readings. To get the most out of the course, do the readings from the text *before* looking at the posted notes. Trying to memorize and regurgitate the notes back to me *may* get you a passing grade (it also may not), but in doing so you miss the point of the course:

the development of your abilities to read, interpret, and critically analyze complicated texts. These skills are more important than any fact you can get out of the notes and can only be achieved by you doing the work on your own. In short, follow the course outline and keep up with the readings, and you should have no problems. Ignore the course outline or fall behind at your own peril.

The parameters for the essays and the annotated bibliography (research for your major essay) have also been released on the course website. You should start thinking about your paper topics immediately, and realize that reading ahead will most likely be required. The sooner you start working on your essays (compiling sources, reflecting on the primary readings, etc.), the better your essay will be.

Distance education students can contact by email to discuss issues or to arrange a mutually convenient time for a phone call.

Teaching Philosophy

No particular tradition or philosophical position will be advocated by the professor. Students will have the opportunity and the freedom to develop their own position vis-à-vis the philosophies dealt with in the course. The professor will alternate between learning guide and devil's advocate for the purpose of challenging students to develop their positions further in light of constructive criticisms and traditional objections. *Note: opinions are worthless in this course. If you want to say or believe something (openly in class or on an assignment), you must present an argument for it.*

Course Requirements and Methodology

This course has five mandatory components. Three multiple choice tests worth twenty percent each, an annotated bibliography worth ten percent, and a major essay worth thirty percent. There is no final exam. Specific parameters for the essay as well as the annotated bibliography are available on the course website separately. The purpose of the tests is to offer students a quick gauge of how deep their reading of the texts is. The window to write the tests will be all day, but the actual test time will be very short (30 minutes). Details will be sent to the class closer to the test dates.

Assignment	Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Test 1:	TBA (on line)	20%
Annotated Bibliography:	TBA	10%
Test 2:	TBA (on line)	20%
Essay:	TBA	30%
Test 3:	TBA (on line)	20%

Late Penalties, Extensions, and Submission of Assignments

A late penalty of 3 marks per day will apply to all assignments, but will be waived for legitimate reasons, providing that supporting documentation is provided (e.g., doctor's note). If students anticipate being late with an assignment due to personal circumstances that cannot be documented, they should approach the professor in advance (e.g., with *reasonable* notice) and

ask for an extension. If this is not done, late penalties will apply no matter how heart wrenching the circumstances may be. Students who hand in assignments late should have their assignments signed and dated by the secretary. Late assignments that are not notarized in this way will be considered as handed in whenever the professor receives them (e.g., if an assignment is handed in on Wednesday, but I do not check my mailbox until Monday, the assignment will be treated as being submitted on Monday and the corresponding late penalty will apply). Should an assignment go “missing” and the student is unable to produce another copy of it by the next class, the assignment will be considered *not* submitted. Students are also responsible for hanging onto all marked assignments. Should a discrepancy arise between a recorded grade and what a student recalls receiving on the assignment, the student will need to produce the marked assignment.

Return of Assignments

University policy requires that assignments totaling 25% of a student’s final grade be made available to the student by the drop date, however, ***it is the responsibility of the student to retrieve marked assignments***. Assignments submitted through the course website can be retrieved from it after they have been marked. Assignments submitted in hard copy format will be distributed in the first class after they have been marked, after that class, students can retrieve unclaimed assignments from the philosophy secretariat located on the third floor of the Ryan Building. In cases where class presentations or participation are included, students looking should contact the professor prior to the drop date for a report on their progress.

Texts

The textbook is mandatory and can be purchased from the Lakehead University Alumni Bookstore. Students will find that this text will prove to be a valuable resource should they continue in philosophy or political science.

Required

Cohen, Mitchell ed. *Princeton Readings in Political Thought: Essential Texts from Plato to Populism*. Princeton [NJ]: Princeton UP, 2018.

Additional selected readings can be found on the course website.

Academic Policies

There are numerous university policies covering attendance, course withdrawal, appeal of grades, plagiarism and other forms academic misconduct, etc. Students are advised to consult the university calendar regarding these and all other policies, as all situations will be dealt with according to university policy.

University Services

Lakehead University offers a variety of services to help students with their academic endeavors as well as with life in general. Students are encouraged to consult the University website to familiarize themselves with these resources and use them if they can be beneficial. Students are also encouraged to think critically about these services and whether or not these services are

appropriate for their situation, and not blindly accept the word of any university employee, counselor, or medical personnel as correct, complete, or beyond question.

Thomas R. Klassen and John A. Dwyer of York University have also published a useful book, *How to Succeed at University (and Get a Great Job!): Mastering the Critical Skills You Need for School, Work, and Life from UBC Press*. Students who are feeling overwhelmed by their choices, or are trying to find their way amidst conflicting advice and pressures from advisors, parents, friends, etc., may want to read this book.

Caveat

While every attempt has been made to organize this course in accordance with university policy, some errors may exist. In such event, the error will be resolved according to the relevant university policies. In the case of due dates, should a due date fall within a period in which assignments cannot be due, the due date will be rescheduled for the first eligible day *preceding* the original date.

Warning

Philosophy often deals with controversial subjects and examines them from a variety of perspectives. Individuals may find some of these perspectives distasteful or offensive, however you are adults, and part of the university experience (and a key element of philosophy) is being exposed to new ideas and viewpoints which you do not agree with. If you cannot deal with such controversy in a mature and acceptable manner, viz. through critical evaluation and a reasoned response, you should save yourself, your classmates, and me time and aggravation and withdraw from this course immediately.

Social and Political Philosophy—Topics and Readings

Module 1: Classical Western Political Thought

Week 1 Introduction

Readings: Plato, *The Apology* (21-37)

Week 2 Ancient Western Political Thought I: Plato

Readings: Plato, *The Republic* (37-90)

Week 3 Ancient Western Political Thought II: Aristotle

Readings: Aristotle, *The Politics* (course website)

Week 4 Medieval Political Thought: Augustine and Aquinas

Readings: Augustine, *On the City of God* (115-123)

Aquinas, “Politics and the Law” (124-130)

Assignment: Test 1 TBD

Module 2: Modern Western Political Thought

Week 5 Machiavelli

Readings: Machiavelli, *The Prince* (145-162)

Study Break TBD

Week 6 The Contractarians: Hobbes and Locke

Readings: Hobbes's *Leviathan* (176-201)

Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (213-234) Mills, "The Racial Contract" (course website)

Week 7 Early Liberal Theory: Adam Smith and J. S. Mill

Readings: Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (398-315)

J.S. Mill *On Liberty* (369-380)

Assignment: Annotated Bibliography for Major Essay due Mar. 1

Week 8 Democracy

Readings: Publius, *The Federalist Papers* (319-328)

De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (388-410)

Assignment: Test 2 TBD

Module 3: Contemporary Western Political Thought

Week 9 Theories of Distributive Justice

Readings: Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (685-6708)

Nozick, *Anarchy, State & Utopia* (709-717)

Marx, "Estranged Labour" and *The Communist Manifesto* (431-452) Fukuyama, "The Worldwide Liberal Revolution" (course website)

Week 10 Oppression and Resistance

Readings: Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (544-557)

King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (621-631) Malcolm

X, *The Ballot or the Bullet* (632-636)

Assignment: Essay due TBD

Week 11 20th Century Feminism

Readings: de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (603-613)

Young, "Justice and the Politics of Difference" (729-737)

Assignment: Test 3 TBD

Week 12 Patriotism and Populism

Readings: Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" (738-745)

Müller, "What is Populism?" (758-761)

Recommended Further Reading

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Ethics as Identity*. Princeton [NJ]: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Blahuta, Jason P. *Fortune and the Dao: A Comparative Study of Machiavelli, the Daodejing, and the Han Feizi*. Lanham [MD]: Lexington Books, 2015.

----- "Maritain, Machiavelli, and the Problem of Machiavellianism: Maritain's Challenge to Political Leaders," *Maritain Studies*, vol. XXIV, 2008: 57-70.

----- "Re-evaluating the Status of Noncombatants in Just War Theory and Terrorism," in *Routledge Handbook of Ethics and War: Just War Theory in the Twenty-first Century*.

- Ed. Fritz Allhoff, Nicholas G. Evans, and Adam Henschke. New York: Routledge, 2013. 253-264.
- Berkowitz, Peter. *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Coleman, Janet. *A History of Political Thought: From Ancient Greece to Early Christianity*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000.
- *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000.
- Dworkin, Ronald. "What is Equality? Part 1: Equality of Welfare," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 10.3 (1981): 185-246.
- "What is Equality? Part 2: Equality of Resources," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 10.4 (1981): 283-345.
- Finnis, John. *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press, 2006.
- *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2011.
- *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2014.
- Galston, William A. *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Hengehold, Laura and Nancy Bauer. Eds. *A Companion to Simone de Beauvoir*. Hoboken [NJ]: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
- Ignatieff, Michael. *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*. Princeton [NJ]: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Kraut, Richard. *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Kymlicka, Will. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Macedo, Stephen. *The Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue, and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.
- Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge [MA]: Belknap Press, 1972.
- *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Raz, Joseph. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Rosen, Frederick. *Mill*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Sandel, Michael J. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Cambridge [MA]: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Schofield, Malcolm. *Plato: Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1999.
- Shelby, Tommie and Brandon M. Terry. Eds. *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political*



- Philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr.* Harvard [MA]: Belknap Press, 2018.
- Skinner, Quentin. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- . *The Malaise of Modernity*. Concord [ON]: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1991.
- . "The Politics of Recognition," *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 1995. 225-256.
- Van Parijs, Phillippe. *Real Freedom For All: What (if Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Viroli, Maurizio. *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250-1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . *Machiavelli*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- . *Niccolo's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and