

POL330Y: POLITICS AND MORALITY 2014-15

Professor Melissa S. Williams
Sidney Smith Hall 3040
Tel. 416-978-8220
Email: melissa.williams@utoronto.ca

Office hours: Thursdays 2-4 p.m.
TA: Lindsay Mahon (lindsay.mahon@utoronto.ca)

Classes meet Tuesdays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Men are born free, but everywhere they are in chains.... How did this come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? That question I think I can answer.”

So Rousseau famously begins *On Social Contract*, summing up in a single question the defining question of modern Western political thought. Political power forges chains that bind us to obey commands: the commands of law, backed up with the power to compel obedience with force, if need be. For Rousseau, as for Hobbes and Locke before him, and Kant, J.S. Mill and Marx after him, the task of political philosophy is to uncover the moral principles by which we can distinguish legitimate from illegitimate power, just from unjust law, freedom from subjection and domination.

What are the moral foundations of politics? What is freedom? What is justice? What is legitimacy?

What if these are the wrong questions? What if they presuppose too much: that it is *possible for there to be a moral foundation to politics for the kind of people we are in the times we inhabit?*

In this course, we will study the works of key figures in 20th-century political thought, for whom the moral possibilities of politics were thrown into radical question by the horrors of two world wars, genocide, and colonialism. All the thinkers we will study situate the problem of political morality within a particular period of human history, what we will sum up as “modernity.” What are the features of modernity that render the morality of politics so uncertain? What sort of freedom, justice or legitimacy is possible for creatures like us, shaped so thoroughly by modern science, technology and capitalism? What are the distinctive forms of unfreedom and injustice to which we are subject?

The 21st century is a period not so much of postmodernity, some might argue, as one of *hyper*-modernity. What we have to learn from these thinkers about the moral possibilities of our politics, then, is not *passé*. Rather, it might even be more urgent than when they wrote these texts.

TEXTS

The following course texts are available for purchase at the UofT Bookstore; if you opt to order them online, please be sure to get the same edition:

- Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*. Hackett Publishing Company (March 2004).
- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 2004).
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990)
- Mohandas Gandhi, *"Hind Swaraj" and Other Writings*. Ed. Anthony Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

2001).

Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

Where possible, online sources for readings not included in these texts have been indicated in the syllabus below. Two further readings will be made available in a course packet or posted on the course Portal site within the first three weeks of term. Readings for the latter half of the spring term will be announced in the middle of November, based on the deliberative syllabus design process described below.

CLASS FORMAT & CLASS ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is critically important in this course; lectures and classroom discussion will not simply replicate the reading. Most class sessions will comprise two hours of lecture followed by a 15-minute break and 45 minutes of class discussion. You should plan to attend class for the entire 3-hour session each week.

Please observe basic rules of etiquette in the classroom. Take care to avoid the following disruptions to the ethos of shared intellectual exchange that we strive to maintain: late arrivals and early departures, surfing the internet during lecture, ringing cell phones, and side conversations during lecture. You know what to do and what not to do, and we hope not to have to remind you.

EXPERIMENTS IN DELIBERATIVE LEARNING

Based on earlier experiments, the syllabus for the last six weeks of the second term of this course will be designed by students through a deliberative process early in the first term. This approach allows students to build on the theoretical foundations constructed in the first three-fourths of the course to examine the moral dimensions of contemporary challenges in political life. Political theory is a branch of practical reason, that is, the use of our reason to address the question of how we ought to live. In exercising our capacities for practical reason, one of the most important things we do is to choose the problems to which we address our intellectual energies. Our ongoing experiment in deliberative syllabus design will afford you the opportunity to set your own intellectual agenda by identifying the political challenges that, in your judgment, most command our moral attentiveness in our time.

A deliberative approach to learning will also structure the post-lecture discussion sessions each week. The classroom in which we are meeting was specifically chosen for its flexibility in enabling this approach.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Mid-term Test, in class, **October 28, 2014**. This two-hour test will comprise an essay and short-answer questions. All material in the course to date will be covered in this quiz. Weight: 15%.
2. First Term Essay, due *in class* on Tuesday, **December 2, 2014**. Note that the peer review process for this assignment will take place in class on Tuesday, **November 25**, by which time you must have completed a draft. Students who have not prepared a draft and/or do not participate in the peer review process will lose 2 points off their final participation mark for the course. Both draft and final essays must be submitted via Turnitin.com and in hard copy in class. Length: 2500-3000 words. Weight: 25%
3. Second Term Essay, due *in class* on Tuesday, **February 24, 2015**. The peer review process for this assignment will take place in class on Tuesday, **February 10, 2015**, so your draft must be complete by then. Students who have not prepared a draft and/or do not participate in the peer review process will lose 2 points off their final participation mark for the course. Both draft and final essays must be submitted via Turnitin.com and in hard copy in class. Length: 2500-3000 words. Weight: 25%
4. Final Exam, during the Winter Term exam period. Weight 25%
5. Participation in class discussion, peer review sessions, and at least 12 entries in your Reading Journal (six in the Fall Term, and six in the Winter Term). Unfortunately we will not be able to provide regular feedback on your journal entries, but we encourage you to respond to one another. Weight 10%

Lateness policy: Requests for extensions beyond the above deadlines will be approved only for reasons of health, and only when accompanied by medical documentation. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of 2 percent per day of lateness, including weekends. Essays must be submitted in person at the beginning of class on their due dates, or they will be subject to the lateness penalty.

Writing essays: Clear, thoughtful, well-organized writing is one of the most important skills you develop in the course of your undergraduate training. This course assumes that you have laid the foundations for strong academic writing and are prepared to continue working on your writing skills. The UofT Writing Centre (www.writing.utoronto.ca) offers some excellent resources, as do College writing centres. Writing well is a lifelong endeavour; it is important to develop the habit of drafting, getting critical feedback from advisors and fellow students, and rewriting before submitting your paper. Revise, revise, revise! Be sure to acknowledge, by name, all who supported you in writing your essay.

ON READING

Many of the texts we are reading in this course are difficult, and the reading load is not light. Questions to guide reading will be posted on the Portal site (as “Reading Guide”), with some suggestions about especially important passages to help you manage the longer readings. We suggest that you read the assigned text *in its entirety*, fairly quickly, one time, then follow up by focusing closely on the passages stressed in the Reading Guide. It may take three or more readings before some of these texts become clear. You may also find it helpful to use the questions in the Reading Guide to focus your journal entries.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rulebook for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”.
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else’s answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.

- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will ask you to *include a signed Academic Integrity Checklist with every assignment*. If you do not include the statement, your work will not be graded.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the turnitin.com web site.

Turnitin.com Class ID: 8483529; Password = modern

CLASS SCHEDULE: FALL TERM

1. **September 9, 2014:** Course introduction: Can morality be a guide in politics?

No assigned reading.

Ethics and Politics: Diagnoses of the Modern Condition

2. **September 16, 2014**

Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation."

3. **September 23, 2014**

Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation."

Suggested: Michael Walzer, "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 2(2): 160-80 (1974). Available through UofT Library system.

Modernity and the Possibility of Politics

4. **September 30, 2014**

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2

****Deliberative Syllabus Design Session I****

5. **October 7, 2014**

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapters 3 & 4

6. October 14, 2014

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapters 5 & 6

Power, Domination and Violence

7. October 21, 2014: Violence

Arendt, *On Violence* (selections on Blackboard)

8. October 28, 2014: **Two-hour mid-term test today, in class******

9. November 4, 2014: Violence (cont'd)

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Chapter 1, "On Violence"

Recommended: Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface" to *The Wretched of the Earth*; Fanon, *Wretched*, Chapter 3 ("The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness").

10. November 11, 2014: Power

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Parts IV and V

November 18, 2014: Fall Reading Break; no class

11. November 25, 2014: Nonviolence

Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, chs. 4-10, 13-14, and 17; "Economic Development and Moral Development," pp. 156-64; Quit India speech, pp. 181-82; and "The Pyramid and the Oceanic Circle," pp. 188-91.

****Peer Review Session, First Term Essay: Completed Draft Required****

Freedom

12. December 2, 2014: What is Freedom?

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 118-72.

Recommended:

Hannah Arendt, "Freedom and Politics," *Chicago Review* 14(1): 28-46 (1960).

****First Term Essay due in class (and via Turnitin.com)****

CLASS SCHEDULE: WINTER TERM

Justice

1. January 6, 2015

John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Part I (entire)

2. January 13, 2015

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Part II (entire); Part III, sections 23-27, 30, 39.

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, pp. ix-xiv; 149-64; 167-78; 213-31 (BB).

3. January 20, 2015

Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, Part IV, sections 41-45, 47, 50; Part V (entire).

Susan Moller Okin, "Justice and Gender," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 16(1): 1987 [available online through UofT Libraries] or *Justice, Gender and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), chapter 5. (Read in conjunction with section 50 of *Justice as Fairness*).

Democracy and Legitimacy

4. January 27, 2015

Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other*, Chapter 1

5. February 3, 2015

Habermas, *Inclusion of the Other*, Chapters 2 & 3

6. February 10, 2015

Habermas, *Inclusion of the Other*, chapters 9 & 10

****Peer Review Session, Second Term Essay: Completed Draft Required (in class and via Turnitin.com)****

** READING WEEK **

7. February 24, 2015: TBD

****Second Term Essay due in class (and via Turnitin.com)****

8. March 3, 2015: TBD

9. March 10, 2015: TBD

10. March 17, 2015: TBD

11. March 24, 2015: TBD

12. March 31, 2015: TBD