

POL 2001: 20th Century Political Thought

Instructor: Margaret Kohn

Fall, Thursday, 10-12

Office Hours: Thursday 1:00-2:00 (SS3118)

Email: kohn@utsc.utoronto.ca

This course is a survey of leading texts in 20th century political thought. This course blends a “great books approach” with a thematic approach. We will read the works of canonical political theorists and discuss their distinctive contributions, including concepts such as the original position (Rawls), the critique of the social (Arendt), disciplinary power (Foucault), non-domination (Pettit), violence (Fanon), and deliberative democracy (Habermas). At the same time, we will pay attention to the way that a debate about obligation and civil disobedience, normalization and resistance runs through these different works.

Course Requirements:

Marking

Three reaction papers (30%) + final research paper (60%) + participation (10%)

Reaction papers: In each section of the course (weeks 2-4, 5-8 and 9-11) students are required to submit one reaction paper. The length should be around 1200 words. These papers should provide a close reading and an interpretation of the assigned readings. The reaction papers should do more than summarize the reading. They should make an argument and/or identify a puzzle. You make chose to answer the discussion questions on the syllabus. Your reaction papers must be uploaded on Quercus by 5 pm on Wednesday. No late reaction papers will be accepted.

Final Essay: This paper is due on the last day of classes. It should be approximately 6,000 – 7,000 words in length. The proposal is due by Week 8. Please submit it by email. Instructions for the proposal will be available on Quercus.

Participation: This course is based on a seminar format, and therefore all students are expected to actively listen and contribute to class discussions. The best way to prepare for class is to read the assigned material carefully and to take notes. There may also be opportunities to give short presentations in class or to lead the discussion.

Required Books: (these can be purchased on-line)

H. Arendt, *On Revolution*

J. Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: a Restatement*

M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

J. Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

Schedule of Readings:

Week One: Introduction

Week Two: Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*

Explain Arendt's distinction between the political and the social. What are the strengths and weaknesses of her use of these concepts?

Week Three: Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (continued)

Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. "Justice: On Relating Public and Private." *Political Theory* 9(3) (1981): 327-352).

Wellmer, Albrecht. "Hannah Arendt on Revolution." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 53, no. 208 (2) (1999): 207–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23955552>.

In On Revolution, Arendt emphasizes the central role of politics in facilitating and perpetuating a good life. How does she advance the theoretical case for this position? What does this mean from an institutional perspective? Are her ideas plausible?

Week Four: Hannah Arendt, "On Violence"

F. Fanon, "Concerning Violence," *The Wretched of the Earth*

Recommended: Richard Bernstein, "Hannah Arendt's Reflections on Violence and Power," *Iris: European Journal of Philosophy and Debate* (2011).

-What is the core of Arendt's disagreement with Fanon?
Is her argument persuasive or based on a
misunderstanding?
-Some commentators have read Fanon as providing a
defense of violence. Are they right? Why or why not?

Week Five: John Rawls, "Civil Disobedience"; John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: a Restatement*, 1-79.

Recommended: Lyons, David. "Moral Judgment, Historical Reality, and Civil Disobedience." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 27, no. 1 (1998): 31-49.

-Simone Chambers has argued that John Rawls has
eschewed the type of politics necessary to bring about the
just society he desires. Is this correct? Is it a problem?
-In the first two parts of *Justice as Fairness*, Rawls
explains his approach to justice. What is most promising
in this set up and what is most problematic?

Week Six: John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: a Restatement*, 80-end.

Zerilli, Linda M. G. "Value Pluralism and the Problem of Judgment: Farwell to Public Reason." *Political Theory* 40, no. 1 (2012): 6-31.

<http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/41502579>

-Explain the original position. Explain two objections,
one that Rawls does respond to and one that he
doesn't anticipate. Are you convinced?
-Explain the concept of the basic structure. Is Rawls
right that justice should be restricted in this way?

Weeks Seven and Eight: M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; 135-292.

Bevir, Mark. "Foucault and Critique: Deploying Agency against Autonomy." *Political Theory* 27, no. 1 (1999): 65-84. <http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/192161>.

J. Butler, "Subjection, Resistance, Resignification: Between Freud and Foucault," *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford University Press, 1997).

-What does Foucault mean by discipline? How does it differ from earlier forms of power? How does it operate today?

-Some critics have argued that Foucault's notion of discipline is too broad. If power is everywhere then it is nowhere. Explain his view of power and then decide whether you agree with this criticism.

-What does Foucault say about freedom and resistance in this text? Is it consistent with his analysis of subject formation?

Weeks Nine: J. Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1-56, 141-235)

J. Habermas, "Three Normative Models of Democracy," *Constellations* 1(1994)1: 1-10.

Is the social theory/historical analysis presented in this book consistent with contemporary theories of deliberative democracy?

Week Ten:

J. Habermas, "On the Pragmatic, the Ethical, and the Moral Employments of Practical Reason." *Justification and Application*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1993: 1-18.

J. Habermas, "Right and Violence: A German Trauma." *Cultural Critique* (1985): 125-139.

Norval, Aletta. “Don't Talk Back!”—The Subjective Conditions of Critical Public Debate.” *Political Theory*, vol. 40, no. 6, 2012, pp. 802–810. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41703103.

-What is the relationship between deliberation, democracy, and other values such as justice?
-What makes deliberation work?

Recommended: Cooke, Maeve. *Language and Reason: A Study of Habermas's Pragmatics*. Second Edition edition. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1997.

Week Eleven: Philip Pettit, “Republican Liberty: Three Axioms, Four Theorems,” in eds. C. Laborde and J. Maynor *Republicanism and Political Theory*.

-----2006. “Freedom in the Market.” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 5 (2):131–149.

Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression,”

Recommended: Pettit, Philip. 1997. *Republicanism : A Theory of Freedom and Government: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford University Press.

-----2013. “Two Republican Traditions.” In *Republican Democracy*, edited by Andreas Niederberger and Philipp Schink, Edinburgh University Press, 169–204.

-What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory of non-domination?
-Do you agree that the force of the market should not be construed as a form of domination? Why or why not?

Week Twelve: Presentation or readings TBA

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Office as soon as possible. The staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations.

Plagiarism: Any case of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Dean of Academic Integrity. More information about plagiarism can be found at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

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.