

## **POL320Y1Y: Modern Political Thought 2020-21**

Instructor: Professor Melissa S. Williams  
3040 Sidney Smith Hall

Office hours: Mondays, 4-6 PM or by appointment  
(online and/or in-person, depending on health guidelines)

Email: [melissa.williams@utoronto.ca](mailto:melissa.williams@utoronto.ca)

Lecture: Online synchronous and asynchronous  
Tutorial: Online synchronous

Time: Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00 PM EDT

---

### **Course description:**

This course examines central themes of the modern era through the careful reading of texts in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> political thought that have shaped the way we think about politics today. We will explore the meaning of “modernity” and its association with the territorial state as the dominant form of political order. We will pay particular attention to how different thinkers interpret the ideals of freedom and equality as the foundations of legitimate political order. Is the history of modernity a story of progress in the direction of human freedom? Or is it inseparable from new forms of domination – imperialism, colonialism, slavery, and class- and gender-based oppression – that develop in tandem with the state? Does the advance of modern rationality bring enlightenment and emancipation, or does it diminish our humanity?

The practice of studying classic texts in order to deepen our understanding of such questions is itself a kind of tradition, the tradition of political philosophy or political theory. By joining this course you become a participant in this tradition. Like most traditions, the tradition of political philosophy evolves over time in response to changes in the social world. In this course, we expand on this practice by putting texts from East Asian, Black Atlantic and South Asian traditions into conversation with texts in the Euro-American “canon.”

---

### **Teaching Assistants:**

Kavita Reddy (Head TA)  
[kavita.reddy@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:kavita.reddy@mail.utoronto.ca)

Amanda Arulanandam  
[amanda.arulanandam@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:amanda.arulanandam@mail.utoronto.ca)

Timothy Berk  
[tim.berk@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:tim.berk@mail.utoronto.ca)

Omar Garcia Diaz  
[omar.garciadiaz@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:omar.garciadiaz@mail.utoronto.ca)

---

## Online Lectures and Tutorials:

This course will take place entirely online. Lecture content will be delivered both asynchronously (through pre-recorded video lecture segments of up to 1 hour per week) and synchronously (normally, for not more than one hour).

- Links to pre-recorded lecture segments will be provided on a weekly basis on Quercus. Set aside time to watch these segments before the synchronous sessions.
- You should also complete your readings and (if applicable) your reading response assignment before the synchronous lecture session and before tutorial.
- Synchronous lecture sessions will be held via Zoom at the scheduled class time (Tuesday, 6:00 PM EDT) and will last about an hour. Their purpose is to allow for an interactive discussion of the course material with the professor. These sessions will be recorded for students who cannot participate in real time, though we strongly encourage your live participation. Links to the recorded lectures will be posted in the week's Module on Quercus.

Tutorials will be held synchronously at the scheduled time, also using Zoom.

Be sure to use the name you prefer others to use when you set up your Zoom profile. Further guidance on the technical requirements for using Zoom will be provided separately, but please do make sure that you have a microphone (and preferably a video camera) available for your participation.

---

## Required Texts:

The following texts are available for purchase online. There are many different translations and editions of many of these texts. Be sure to read these particular editions and use them in your course assignments. I strongly encourage you to get your own hard copy of these texts so that you can mark them up as you read them, an important way of interacting with the text and making them your own. However, UofT Libraries is working to make all required readings available online (via "Library Course Reserves" on Quercus). All other readings will be posted on the course portal (Quercus).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*. Hackett 2012 edition translated by Cress (ISBN-10: 1603846735 / ISBN-13: 978-1603846738).

Immanuel Kant, *Kant: Political Writings*. Edited by Hans Reiss. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 (ISBN-10: 0521398371, ISBN-13: 978-0521398374).

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women and A Vindication of the Rights of Man*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 (ISBN-10: 019955546X, ISBN-13: 978-0199555468).

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Edited by L.G. Mitchell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 (ISBN-10: 9780199539024, ISBN-13: 978-0199539024).

Nakae Chōmin, *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. Translated and edited by Noboku Tsukui; edited by Jeffrey Hammond. Boston: Weatherhill, 1984 (ISBN-10: 0834801922, ISBN-13: 978-0834801929).

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Edited by Allen W. Wood. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 (, ISBN-10: 0521348889, ISBN-13: 9780521348881).

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*. Edited by Mark Philp and Frederick Rosen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 (ISBN-10: 0199670803, ISBN-13: 978-0199670802)

Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*. Edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994 (ISBN-10: 0872202194, ISBN-13: 978-0872202191).

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson. Translated by Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) (ISBN-10: 9781316602591, ISBN-13: 978-1316602591).

Mohandas Gandhi, *“Hind Swaraj” and Other Writings*. Edited by Anthony J. Parel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 (ISBN-10: 052114602X, ISBN-13: 9780521146029).

---

### Course requirements:

<u>Tutorial participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
<u>First Term Essay (1500-2000 words)</u>	<u>25%</u>
• Draft due 9:00 AM on Friday, November 20	
• Final essay due 5:00 PM on Wednesday, December 9	
<u>Second Term Essay (2500-3000 words)</u>	<u>35%</u>
• Draft due 9:00 AM on Friday, March 12	
• Final essay due 5:00 PM on Thursday, April 1	
<u>Final Exam (3 hours)</u>	<u>30%</u>

## 1. Tutorials

Regularly scheduled tutorials are crucial for your learning experience in this course, and tutorial participation is therefore a course requirement. Tutorials will be led by skilled doctoral candidates who are deeply knowledgeable about the history of political thought. Through tutorial discussion, you will refine your interpretation of the texts we are studying and your judgment about whether the visions of politics they offer are convincing or appealing.

## 2. Essays

The challenge of framing your own interpretation of the course texts comes to a head in writing essays. You will hone your interpretive skills by writing two term essays, for each of which you will submit a draft prior to the final due date. You will participate in a peer review process with your class colleagues, offering one another advice as to how to improve your essays before you finalize your revisions.

2.1. First Term Essay: You will write an essay of 1500-2000 words on an assigned topic. You will submit your draft of the essay via the Quercus portal, no later than 9:00 AM on Friday, November 20. Tutorials during the week of November 23 will be dedicated to a peer review session in which you will provide feedback to a colleague on her or his essay, and receive feedback in turn. The final essay is due at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, December 9, via Turnitin.com through the Quercus portal. You must submit an Academic Integrity Checklist and your Peer Review Comment Sheet along with your final essay.

2.2. Second Term Essay: You will write an essay of (2500-3000 words) on an assigned topic. You will submit your draft of the essay via the Quercus portal, no later than 9:00 AM on Friday, March 12. Tutorials during the week of March 15 will be dedicated to another peer review session. The final essay is due at 5:00 PM on Thursday, April 1 via Turnitin.com through the Quercus portal. You must submit an Academic Integrity Checklist and your Peer Review Comment Sheet along with your final essay.

### 2.3. Penalties:

- 2.3.1. Failure to submit your Academic Integrity Statement with your final essay: Your essay will not be graded until you have submitted this statement.
- 2.3.2. Non-participation in the Peer Review process: Students who fail to submit a draft on time, or who do not participate in the peer review process, will lose two percent from their grade for the essay.
- 2.3.3. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of 2 percent per day of lateness, including weekends. Extensions will be granted only with a valid medical excuse, and only if your TA has given express written permission for late submission before the final essay deadline.

### 3. Exams:

- 3.1. Final Exam: A limited-time take-home exam, conducted online during the April exam period.
  - 3.2. Make-up exams: Only students with documented medical problems or family emergencies may be permitted to take a make-up exam. Students who miss the exam for a valid reason should contact Kavita Reddy ([kavita.reddy@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:kavita.reddy@mail.utoronto.ca)) as soon as possible, and must express your request to take a make-up exam within *one week* of the missed exam. Further details on Arts and Science regulations concerning exams (and many other matters) are available at: [http://calendar.artsci.utoronto.ca/Rules\\_&\\_Regulations.html](http://calendar.artsci.utoronto.ca/Rules_&_Regulations.html).
- 

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the University of Toronto 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's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). It is the rulebook for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules.

For further guidance, see [“How Not to Plagiarize”](#).

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

Normally, students will be required to submit their essays to Turnitin (via Quercus) for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database where they are used solely for detecting plagiarism. Terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.

We treat 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 your TA. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from your TA, or from other available campus resources like the University of Toronto's [Writing website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to your TA or seek the advice of your college registrar.

---

## Quercus, E-mail, and Communication

All students should ensure that they are registered on the course on Quercus, as reading materials and course announcements will be posted electronically. If you would like to change your Quercus profile (e.g., to make sure that your preferred name appears correctly), follow the instructions [here](#). You should regularly check your utoronto email account to make sure that you receive important email notices.

Please use the Quercus Inbox tool for all course-related email communication. We will endeavour to respond to emails within 72 hours, but please be patient if we are slow to respond, and please do not expect responses on evenings or weekends. Email is for short clarification questions only. If you have concerns or questions that cannot be answered in a short response please see us during office hours.

---

## Course Accessibility and Supports for Students

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach Kavita Reddy ([kavita.reddy@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:kavita.reddy@mail.utoronto.ca)) and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible.

If you have preferences regarding your gender pronouns, please inform the professor and your TA.

Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. Information on these services can be found on their website (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>). Accessibility Services can also be reached by phone (416-978-8060) or email ([accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca)). The sooner you let them know your needs, the more quickly they can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## Other Supports for Students

Students also have access to mental health and safety, and research and writing resources:

### *Mental Health & Safety*

- Guide to available resources (<https://safety.utoronto.ca/>).
- Health & Wellness Centre (<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>).

### *Research & Writing*

- Research and writing guide (<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/>).
  - Chicago Manual of Style citation guide ([https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html)).
  - Writing Centres (<http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/>).
-

## **Schedule of lectures and readings**

### **Fall Term**

#### **Week 1 (September 15): Introduction**

#### **Week 2 (September 22): Rousseau I**

*Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, Preface and Part I (pp. 45-69 and Rousseau's notes, pp. 93-116)

#### **Week 3 (September 29): Rousseau II**

*Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, Part II (pp. 69-92 and Rousseau's notes, pp. 117-120)

**\*\*Tutorials begin\*\***

#### **Week 4 (October 6): Rousseau III**

*On Social Contract*, Books I and II; also read Book IV, chs. 1-2 alongside Book II (pp. 156-191, 224-228)

#### **Week 5 (October 13): Rousseau IV**

*On Social Contract*, Books III and IV (pp. 191-252)  
*The State of War* (pp. 255-265)

#### **Week 6 (October 20): Kant I**

"What is Enlightenment?" (pp. 54-60)  
"On the Common Saying: 'This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice,'" (pp. 61-92)

#### **Week 7 (October 27): Kant II**

"Perpetual Peace," (pp. 93-130)

#### **Week 8 (November 3): Burke**

*Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789)  
*Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 3-59, 75-97, 245-50.

#### **November 10: Reading Week (no class)**

#### **Week 9 (November 17): Wollstonecraft**

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Prefatory Letter, Introduction, chs. 1-4, 6, 9 & 12 (pp. 65-68, 71-149, 191-197, 241-65)

**\*\*Friday, November 20, 9:00 AM: First Term Essay Draft Due on Quercus\*\***  
(Tutorials next week will be dedicated to essay peer review)

**Week 10 (November 24): Mill I**  
*On Liberty*, chs. 1-4 (pp. 5-90)

**Week 11 (December 1): Mill II**  
*Considerations on Representative Government*, chs. 1-5, 18 (pp. 181-248, 388-405)

**Week 12 (December 8): Mill III**  
*On the Subjection of Women*, chs. 1, 2 & 4 (pp. 409-454, 484-505)

**\*\*Wednesday, December 9, 5:00 PM: Final First Term Essay due on Quercus\*\***

### **Winter Term**

**Week 13 (January 5): Nakae Chōmin**  
*A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* (entire) (pp. 47-137)

**Week 14 (January 12): Hegel I**  
“Lordship and Bondage” (aka “Master-Slave Dialectic”) from G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 111-119 (available on Quercus).  
*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Preface and Introduction

**Week 15 (January 19): Hegel II**  
*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Part I, sections 41-51; 72-77; Part II, sections 105-114; Part III, ss. 142-169, 181-190, 231-49.

**Week 16 (January 26): Hegel III**  
*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Part III, ss. 255-86, 330-360.

**Week 17 (February 2): World History and Self-Emancipation: Jean-Jacques Dessalines and The Haitian Revolution**

The American Declaration of Independence (1776), available at:  
<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

David Geggus, “The Haitian Revolution in Atlantic Perspective,” in Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Jean-Jacques Dessalines, The Haitian Declaration of Independence (1804), available at:  
<https://today.duke.edu/showcase/haitideclaration/declarationstext.html>

[Jean-Jacques Dessalines, "I Have Avenged America" \(1804\), available at: https://haitidoi.com/2013/08/02/i-have-avenged-america/](https://haitidoi.com/2013/08/02/i-have-avenged-america/)

**Week 18 (February 9): World History and Self-Emancipation: Frederick Douglass**

Frederick Douglass, "The Battle with Covey," from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, ch. X (pp. 58-73) (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1849), available at: [https://heinonline-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/HOL/Page?collection=slavery&handle=hein.slavery/nafredd0001&id=2&men\\_tab=srchresults](https://heinonline-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/HOL/Page?collection=slavery&handle=hein.slavery/nafredd0001&id=2&men_tab=srchresults)

Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, chapters XV and XVII (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), available at: <https://heinonline-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/HOL/Page?handle=hein.slavery/mybmfr0001&id=1&collection=slavery&index=>

Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852), available at: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

Frederick Douglass, "Lecture on Haiti" and "Dedication Ceremonies of the Haitian Pavilion" (Chicago: Violet Agents Supply Co., 1893), available at: <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/rbc/lrbmrp/t2109/t2109.pdf>

**February 16: Reading Week (no class)**

**Week 19 (February 23): Marx I**

"On the Jewish Question" (pp. 1-26)

"Toward a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" (Introduction) (pp. 27-39)  
*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, "Alienated Labor" (pp. 58-68)

**Week 20 (March 2): Marx II**

Theses on Feuerbach (pp. 98-101)

*The Germany Ideology*, Part I (pp. 102-156)

**Week 21 (March 9): Marx III**

The Communist Manifesto (pp. 157-186)

"The Indian Revolt" (1857) in *On Colonialism* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), pp. 152-155

Marx to Engels (Oct 8, 1858), in *On Colonialism*, pp. 320-321.

**\*\*Friday, March 12, 9:00 AM: Second Term Essay Draft Due on Quercus\*\***

**(Tutorials next week will be dedicated to essay peer review)**

**Week 22 (March 16): Nietzsche I**

*On the Genealogy of Morality*, Preface & Essay I

**Week 23 (March 23): Nietzsche II**

*On the Genealogy of Morality*, Essays II and III

**Week 24 (March 30): Gandhi**

*Hind Swaraj*, Preface to the English edition; Foreword; chs. 1-9, 13-14, 16-17, 20 (pp. 5-48, 64-72, 77-97, 110-117)

**\*\*Thursday, April 1, 5:00 PM: Final Second Term Essay Due\*\***

**Final Exam: Final Assessment Period**