

Might and Right: Power and Justice in International Relations

POL109H1S – Winter 2023

(OI G162 – Wed 5-7)

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Office Hours: By appointment

“I have been thinking,” said Arthur, “about Might and Right. I don’t think things ought to be done because you are *able* to do them. I think they should be done because you *ought* to do them.”

- T. H. White, *The Once and Future King*

Questions of power and justice are inherent in political life but are especially acute in international politics, where the stakes are higher and our ethical obligations less certain. This course will examine this dilemma with the help of major political thinkers, both ancient and modern. Along the way, we’ll explore key themes in the history of political thought and consider whether necessity can justify cruelty, how the interests of fellow citizens can be balanced against those of foreigners, and whether a just international order is truly possible, among much else.

Course Readings

All course readings will be made available via Quercus. Students are encouraged, however, to use *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Strassler, trans. Crawley (Simon & Shuster) for Thucydides readings. I am working on making this available for purchase at the U of T bookstore, but in the meantime, it is widely available online in the paperback edition.

Course Requirements

Performance in the course will be evaluated according to the following:

Participation	20%
Quizzes	20%
Paper	30%
Exam	30%

Participation in all lectures and tutorials is mandatory, full stop. Quizzes will refer to readings and will be conducted on paper at the beginning of each lecture. If you do the readings, you will ace the quizzes.

Topics and parameters for the paper (1200-1500 words) will be assigned in due course, and will focus one two of the four thinkers we read in the first half of the course. The final exam will take

- Feb 15th Nationalism
- Mill, “A Few Words on Non-Intervention

WINTER READING WEEK

War

- Mar 1st FIRST PAPER DUE
Causes of War
- Thucydides, 1.1-1.23
- Mar 8th The Spartan Congress and Sparta’s War Vote
- Thucydides 1.66-1.89
- Mar 15th Pericles on Necessity and War
- Thucydides 1.139-1.146; 2.35-2.65
- Mar 22nd The Revolt of Mytilene and the Mytilenean Debate
- Thucydides, 3.1-3.49
- Mar 29th Civil War and the Melian Dialogue
- Thucydides 3.70-3.84; 5.84-5.116
- Apr 5th Melian Dialogue, continued and Course Conclusion

FINAL EXAM