

POL321HS. Modern Political Thought

Winter 2024



Professor: Rebecca Kingston

Lectures: Wednesdays 5 to 7 pm in Wilson Hall 1016, New College

Office and Office Hours: Sidney Smith 3022 (to the right inside the main office of the Department of Political Science), Tuesday 3-5, or by appointment.

E-mail: rebecca.kingston@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants: Maddie Hay Kellar (m.hay@mail.utoronto.ca) and Stefan MacLeod (stefan.macleod@mail.utoronto.ca)

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississauga's of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and study on this land.

Description:

This course offers an introduction to key thinkers and themes in nineteenth century political thought in Europe and the Americas. In our readings and assignments, we explore deeper exploration and contestation of Enlightenment conceptions of freedom and equality, alongside calls for more radical political reform and revolution. The broader premiss of the course is that liberal modernity has developed hand in hand with imminent and often radical critique of its basic commitments to reason, science and growth, as well as a rethinking of its commitments to equality and freedom.

Learning Objectives:

In conjunction with the central themes noted above, this course has been designed with several learning objectives in mind. Through the critical analysis of texts, and a close reading of select passages, you will be trained to become more attuned to competing understandings and uses of key political concepts, partly through a study of their use in writing, and partly through comparison with other passages and other thinkers.

You will also develop writing skills, analytical skills and speaking skills, all in the service of a critical analysis of texts on the implications of the ideas put forward. The course material and its

framing offer an invitation to probe more deeply into the meaning of various political stances, and the assignments will help you develop a practice of critically parsing ideas and arguments.

Consider yourself lucky to having the opportunity to probe and engage with texts that are the product of deep analysis and profound political commitment. In a world where AI technologies are expanding their horizons, the texts assigned in this course do not draw on algorithmic calculations of the frequency of words, with the underlying assumption that frequency of iteration and word correlation is the measure of truth; rather these texts demonstrate a meaningful engagement with the realities of social and political life. These texts are expressions of how these authors perceived the political challenges of their time and sought to create a vision that would captivate and motivate their rulers and fellow citizens. We probe within and among these texts with an eye to both continuities and differences in arguments and terms to understand what the authors were doing in their own context, as well as to find resources that can help to captivate our own political imaginations in facing the challenges of our current world.

The analysis and comparison of terms and concepts in their various uses will also help you develop and articulate a more sophisticated understanding of your own political stances and the priorities and meanings that you give to the concepts which animate and justify contemporary democracy.

In view of this, any use of generative technologies is prohibited in this course. To defer to AI to generate the meaning of your core political beliefs is a prime example of Hobbesian tyranny.

Required Texts:

Many course readings are available as e-books or e-readings through links on the course site on Quercus (see the Course Materials tab where the readings are arranged on a weekly basis).

The texts listed below are in two categories. The first are required texts that you must purchase as they are not available in e-format. The second list is of texts that are required but for which an e-version exists with a link available on the Quercus site. They are listed here because some of you will want to continue taking courses in political theory and it will be helpful for you to keep a physical copy of the book and for some of you it will be easier to read the physical copy of the book than to read the material online (besides, they do look good on a bookshelf!).

I. Texts that are now available for purchase at the University of Toronto Bookstore and that are NOT available in e-format. Please stick to the editions noted here as other editions may cause certain confusion given differences in pagination as well as translation.

Mary Shelley. **Frankenstein**, 3rd ed, ed. D.L. MacDonald. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2012.

Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel. **Elements of the Philosophy of Right**, ed. Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. (a copy of this will be available for 3 hour loan at the Pratt Library of Victoria College, but I recommend purchasing a copy as we will be spending three weeks on this text)

Nietzsche. **On the Genealogy of Morality**, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

II. Texts that are available in e-format through links on Quercus as well as available (except Marx which will not be available for reserve) at the course reserve desk of Robarts Library, but which you may wish to order if you prefer reading printed sources rather than online ones (you might also want to think about ordering these editions second-hand). Please use only these editions, again, because other editions can cause confusion with pagination as well as translation.

John Stuart Mill. **On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays**, ed. Mark Philp and Frederick Rosen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Karl Marx. **Selected Writings**, ed. Lawrence Simon. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994.

Frederick Douglass. **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Course Requirements (further discussion of each of these components of the final grade are listed below):

Exam (in final examination period) 50%

Scaffolded PROP (Passages, Reflection, Ordering and Paper) assignment

Passages, Reflection and Ordering- here you 1) transcribe key passages from the required texts and editions (no exceptions) as relevant to the chosen theme, 2) engage in textual analysis with reflection on the meaning and significance of each of those passages in relation to the theme of the question you are answering, 3) arrange these passages and reflection in a preliminary order so as to set up a tentative argument. c. 7-8pp. Due February 28 15%

Final Paper 10-15 pp. (include a note as to how you have incorporated changes based on TA grading notes from the first stage of the assignment). Due April 3 15%

Tutorial (15%) and **online discussion** (5%) (attendance and quality of participation) ~~20%~~ 20%

100%

Essay (or Scaffolded PROP as noted above): A list of questions will be provided to students before Reading Week.

As noted above, the essay assignment is divided into two steps that are designed to roughly mimic the stages of researching and drafting a paper in political theory. The first step is to (re)read the key primary text or texts chosen in view of a chosen theme (to be listed on the essay questions). In reading, students will single out and transcribe or copy the quotes from the text that have key relevance to the theme. The first thing to do, then, will involve listing those key passages (with proper citation format) and then offering a commentary below each quote or passage that articulates the meaning (including identifying any questions or ambiguities raised) and offers an account of its significance for the theme. Through this process you should begin to see how different aspects of the theme and how the author related to them is revealed. This, then should allow you to place these reflections in some sort of logical order, either related to tensions in the argument, or revelation of different aspects allowing for a more sophisticated analysis of

the theme. You should indicate how you are going to offer a logical framework for the making of the points rising from your analysis in the first Passage, Reflection and Ordering Assignment. It will be graded by measuring the student's ability to recognize appropriate passages relevant to the chosen theme, their ability to engage in deeper analysis to reveal the meaning and significance of the passage in view of the theme, and to be able to place together those citations and reflections that support an argument about the text(s) to be made in the longer essay. By placing quotes and analyses of them in an appropriate order the students are demonstrating their capacity to deepen their analysis of the text and to bring together some of their random observations and analysis into a more coherent structure that will serve to build an outline for the paper. Here there should be some evidence of the emergence of an argument around which the paper will be constructed. The main points or stages in the discussion should be laid out on paper. Students will be graded by the extent of organization and the degree of independent thought and insight shown by students in engaging with the broader theme, as well as by their ability to engage with the question in a thoughtful way.

The final paper due April 3 should be a piece of polished writing in which the points made by the student in the development of their argument are fully backed up by the textual evidence and passages noted in the first stage of the assignment. The paper will include a note that explains how the grading feedback from the first stage of the assignment was integrated into the final version. The essay should be structured as an argument to support a particular interpretation of the chosen author and text, or to argue for a more general point regarding the chosen theme and support for this argument should include direct reference to the relevant text through direct quotes appropriately cited, again from the editions assigned in this course.

Although this essay is not considered an extensive research essay, in the final paper students who include discussion of at least two competing interpretations from secondary literature on a given author's work (reference to these interpretations should be cited fully and appropriately) will be appropriately rewarded for their engagement with these arguments in the secondary literature (and lack of engagement with those resources will be reflected in the grade). All references used must be cited fully and appropriately (any standard citation style used in the humanities and social sciences- MLA, Chicago Style, etc.- is acceptable if it is used consistently throughout the essay).

Although the assigned readings for this course draw from only selected parts of a particular work, in choosing an essay topic you should not limit your reading or study to only that part of the work assigned in this syllabus, but plan to look over the full text focusing on whatever sections are most relevant to the topic chosen. (There should be a good deal of overlap in this, but the point is that you should begin to think about these texts in holistic terms, texts that not only offer statements and a series of arguments, but written reflections that work through themes in various ways and thus may require deeper interpretive work to find their meanings.)

The final paper should be 10-15pp., double-spaced.

****Please note that student use of any form of generative AI for the research or writing of any stage of this assignment or for online discussion purposes is considered an academic offense.****

The reasons for this are multiple: as a student you are here to learn the skills of critical thinking, understanding political concepts to arrive at a more sophisticated version of your political commitments and writing and the use of generative AI does not help you in this process.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources (for example, the University of Toronto website on Academic Integrity)

Students are also required to keep their rough and draft work and copies of their assignments until the end of the course when grades are posted on ROSI. University policy regarding plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Please see the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism on the Quercus site or at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Writing Resources on Campus: Start here: <https://writing.utoronto.ca> . Additional more specialized resources are noted below.

1. Arts & Science Writing Centres will offer a mix of in-person and online appointments in 2024, with an asynchronous option at some centres. Students can find information about the offerings of specific college writing centres at <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science> . Students should visit each individual centre's site for information on how to make an appointment.

2. More than 60 advice files on all aspects of academic writing are available from <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca> . Printable PDF versions are listed at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/student-pdfs> .

3. "How Not to Plagiarize" and other advice on documentation format and methods of integrating sources are listed at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources> .

3. For group instruction on writing and study skills, please note the Writing Plus workshop series at <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus> . In 2024, these workshops will be conducted in person and through Zoom. Students may join these virtual workshops at the Quercus Writing Plus site: <https://uoft.me/writingplus> . A flyer for this series is attached.

4. Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL)'s offerings is available at English Language Learning | Faculty of Arts & Science (utoronto.ca). For more information, please contact the ELL coordinator Leora Freedman at ell.newcollege@utoronto.ca .

Tutorials: Students should attend tutorials starting the third week of this class with ten sessions throughout the term. Work in tutorials will be focused on the themes raised in the lectures and on discussing and analysing select passages from the works studied.

Discussion: In discussion, in class, in tutorial and online please be considerate. The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

At times I will be posting passages from the primary texts we are studying to Quercus for the relevant week for the author. My hope is to use the tool Hypothesis to have students contribute independently to the annotation of a particular passage to probe its meaning. Participation through this online collaborative annotation tool will contribute to your general participation grade. This practice will help you in the passage analysis you will need to undertake for your essays as well as for the final exam.

The purpose of online discussion is for students to have a venue to apply and work through ideas in the texts as we go through the assigned readings. Thus, your comments should be timely. Discussion on each section will be closed a week after it is available for commentary.

Reminders and regulations: Please consult with your T.A. if you require extensions on your assignments. Without prior permission from your T.A., assignments handed in late will be deducted 5% of the assignment grade per day (including weekends).

Accessibility: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/> .

Mental health support for all U of T students: There is a new service for UT students called Telus Health Student Support Services. You can call 1-844-451-9700 or download the app. It also can be found at uoft.me/thss . Through this app help can be provided in 146 languages. There is also the office of UT Health and Wellness where you can set up an appointment with an individual counsellor <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/> . If in crisis dial 911 or consult this page: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/> .

Absence and illness declaration: If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me or your TA right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy

about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca> . For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence> . If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Course Schedule and Weekly Readings:

Week 1, January 10: Introduction to the course

I. Thinking about Modernity and its Imminent Critique

Week 2, January 17: Mary Shelley

Read: Frankenstein, vol. 1 chapters 1-4 and vol. 2 chapters 1-4 and 7-9 (You are encouraged to read the whole story, but I highlight here the sections that will be raised in the lecture.) This text is available for purchase at the UT Bookstore.

II. The Language of Welfare and the Contours of Liberty in the Modern Era

Week 3, January 24: John Stuart Mill

Read: Read: John Stuart Mill. "Utilitarianism," In **On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays**, pp. 129-158. This text is available for purchase at the UT Bookstore as well as through the following link through the library and on Quercus:
<https://oxfordworldsclassics-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/display/10.1093/owc/9780199670802.001.0001/isbn-9780199670802>

Week 4, January 31: John Stuart Mill

Read: "On Liberty," In **On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays**, pp. 5-43, 62-78 and 83-91. See link above.

III. The Individual and the Modern State

Week 5, February 7: Hegel 1. Thinking through History

Read: Hegel, **Elements of the Philosophy of Right**, Introduction, I ss. 41-50, 57-66 and III, 341-380. This text is available for purchase at the UT Bookstore.



Week 6, February 14: Hegel 2. Property, the Family and Civil Society-
Read: Hegel, **Elements of the Philosophy of Right**, I, ss. 72-75; II, 142-169; III, 181-188, 209-218, 239-249.

Week 7, February 21: READING WEEK, NO CLASS

Week 8, February 28: **PROP Assignment due (this will be returned to you with comments before the drop date March 11 if you hand it in on time.)**

Hegel 3. The State

Read: Hegel, **Elements of the Philosophy of Right**, III, ss. 255, 257-270, 273-286.

IV. Challenging the Political Economy of Emerging Modernity

Week 9, March 6: Marx 1
Read: Marx, “Introduction to Toward a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right”, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” and “Theses on Feuerbach” In **Selected Writings**

Week 10, March 13: Marx 2
Read: Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” and Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” and “Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy” in **Selected Writings**

V. Challenging the Racial Norms of Emerging Modernity

Week 11, March 20: Douglass
Read: Douglass, **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.**

VI. Challenging the Moral Foundations of Emerging Modernity

Week 12, March 27: Nietzsche
Read: Nietzsche. **On the Genealogy of Morality**, first essay.

Week 13, April 3: Final Essay due.
Nietzsche and review.

Final Exam in the April examination period.