

Faculty of Arts and Science
 Department of Political Science
 Fall-Winter terms 2024-25 (full year)

POL200Y1
Political Theory: Visions of the Just/Good Society
LEC0101

(Draft syllabus: 30 August 2024)

Thursdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m. (Room location available on ACORN)

Plus a one-hour tutorial each week: **Students must sign up for a tutorial that corresponds to the lecture section in which they are enrolled (this one: 0101).**

The class will meet in person. A hybrid option will not be offered.

Instructor:

Andrew Sabl (rhymes with “bauble”)
 Professor of Political Science

andrew.sabl@utoronto.ca

(Emails will be answered within 24 hours. **Feel free to re-send if one is not.**)

3030 Sidney Smith Hall

Office hours (**that is, *student meeting hours*, whether or not you have a particular problem**):

Friday, 10 a.m.-noon, or by appointment

(but no office hours the first week of class or during reading weeks).

Please make appointments via Calendly app:

<https://calendly.com/andrew-sabl/office-hour-meeting>

Meetings at other times are also possible, including Zoom meetings if necessary: please email. However, please schedule a meeting for office hours if at all possible.

Teaching Assistants (not all of whom will head Tutorials; to be announced)

Kelsey Gordon (Head TA; please contact for administrative questions, including tutorial enrollment): kelsey.gordon@mail.utoronto.ca

Joseph Dattilo: joseph.dattilo@mail.utoronto.ca

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to some of the major themes of political theory via classic texts. Despite the course subtitle (which could not be changed in time), the focus will be downplay ideal “visions” in favor of focusing on the fundamental political problems that every political order must address:

—The nature of real or potential political *conflict*, both in general and in a particular time and place;

- The political arrangements that can achieve *order* in the face of conflict;
- The way in which claims of *justice* can buttress or challenge the political order;
- The extent to which the political order can accommodate *diversity* or *pluralism* so as to satisfy enough political groups to forestall conflict.

This set of questions might suggest that political theory has much in common with political science, as it should. However, unlike the other areas of political science, political theory does not aspire to be value-free or strictly “empirical.” Politics always involves questions of value—of right and wrong, better and worse, fair and unfair. Political outcomes depend on what people come to believe on these questions: whose claims are valid (and who gets to make claims), which political orders are legitimate, which laws or practices are just or unjust, and how much diversity of opinion and behavior can and should be tolerated. Moreover, there are fundamental truths about politics that cannot be arrived at through mere “observation of facts”: the facts that are noticed and salient depends on what we are looking for, and the right kind of observation requires thinking as well as looking. In fancier words: an explicit, continual focus on these *normative* and *ontological* concerns is what separates political theory from the rest of political science.

The course method is interpretation and argument. You are expected to address difficult questions by reading the texts carefully, aiming to understand the arguments they present, and formulating clear and convincing arguments, with proper textual citation, regarding the claims they make.

Course Requirements

Two short papers (1200-1500 words)	
—First due on 13 October 2024.....	15%
—Second due on 1 December 2024.....	15%
One longer paper (2600-3000 words), due late in Winter term (date TBA).....	25%
Winter final exam, covering the whole course (during exam period).....	30%
Attendance and quality of participation in tutorial.....	15%
	100%

Submission of Assignments

Papers must be turned in via Quercus: no hard copies will be accepted. The Paper assignments will appear there under “Assignments”.

To avoid the risk of lost work, you should retain an electronic copy and a backup copy (hard copy, or an electronic copy stored in the cloud or somewhere other than the device where the original is) of all work submitted. You are strongly advised to retain the rough work, notes, and draft material that went into the essay or assignment in case there is any question regarding academic integrity (see below).

Quercus and Email

Course assignments and guidelines will be posted on the course webpage on Quercus. You *must* have a valid UTOR email and set it so that you will receive course announcements. You are expected to consult Quercus regularly as well as enabling prompt (same-day) Quercus announcements to allow communication of urgent matters.

Email protocol

—Your first line of contact, whether about the material or about practical questions (e.g. assignments), should be your teaching assistant (tutorial leader).

—If your TA cannot answer a question, the instructor will respond to emails within 24 hours whenever possible. In the rare case that a substantive question is not answered within that time, you should feel free to send it again and will never be penalized for (politely!) repeating your inquiry.

—Please leave adequate time for a response. For instance, do not assume that a request for more time to submit course work will be read and answered if submitted two hours before work is due.

—*Please consult the syllabus or Quercus before asking questions that are answered there.*

—Norms of politeness apply. While ordinary questions are welcome and requests for accommodations will always be considered carefully, hectoring or harassing emails are not appropriate and may incur consequences.

Late Work Policy

Late papers and other assignments will be penalized three points on the 100-point U of T grading scale per day late or part thereof. Exceptions may be granted to students who have faced serious medical or other emergencies, and who have substantial and convincing documentation fully accounting for the length of delay. If you are facing such a situation, inform your TA as soon as possible. **It is course policy to be understanding when you face difficult circumstances, but please contact your TA as far in advance as possible and provide as much detail as is consistent with university rules, medical privacy, etc.**

Smartphone and Laptop Policy

Laptops are allowed during class for note-taking purposes. You will learn less, and receive a lower mark, to the extent that you use them for any other purpose. (You are encouraged to explore apps that turn off internet access for a specified period, thus enabling you to devote your full attention to learning. The instructor recommends, but does not profit from, an app called Freedom.)

Cellphones/smartphones should *not* be used during class, since there is no pedagogical reason for doing so. Those using smartphones during class, even quietly, may be asked to stop. Please contact the instructor for any exceptions (e.g. disability accommodations). In almost all cases, however, those can be accommodated through the use of laptops. Those awaiting urgent messages should seat themselves near an exit; put their phones on vibrate; and excuse themselves from the lecture hall if they receive an alert requiring the use of a phone.

****Academic Integrity Issues (Please read these paragraphs more than once)**

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship at UofT. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community is the only

method of ensuring that you learn what you are expected to learn at university and that your degree will be valued accordingly.

The University of Toronto's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to read it and be familiar with it.

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the instructor's permission
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work, as *all* the assignments in the course are).

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 (but not limited to) doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources like the [College Writing Centres](#), the [Academic Success Centre](#), or the [U of T Writing Website](#).

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>).

If you object to using the plagiarism detection tool, please contact your TA to establish alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments.

Be sure to retain an electronic file or other copy of each of your papers before submitting it to your TA, in case the submitted copy is lost.

The use of generative AI at any stage in the preparation of assignments (taking notes, outlining, drafting, revising), except for checking spelling, is prohibited. Such use will be considered a serious violation of academic integrity, under the category of “unauthorized assistance” (see above). You should also be aware that chatbots do not, as a rule, write good answers to the kind of specific, analytic questions that will be assigned in this course. Using them will therefore expose you to extreme hazards for negligible benefit.

Texts

The following are all available for purchase at the UofT bookstore. Used and electronic copies are also acceptable (and the ISBN-13 is provided to facilitate the former).

When noted below (with an asterisk *), specific translations are *required*, and you will be expected to refer these translations in course assignments. This is both to spare extra, unfair work for those marking the papers, to allow everyone to refer to the same pages, and to make sure that you do not use inferior translations that may mislead.

Fall term

*Thucydides. *The Essential Thucydides: On Justice Power, and Human Nature* (selections from *The History of the Peloponnesian War*). Ed. and trans. Paul Woodruff. 2nd edition. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett. ISBN-13: 978-1-64792-015-9.

*Plato. *The Republic [of Plato]*. Trans. Allan Bloom. With an Introduction by Adam Kirsch. New York: Basic Books, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0-46509-408-0 . Older editions of the Bloom translation are fine, but *do use this translation*.

*Aristotle. *The Politics*. Trans. Carnes Lord. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-22692-184-6. Older editions are fine, but *do use this translation*.

Winter term

*Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Trans. Manuela Scarci, ed. Jason P. Blahuta. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2024. ISBN-13: 978-1-55481-360-5. *Please use this edition* because it contains invaluable supplementary material that will be assigned in class.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. Edwin Curley. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0-87220-177-4. You may use other editions, but this one has a big advantage: Curley modernizes Hobbes’ 17th-century spelling and punctuation, it’s much easier to read than other editions are.

Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*. Ed. C.B. Macpherson. Indianapolis: IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980. ISBN-13: 978-0-91514-486-0. Feel free to use another edition or to read the text online; Locke numbered his paragraphs for easy reference.

Selections from David Hume’s *Essays* will also be assigned towards the end of Spring term, but purchase of the book will be optional.

Class Schedule

You are expected to complete the readings assigned for each lecture and tutorial *before* that session takes place.

The lectures will not summarize the reading. On the contrary, they will assume that you have covered the reading material and will therefore analyze or explain the reading, or place it in a larger context. The papers as well as the fall and end-of-year exams will be based on material covered in both the readings and the class lectures and discussion.

FALL TERM

Introductory session: no reading 5 September

Tutorials will not meet the first week of class.

I. Thucydides: Conflict Without Order, and the Limits of Justice?

A. The Sources of Conflict; Justice, Glory, “Liberty”, and Necessity 12 September

The Essential Thucydides: 1, 12-13, 14-46, 60-68, 74-80, 139-143.
(*History of the Peloponnesian War* Book 1 paragraph 1; 1.20-146; 2.34-46, 59-65; 3.82-4) .

B. Power and Interest; “Realism” and its Limits. 19 September

The Essential Thucydides: 95-105, 108-121, 162-171
(*Peloponnesian War* 3.1-19, 25-50, 5.84-116).

II. Plato: Order Through Justice?

A. What is Justice (and Why Should we Care)? 26 September

Plato, *Republic* Book I (327a-354c).

B. Justice as Order—In Cities and Souls 3 October and 10 October

Plato, *Republic* Books II-IV

Sunday, 13 October: First Paper due, 11:59 p.m., via Quercus.

C. The Costs of Order? Political Unity vs. Private Life 17 October

Republic Book V 449a-471b
Aristotle, *Politics* Book II, Chapters 1-5 (1260a27-1264b25)

D. Diversity as Pathology?

24 October

Republic Books VIII-IX**31 OCTOBER: READING WEEK (NO CLASS).****III. Aristotle: “Justice” as the Source of Conflict?****A. The Natural Order? Alleged Hierarchy and “Pre-Political” Domination**

7 November

Aristotle, *Politics* Book I**B. Partiality, Conflict, and the Common Good (?)**

14 November

Aristotle, *Politics* Book II Chapters 9-12 (1269a27-1274b28);
Book III.**C. The Threat of Revolution and the Management of Conflict**21 November and
28 NovemberAristotle, *Politics* Books IV-VI, selections to be announced.**Sunday, 1 December: Second paper due, 11:59 p.m., via Quercus****FALL TERM TEST: DURING EXAM PERIOD****Three hours long. Date and time to be announced.****WINTER TERM:****[Detailed readings and course sessions to be announced in a revised Syllabus to be distributed early in Fall term]****IV. Machiavelli: Is Order Overrated?****V. Hobbes: Order and Justice Through Sovereignty?****VI. Locke: Natural Justice and its Limits****VII. Hume: Towards Modern Solutions (and Modern Problems)**