



ARTS2384

Political Philosophy

Term Two // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
James Phillips	j.phillips@unsw.edu.au	Tuesdays 1-2 pm	Morven Brown 369	9085 2987

School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

The course provides you with a solid foundation in political philosophy by means of close readings of central texts by thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Hannah Arendt. Political philosophy examines the nature and justification for the institutions of government, the aims of government and the desired outcomes such as freedom, equality and justice. Unlike political science it is not purely descriptive but also normative, asking why we should have certain kinds of institutions, how the basic structure of society should be organised, and how all of these might be transformed. Topics covered will include: the limits of state authority, the social contract, the role and meaningfulness of consent, power, rights, secularism, property, democracy and conceptions of the public political sphere.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and expound major theories and arguments in political philosophy
2. Apply philosophical concepts to existing and proposed political institutions
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical approaches to political union and the limits of government
4. Communicate and debate complex ideas
5. Demonstrate skills of scholarly inquiry associated with the study of philosophy

Teaching Strategies

The purpose of this course is to provide you with a solid grounding in political philosophy through an engagement with key thinkers in the discipline. The course is structured around weekly readings, lectures and tutorial discussions. Each week there will normally be a three-hour lecture followed by a one-hour discussion-based tutorial. As philosophy is a discipline that values independent questioning, student participation is encouraged in both the lectures and tutorials. Lectures will cover central themes and arguments in political philosophy and will relate them to their historical background. Tutorials will be problem-based and will involve large- and small-group discussions. In the tutorials we will consider the contemporary relevance of the theories and positions set out in the course readings. You will be expected to prepare for class discussions by completing the set readings. By means of the readings, assessment tasks and group discussions you will develop your ability to read, analyse, criticise, discuss, and interpret philosophical texts. On-line discussion fora will be set up each week so that you can continue to engage with the issues of the courses with your peers.

Assessment

Assessment Rubric/Essay Standards

	HD	DN	CR	PS
Exposition of issues	Conveys in a coherent manner a clear and profound comprehension of the issues.	Conveys in a coherent manner a clear comprehension of the issues.	Conveys in a coherent manner a comprehension of the issues.	Conveys a comprehension of the issues.
Analysis	Exhibits skills associated with the philosophical analysis of texts, offering innovative and insightful interpretations.	Exhibits skills associated with the philosophical analysis of texts, showing independence of thought.	Exhibits some skills associated with the philosophical analysis of texts.	Exhibits some reflection on the issues covered.
Disciplinary conventions	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to the academic essay in philosophy, including organisation, content, presentation, referencing, formatting and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to the academic essay in philosophy, including organisation, content, presentation, referencing, formatting and stylistic choices.	Follows expectations appropriate to philosophy and the academic essay for basic organisation, content, and presentation.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organisation and presentation.
Citations and quotations	Demonstrates critically reflective use of relevant sources to advance argument.	Demonstrates reflective use of relevant sources to support position.	Demonstrates an attempt to use relevant sources to support position.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the essay.
Syntax, punctuation and vocabulary	Uses graceful language that communicates meaning with clarity and fluency and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the essay has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Writing an academic essay means keeping in mind several tasks:

- a) accurately conveying the meaning of the primary text (what is the textual evidence for your interpretation?);
- b) reflecting on the possible weaknesses and implications of the author's positions (what strikes you as contentious in the reading and/or what follows from it?);
- c) situating your interpretation in relation to existing commentaries (does your take on the text differ from what others have made of it and can you provide reasons for your own way of reading the text?).

Without (a) – an accurate exposition of the primary text – you make it harder for your reader to see, for instance, that your critical remarks strike home (and do not just land a “killer blow” on a figment of your imagination).

Without (b) – the expression of your own reflections on the primary text – you make it harder for your reader to see that something is being said that has not been said before.

Without (c) – engagement with secondary literature – you make it harder for your reader to see how your interpretation contributes to contemporary academic understanding of the issues at stake, neither replicating what others have already said nor falling foul of their arguments.

NB. Keeping (a), (b) and (c) in mind is extremely difficult and never becomes straightforward. To try, however, is to set out in the right direction.

As a rule of thumb, referring to commentators when they criticise or elaborate on the primary text is better than referring to them when they simply paraphrase it or repeat widely known facts concerning its composition or influence. It is even better when you can put forward an argument of your own in response to a commentator's criticism or elaboration of the primary text.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Research essay 1500 words	35%	02/07/2021 04:00 PM	1, 3, 4, 5
Research Essay 2000 words	50%	13/08/2021 04:00 PM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Moodle Posts	15%	13/08/2021 04:00 PM	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Research essay 1500 words

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 1500 words

Details:

Students write a research essay - 1500 words.

Feedback will take the form of a rubric and individual comments.

Additional details:

Essay topics will be posted on Moodle at the start of term.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Research Essay 2000 words

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 2000 words

Details:

Students write a research essay - 2000 words.

Feedback will take the form of a rubric and individual comments.

This is the final assessment for attendance purposes.

Additional details:

Essay topics will be listed on Moodle at the start of term.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Moodle Posts

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 3 x 100-150 word posts

Details:

Students post on Moodle 3X100-150 words, one post for each of the three set texts, in response to discussion topics drawn up by students each week during the tutorials.

Convenor provides feedback by responding to the Moodle posts.

Additional details:

This assessment item is your chance to obtain feedback on your progress in the course before the census date.

While the due date for the three posts is 13 August 2021, it makes sense to upload your post on each

book while you are still reading it.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 31 May - 4 June	Lecture	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , pp. 75-149 Topics: The historical background: Parliament, monarchy and the civil wars
	Tutorial	What is human nature? How do our ideas about human nature inform our theories about politics?
Week 2: 7 June - 11 June	Lecture	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , pp. 150-222 Topics: Equality, security and the original condition
	Tutorial	What is the purpose of political bodies? What is the role of the individual in legitimating them?
Week 3: 15 June - 18 June	Lecture	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , pp. 223-311 Topics: Politicising materialism, the social contract and sovereignty
	Tutorial	What is sovereignty? Is it essential to any political body?
Week 4: 21 June - 25 June	Lecture	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , pp. 311-408 Topics: Rights, Hobbes's audiences and models
	Tutorial	What are the threats to the security of the commonwealth? Is the security of the commonwealth the highest priority?
Week 5: 28 June - 2 July	Lecture	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , pp. 1-73 Topics: Property, revolt and majority rule
	Tutorial	What does it mean to give consent?
Week 6: 5 July - 9 July	Reading	No classes this week
Week 7: 12 July - 16 July	Lecture	Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , pp. 74-112 Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration", pp. 113-53 Topic: The reinvention of the state in early modern Europe
	Tutorial	What is individual freedom and how does it relate to

		the legitimacy and power of the state?
Week 8: 19 July - 23 July	Lecture	Arendt, <i>On Revolution</i> , pp. 1-105 Topics: Power, violence and the varieties of freedom
	Tutorial	What is power? What does political participation add to being human?
Week 9: 26 July - 30 July	Lecture	Arendt, <i>On Revolution</i> , pp. 106-206 Topics: The foundations of states and the philosophical import of political history
	Tutorial	Why does Arendt call the French Revolution a failure and the American Revolution a success? Do her reasons bear scrutiny?
Week 10: 2 August - 6 August	Lecture	Arendt, <i>On Revolution</i> , pp. 207-73 Topics: The varieties of revolution and the political costs of the reasons for action
	Tutorial	What are the lessons to be drawn from the revolutions of the last two centuries?

Resources

Prescribed Resources

There are three required texts for this course. All are available for purchase from the UNSW Bookshop.

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (London: Penguin, 1985).
2. John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002).
3. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin, 2006).

Recommended Resources

A list of recommended secondary readings will be available on Moodle and via Leganto.

Course Evaluation and Development

Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on the course both formally - via the end-of-term MyExperience survey - and informally - via e-mail or face-to-face.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

Image Credit

Pieter Bruegel, *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* (1559). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fight_Between_Carnival_and_Lent#/media/File:Pieter_Bruegel_d._%C3%84._066.jpg

CRICOS

CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.