ARTS2384

Political Philosophy

Term One // 2018

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
James Phillips	j.phillips@unsw.edu.au	Mondays 2-3 pm	Morven Brown 369	9385 2987

School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

Location: School Office, Morven Brown Building, Level 2, 258

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Subject Area: *Philosophy*

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 for this course involves three academic essays on the three set texts. 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 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	Demonstrates consistent use of important	Follows expectations appropriate to	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic

	execution of a wide range of conventions particular to the academic essay in philosophy, including organisation, content, presentation, referencing, formatting and stylistic choices.	conventions particular to the academic essay in philosophy, including organisation, content, presentation, referencing, formatting and stylistic choices.	philosophy and the academic essay for basic organisation, content, and presentation.	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.

The library has access to the Chicago Manual of Style:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.wwwproxy1.library.unsw.edu.au/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html

Consult this for detailed and authoritative information on referencing.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Research essay 1600 words	30%	13/04/2018 04:00 PM	1,3,4,5
Research essay 1600 words	30%	04/05/2018 04:00 PM	1,3,4,5
Research Essay 1600 words	30%	25/05/2018 04:00 PM	1,2,3,4,5
Moodle Posts	10%	01/06/2018 04:00 PM	1,2,3,4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Research essay 1600 words

Start date:

Details: Students write a research essay on the first reading - 1600 words.Feedback will take the form of a rubric and individual comments.

Additional details:

Focus: Hobbes

Essay topics:

1) Hobbes paints an unflattering portrait of man in the state of nature. What does this portrait help Hobbes to argue? To what criticisms does it expose his account of the founding of a commonwealth?

2) With his theory of covenanting Hobbes grounded the commonwealth in consent. But in what ways does he qualify and dilute this consent? What can be said for and against Hobbes's notion of consent?

3) Hobbes made security the rationale of the modern state as far as subjects are concerned. Is this how the state is conceived today? Are there alternatives? What problems can you identify with security and/or with alternative rationales such as religious obedience and the flourishing of the individual?

Students are encouraged to devise their own essay topics, since self-directed research as an undergraduate is an excellent way to prepare for postgraduate study. Please consult the course convenor for approval of your chosen topic.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Research essay 1600 words

Start date:

Details: Students write a research essay on the second reading - 1600 words.Feedback will take the form of a rubric and individual comments.

Additional details:

Focus: Locke

Essay topics:

1) Locke is a theorist of limited government. What are the checks that he places on executive power? What problems do you discern in these checks? Have they changed over the succeeding centuries?

2) How does Locke understand consent? What use does he make of it? What objections can be made to it?

3) Locke's argument for religious toleration draws on Protestant ideas concerning the sanctity of individual conscience. What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Students are encouraged to devise their own essay topics, since self-directed research as an

undergraduate is an excellent way to prepare for postgraduate study. Please consult the course convenor for approval of your chosen topic.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Research Essay 1600 words

Start date:

Details: Students write a research essay on the third reading - 1600 words.Feedback will take the form of a rubric and individual comments.This is the final assessment for attendance purposes.

Additional details:

Focus: Arendt

Essay topics:

1) Arendt twists and squeezes history to extract from it neatly contrasting theories of revolution. What are the benefits and drawbacks of this approach to the historical record?

2) Arendt rethinks freedom in terms of participation in collective decision-making. Evaluate her reasons for this redefinition.

3) Arendt treats the political actor as a short-lived phenomenon of the modern period. What factors does she claim contribute to the demise of the euphoric freedom of political action? What is your assessment of her position?

Students are encouraged to devise their own essay topics, since self-directed research as an undergraduate is an excellent way to prepare for postgraduate study. Please consult the course convenor for approval of your chosen topic.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 4: Moodle Posts

Start date:

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:

Students are required to post a total of three contributions – one on each of the three books we will be reading – to the discussion fora on Moodle by the end of the semester.

Topics for the discussion forum will be drawn up each week in the tutorial and posted by the course convenor. It is unwise to leave it until the end of the semester to begin posting.

The purpose of the activity is to hone one's ideas regarding the readings and to continue the discussions that we will be having in the tutorials. The texts we will be reading are full of difficult ideas and arguments and we should be prepared to help and to challenge one another in our attempts to come to grips with them.

Each post should be between 100-150 words and demonstrate an engagement with the reading. The task does **not** involve writing a summary of the reading. Showing that you have done the reading is not necessarily the same as showing that you have understood it. If you can say what it is about a text that you find confusing, you will be demonstrating your engagement with it.

You may find that you are able to make a better contribution by responding to someone else's post rather than to the discussion topic directly.

The posts will be marked on 1) their level of insight into the issues, 2) the clarity with which ideas are expounded and 3) the skills of philosophical argumentation they demonstrate.

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: 26 February - 4 March	Lecture	Topic: What is Political Philosophy? Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 75-149 Tutorials start week 2.
Week 2: 5 March - 11 March	Lecture	Topic: Of Human Nature Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 150-222
Week 3: 12 March - 18 March	Lecture	Topic: Beginnings of Political Union Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 223-94
Week 4: 19 March - 25 March	Lecture	Topic: Absolutism Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 294-363
Week 5: 26 March - 1 April	Lecture	Topic: Hobbes and His Times Reading: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 363-408 and 717-29
Break: 2 April - 8 April		There are no lectures and tutorials running this week.
Week 6: 9 April - 15 April	Lecture	Topic: Locke as Liberalism's Precursor? Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, pp. 1-57
Week 7: 16 April - 22 April	Lecture	Topic: Limited Government Reading: Locke, *Second Treatise*, pp. 57-112
Week 8: 23 April - 29 April	Homework	Public holiday - no class. Lecture notes will be posted on Moodle. Topic: Reading: Locke, "Letter Concerning Toleration", pp. 113-53
Week 9: 30 April - 6 May	Lecture	Topic: The Meaning of Revolution Reading: Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 1-48
Week 10: 7 May - 13	Lecture	Topic: The French Revolution

May		Reading: Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 49-131
Week 11: 14 May - 20 May	Lecture	Topic: The American Revolution Reading: Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 132-206
Week 12: 21 May - 27 May	Lecture	Topic: Post-Revolutionary Societies Reading: Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 207-73
Week 13: 28 May - 3 June	Tutorial	Tutorial only. No lecture.

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

Suggested further reading on Hobbes:

Aubrey, John. "Thomas Hobbes" in *Brief Lives.* There are multiple editions of this celebrated early biography.

Baumgold, Deborah. 2008. "The Difficulties of Hobbes Interpretation." *Political Theory* 36: 827-55.

Carvalho, Henrique. 2017. "Liberty and Insecurity in the Criminal Law: Lessons from Thomas Hobbes." *Criminal Law and Philosophy* 11: 249-71.

Cromartie, Alan. 2008. "The God of Thomas Hobbes." *The Historical Journal* 51: 857-79.

Curran, Eleanor. 2002. "A Very Peculiar Royalist: Hobbes in the Context of his Political Contemporaries." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 10: 167-208.

Hamilton, James J. 2009. "Hobbes the Royalist, Hobbes the Republican." *History of Political Thought* 30: 411-54.

Hill, Christopher. 1997. "Thomas Hobbes and the Revolution in Political Thought." In id., *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century*, 248-68. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Mintz, Samuel I.1962. *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth-Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richardson, Janice. 2016. "Hobbes' Frontispiece: Authorship, Subordination and Contract." *Law and Critique* 27: 63-81.

Skinner, Quentin. 2008. *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sreedhar, Susanne. 2010. *Hobbes on Resistance: Defying the Leviathan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, Leo. 1952. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*. Translated by Elsa M. Sinclair. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sussmann, Naomi. 2010. "How Many Commonwealths Can 'Leviathan' Swallow? Covenant,

Sovereign and People in Hobbes's Political Theory." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18: 575-96.

Tuck, Richard. 1993. "The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes." In *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, edited by Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner, 120-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vaughan, Geoffrey M. 2001. "The Audience of Leviathan and the Audience of Hobbes's Political Philosophy." *History of Political Thought* 22: 448-71.

Suggested further reading on Locke:

Bejan, T. M. 2016. "Locke on Toleration, (In)Civility and the Quest for Concord." *History of Political Thought* 37: 556-87.

Brady, Michelle. 2017. "Acting for the Public Good: Locke on Freedom and Judgment." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 57: 43-60.

Brown, Vivienne. 1999. "The 'Figure' of God and the Limits to Liberalism: A Rereading of Locke's 'Essay' and 'Two Treatises'." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60: 83-100.

Brubaker, Stanley C. 2012. "Coming into One's Own: John Locke's Theory of Property, God, and Politics." *The Review of Politics* 74: 207-32.

Grant, Ruth W. 2012. "John Locke on Custom's Power and Reason's Authority." *The Review of Politics* 74: 607-29.

Moots, Glenn and Greg Forster. 2010. "*Salus populi suprema lex*: John Locke versus Contemporary Democratic Theory." *Perspectives on Political Science* 39: 35-45.

Myers, Peter C. 1995. "Between Divine and Human Sovereignty: The State of Nature and the Basis of Locke's Political Thought." *Polity* 27: 629-49.

Pasquino, Pasquale. 1998. "Locke on King's Prerogative." *Political Theory: An International Journal of Political Philosophy* 26: 198-208.

Powers, Thomas F. 2007. "The Act/Belief Doctrine and the Limits of Lockean Religious Liberty." *Perspectives on Political Science* 36: 73-83.

Simmons, A. John. 1989. "Locke's State of Nature." *Political Theory* 17: 449-70.

Schwartzman, Micah. 2005. "The Relevance of Locke's Religious Arguments for Toleration." *Political Theory* 33: 678-705.

Stevens, Jacqueline. 1996. "The Reasonableness of John Locke's Majority: Property Rights, Consent, and Resistance in the *Second Treatise*." *Political Theory* 24: 423-63.

Tate, John William. 2009. "Locke and Toleration: Defending Locke's Liberal Credentials." *Philosophy &*

Social Criticism 35: 761-91.

Tierney, Brian. 2005. "Historical Roots of Modern Rights: Before Locke and After." *Ave Maria Law Review* 3: 23-43.

van der Schaar, Maria. 2012. "Locke on Judgement and Religious Toleration." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20: 41-68.

Vogt, Philip. 1997. "Locke, Eden and Two States of Nature: The Fortunate Fall   Revisited." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 35: 523-44.

Waldron, Jeremy. 1989. "John Locke: Social Contract versus Political Anthropology." *The Review of Politics* 51: 3-28.

–––. 2002. *God, Locke and Equality: Christian Foundations of Locke's Political Thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suggested further reading on Arendt:

Arnold, Jeremy. 2014. "Arendt's Revolution: Reading *On Revolution* in a Time of Decline." *The Review of Politics* 76: 361-87.

Barnouw, Dagmar. 1986. "Speech Regained: Hannah Arendt and the American   Revolution." *Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History* 15: 137-52.

Bernasconi, Robert. 1996. "The Double Face of the Political and the Social: Hannah Arendt and America's Racial Divisions." *Research in Phenomenology* 26: 3-24.

Breen, Keith. 2007. "Violence and Power: A Critique of Hannah Arendt on the   'Political'." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 33: 343-72.

Demirović, Alex. 2003. "Revolution and Freedom." Translated by Kurt Hirtler.   *Parallax* 9: 42-55.

Feher, Ferenc. 1987. "Freedom and the 'Social Question' (Hannah Arendt's Theory of the   French Revolution)". *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 12: 1- 30.

Hobsbawm, E. J. 1965. "*On Revolution*, by Hanna Arendt." *History and Theory* 4: 252-57.

Honig, Bonnie. 1995. *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

James, Barry. 2007. "The Growth of the Social Realm in Arendt's Post-Mortem of the Modern Nation-State." *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Radical Social Theory* 138: 97-119.

King, Richard H. 2011. "Hannah Arendt and the Concept of Revolution in the 1960s." *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 71: 30-45.

Kristeva, Julia. 2008. "Refoundation as Survival: An Interrogation of Hannah   Arendt." *Common Knowledge* 14: 353-64.

Magun, Artemy. 2007. "The Double Bind: The Ambivalent Treatment of Tragic Passions in Hannah Arendt's Theory of Revolution." *History of Political Thought* 28: 719-46.

Villa, Dana Richard. 1999. *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Visker, Rudi. 2009. "Beyond Representation and Participation: Pushing Arendt into Postmodernity." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 35: 411-26.

Students are strongly advised to venture beyond these recommendations. An engagement with the secondary literature will assist students in orienting their own interpretations of the primary texts covered in the course. Each of the three thinkers with whom we will be dealing is the subject of a vast secondary literature that continues to grow. It is a feature of an academic essay that a position is adopted in relation to previous commentaries.

The database "Philosopher's Index" is one recommended research tool for exploring the scholarly literature on political philosophy.

Course Evaluation and Development

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 information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.

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; review of marks; occupational health and safety; 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/

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