



UNSW Course Outline

ARTS2384 Political Philosophy - 2024

Published on the 20 Sep 2024

General Course Information

Course Code : ARTS2384

Year : 2024

Term : Term 3

Teaching Period : T3

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture

Academic Unit : School of Humanities and Languages

Delivery Mode : In Person

Delivery Format : Standard

Delivery Location : Kensington

Campus : Sydney

Study Level : Undergraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

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.

Relationship to Other Courses

This course is one among several in the UNSW Philosophy curriculum that addresses topics in political philosophy.

Students interested in further study in this area should consider:

ARTS1360 Truth and Human Existence: Introduction to Philosophy

ARTS1361 Mind, Ethics, and Freedom: Introduction to Philosophy

ARTS2249 Environmental Philosophy

ARTS2362 Alienation and Social Critique

ARTS2363 Chinese Philosophy

ARTS3368 Modern European Philosophy

ARTS3377 Advanced Topics in Political Philosophy

ARTS3380 Advanced Topics in Social Philosophy

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Identify and expound major theories and arguments in political philosophy
CLO2 : Apply philosophical concepts to existing and proposed political institutions
CLO3 : Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical approaches to political union and the limits of government
CLO4 : Communicate and debate complex ideas
CLO5 : Demonstrate skills of scholarly inquiry associated with the study of philosophy

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CL01 : Identify and expound major theories and arguments in political philosophy	• Essay 1 • Essay 2
CL02 : Apply philosophical concepts to existing and proposed political institutions	• Essay 1 • Essay 2
CL03 : Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical approaches to political union and the limits of government	• Essay 1 • Essay 2
CL04 : Communicate and debate complex ideas	• Essay 1 • Essay 2
CL05 : Demonstrate skills of scholarly inquiry associated with the study of philosophy	• Essay 1 • Essay 2

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Echo 360

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Essay 1 Assessment Format: Individual	40%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 11/10/2024 04:00 PM
Essay 2 Assessment Format: Individual	60%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 22/11/2024 04:00 PM

Assessment Details

Essay 1

Assessment Overview

Students write a research essay - 1500 words.

Feedback will take the form of individual written comments.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify and expound major theories and arguments in political philosophy
- CL02 : Apply philosophical concepts to existing and proposed political institutions
- CL03 : Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical approaches to political union and the limits of government
- CL04 : Communicate and debate complex ideas

- CL05 : Demonstrate skills of scholarly inquiry associated with the study of philosophy

Detailed Assessment Description

Students select one topic from a list posted on Moodle by the course convenor.

The marking rubric is visible on Moodle. Please pay attention to the rubric, since satisfying the five criteria is essential to obtaining a good mark.

Assessment Length

1500 words (leeway without penalty: 150 words +/-)

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

You are expected to write your own essays. Your submission will be passed through an AI-generated text detection tool. If your marker has concerns that your answer contains passages of AI-generated text, you may be asked to substantiate your claim to authorship in a one-to-one interview. An unconvincing performance will result in referral to the school's plagiarism officer for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

Essay 2

Assessment Overview

Students write a research essay - 2500 words.

Feedback will take the form of individual written comments.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify and expound major theories and arguments in political philosophy
- CL02 : Apply philosophical concepts to existing and proposed political institutions
- CL03 : Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical approaches to political union and the limits of government
- CL04 : Communicate and debate complex ideas

- CLO5 : Demonstrate skills of scholarly inquiry associated with the study of philosophy

Detailed Assessment Description

Students select one topic from a list posted on Moodle by the course convenor.

The marking rubric is visible on Moodle. Please pay attention to the rubric, since satisfying the five criteria is essential to obtaining a good mark.

Assessment Length

2500 words (leeway without penalty: 250 words +/-)

Assessment information

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

You are expected to write your own essays. Your submission will be passed through an AI-generated text detection tool. If your marker has concerns that your answer contains passages of AI-generated text, you may be asked to substantiate your claim to authorship in a one-to-one interview. An unconvincing performance will result in referral to the school's plagiarism officer for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

General Assessment Information

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 you are making an original contribution to research.

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.

Does practice in writing academic essays have any benefit beyond writing academic essays? Yes! It counts as deep training in democratic citizenship because it encourages and enhances thinking for yourself along with thinking from other people’s viewpoints. The two have to go together if we are to avoid both the social atomisation and conformism that repressive governments foster and build upon.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

To pass the course a student must obtain an overall mark of 50% or higher from the two assessment tasks.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 9 September - 15 September	Lecture	Introduction to the course Read in advance: Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 75-149 (chapters 1-9 of Part One) Topics: The chicken-and-egg question of Hobbes's political theory and his philosophy of knowledge, the meaning of sovereignty and Hobbes's historical background: Parliament, monarchy and the civil wars in mid-seventeenth-century Britain.
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What is human nature? How do our ideas about human nature inform our theories about politics and vice versa?
Week 2 : 16 September - 22 September	Lecture	Read in advance: Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 150-222 (chapters 10-16 Of Part One) Topics: Equality, security and Hobbes's so-called original condition
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What is the purpose of political bodies? What is the role of the individual in legitimating them? Is individuality a fact or a fiction?
Week 3 : 23 September - 29 September	Lecture	Read in advance: Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 223-311 (chapters 17-25 of Part Two) Topics: Politicising materialism, the social contract and sovereignty in its early modern context
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What is sovereignty? Is it essential to any political body? Can we repurpose it?
Week 4 : 30 September - 6 October	Lecture	Read in advance: Hobbes, Leviathan, pp. 311-408 (chapters 26-31 of Part Two) Topics: Rights, Hobbes's audiences and models
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What are the threats to the security of the commonwealth? Is the security of the commonwealth the highest priority?
Week 5 : 7 October - 13 October	Lecture	Read in advance: Locke, Second Treatise of Government, pp. 1-73 (chapters 1-13) Topics: Property, revolt and majority rule NO CLASS ON MONDAY ON ACCOUNT OF THE PUBLIC HOLIDAY
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What does it mean to give consent? What is the history and what is the future of this concept?
Week 6 : 14 October - 20 October	Reading	No classes this week.
Week 7 : 21 October - 27 October	Lecture	Read in advance: Locke, Second Treatise of Government, pp. 74-112 (chapters 14-19) and Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration", pp. 113-53 Topics: The reinvention of the state in early modern Europe and the role of Christianity in demarcating its legitimate scope
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What is individual freedom and how does it relate to the authority and power of the modern state?
Week 8 : 28 October - 3 November	Lecture	Read in advance: Arendt, On Revolution, pp. 1-105 (Introduction, chapters 1-2) Topics: Power, violence and the varieties of freedom
	Tutorial	What do we mean politically by "power"? What does political participation add to being human? What does Arendt gain and lose by excluding social questions from her understanding of politics?
Week 9 : 4 November - 10 November	Lecture	Read in advance: Arendt, On Revolution, pp. 106-206 (chapters 3-5) Topics: The foundations of states and the lessons philosophers have drawn from and imposed on political history
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: Why does Arendt call the French Revolution a failure and the American Revolution a success? Do her reasons bear scrutiny? How committed is Arendt herself to the contrast between the two?
Week 10 : 11 November - 17 November	Lecture	Read in advance: Arendt, On Revolution, pp. 207-73 (chapter 6) Topics: The varieties of revolution and the political costs of the reasons for action
	Tutorial	Discussion questions: What can we learn from the so-called successful as well as failed revolutions of the last two centuries? Have the political events of the sixty years since the publication of Arendt's book led us to adopt different views from hers?

Attendance Requirements

Attendance at tutorials is mandatory in this course. Unexcused absence from more than 20% of tutorials will result in the award of a fail grade. A record of tutorial attendance will be kept by the course tutor.

In the tutorials you will actively engage with core course content, enabling you to attain Course Learning Outcome 4.

Other Considerations:

- Align with the course learning outcomes;
- Result in a recorded artefact (an artefact for participation may include a post, or response, to an online discussion forum, poll or quiz, when an artefact for mandatory attendance may include a record of attendance) and have processes in place for recording the student artefact;
- Where relevant, include evidence that the attendance or participation is required to meet a statutory or professional body requirement; and
- Be comparable where the activity is delivered in different modes.

General Schedule Information

This course is devoted to the examination of three thinkers and their contributions to political philosophy. Weeks 1-4 are on Hobbes, 5 and 7 are on Locke, and 8-10 are on Arendt.

In the course schedule you will find listed the page spans for the weekly readings. These refer to the following editions:

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).

There are multiple editions of the set readings. If your edition has a different pagination, the relevant information is the chapter numbers (given in brackets) assigned for each week.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

Students will have access to all required readings via Moodle.

The set readings can also be purchased as hard copies from the UNSW book store.

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (London: Penguin, 2017)
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

Links to secondary readings will be available on Moodle via Leganto.

These constitute just a small portion of the commentaries on the set readings that are available through the library.

Additional Costs

None

Course Evaluation and Development

Student feedback will be sought throughout the course in the form of direct questions and the MyExperience survey. Feedback will be analysed on an on going basis and any relevant course alterations undertaken.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	James Phillips		Morven Brown 369	9065 1055	Consultation hour: Wednesdays 12:30 - 1:30 pm	No	Yes
Tutor	Sofia Kartavtseva					No	No

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Student equity and disability;

- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- Examination information;
- Review of results;

Please see: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines>

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 includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original 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 for the purpose of them plagiarising, 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.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. 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 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

Use of AI for assessments

As AI applications continue to develop, and technology rapidly progresses around us, we remain committed to our values around academic integrity at UNSW. Where the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, has been permitted by your course convener, they must be properly credited and your submissions must be substantially your own work.

In cases where the use of AI has been prohibited, please respect this and be aware that where unauthorised use is detected, penalties will apply.

[Use of AI for assessments | UNSW Current Students](#)

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a

student cannot submit an assessment, and

- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request [Special Consideration](#) as early as possible before the deadline. Support with [Time Management is available here](#).

Important note: UNSW has a “fit to sit/submit” rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

School Contact Information

School of Humanities & Languages

Email: hal@unsw.edu.au

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

Opening Hours: Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm