

# PHIL 382R: Politics and Liberation

## Instructor

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**Office Hours** Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00pm-5:00pm (appointment only)

## Course description

Can politics still be a source of human liberation and justice, or does our contemporary moment give us reason to doubt the promise of politics? This class will examine the nature of human freedom, political power, and justice. Reading authors from diverse traditions writing in the 20th and 21st century, we will consider 1) different attempts to define the nature of politics and power, 2) which forms of politics and power best enable us to realize a more just world (and why), and 3) what it means to be a "liberated" human being or society. An important focus of this course will be consideration of how these social and political theories are currently alive, understood, and relevant to our contemporary world.

## Required texts

Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 978-0805212136      Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 978-0231130639  
Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, 978-0415305211      Enrique Dussel, *20 Theses on Politics*, 978-0822343288  
Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 978-0801484636

## Goals

1. To develop an understanding and appreciation of important writings, concepts, and theoretical frameworks in philosophy. [Knowledge]
2. To discover and develop your knowledge (and the knowledge of others) through research and writing projects. [Research and Scholarship]
3. To develop your leadership abilities by being responsible for guiding and facilitating discussion. [Academic Leadership]
4. To develop your ability to construct and articulate your philosophical views, on your own and by listening and being receptive to the critiques and suggestions of your peers. [Communication and Team Learning]

## Requirements

Participation	5%	Research Assignments	5%
Daily writing responses	10%	Final Research Project	25%
Discussion Facilitations	10%	Midterm Exam	20%
		Final Exam	25%

## Grading Scale

94-100	A	77-79	C+
90-93	A-	74-76	C
87-89	B+	70-73	C-
84-86	B	67-69	D+
80-83	B-	60-66	D
			< 60 F

## Participation:

Great discussions happen when everyone has a chance to participate in our conversations. Accordingly, we will try to actively involve everyone in our conversations and create a classroom culture that welcomes everyone. I expect you to be prepared and engaged with the text, and I expect you to participate nearly every class (for an A grade). You will be given a participation grade at midterm and at the end of the semester. Your overall participation grade is an average of these two grades. There is a detailed participation rubric posted on Canvas that you need to consult in order to know exactly how you will be graded.

## Daily writing responses

Everyone is responsible for bringing a written reflection to class each time we meet. Your reflection can be typed or handwritten, and it needs to be one substantial paragraph. It must demonstrate that you have read the assigned material and have something thoughtful to say, whether it is criticism, support, or connections with other ideas studied in other classes. You should not simply summarize the assigned reading. Discuss one aspect of the reading that interests you the most, and develop your thoughts about the author's ideas. That is, whether you agree or disagree, why is this idea worth considering? Explain why you find it meaningful. In order to receive full marks, your reflection needs to focus on an idea that develops throughout the reading, not simply an idea discuss in one paragraph or at the very beginning of the reading. Also, you must have one or two questions written out below your reflection paragraph that you want to discuss during our discussion. I will collect these reflections every day at the beginning of class, and

their main purpose is 1) for you to practice writing and thinking through philosophical ideas and 2) to encourage you to collect your thoughts about the reading prior to class, in order for us to have more productive and thoughtful conversations. Your lowest grade is dropped and you can turn this in when you are absent if your absence is excused (see policies below). If you forget to bring your reflection to class, you will receive a zero (no emailing responses). Graded responses will count as quiz grades in Canvas.

### Research project:

You will slowly develop a research project over the course of the semester. There is a document with assignment details in Canvas under “Files” that describes each aspect of this assignment. Briefly, this is an “applied” research paper that will require you to investigate a contemporary political issue or event, research literature related to your topic, and develop a theoretical evaluation of your topic using a theoretical framework from one of the course’s units.

### Discussion facilitation:

You will form groups of two during the first week of class. Your group will be responsible for facilitating the second half of our class discussion four times during the semester. Your facilitation will focus on understanding the text’s philosophical and political implications, applying the texts to contemporary political issues, and raising criticisms and potential objections for the class to discuss. The dates are first come, first serve, but you can’t facilitate back-to-back classes. There is a link to the signup website on our Canvas homepage. There is also a document with instructions and a grading rubric on Canvas. We will discuss the details of this assignment and my expectations at the beginning of the second day of class.

### Exams

You will have two exams. Both tests will primarily involve short answer and essay questions, and they will test you on 1) your understanding of the philosophers’ texts discussed during class, 2) any key concept/terminology we discuss, and 3) your ability to compare and contrast the views of different philosophers we discuss. The final exam is cumulative. There are no review sessions or study guides. You are responsible for taking notes on all important ideas and concepts discussed during class.

Midterm: October 5<sup>th</sup>

Final: Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 7pm-10pm (in our classroom)

## Classroom Policies

### Unexcused Absence

An absence is excused only if you are 1) involved in an official Oxford event (sports, for example), 2) have a note from health services, 3) observing a religious holiday, or 4) have a note/e-mail from a dean excusing you from class. Any note must be for the day/time of our class.

### Turning in Assignments

I will not accept assignments that are e-mailed to me. Any assignment that is not turned in by you at the beginning of class is late and will be penalized. If you leave class after turning in an assignment, you will receive a zero on the assignment. For daily assignments, late work is not accepted. For *all* assignments: each day late = one letter grade off (-10pts).

### Electronics

You are not allowed to have laptops or cell phones out during class.

On days when the reading is a pdf, you either need to print the article or have an e-reader (no laptops or phones).

I do not consent to audio or video recordings of our classes.

### Academic Dishonesty

Cheating/plagiarism is not tolerated. Any form of cheating or plagiarism (regardless the assignment) will forfeit any possible credit for that assignment, and following school policy you will be reported to the Honor Council. (Please consult the Academic Honor Code in the Student Handbook.) If you have *any* questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism, don’t hesitate to contact me.

### Disability Accommodations

Any student who thinks s/he may need an accommodation should contact the Office of Disability Services (ADSR): [adsroxford@emory.edu](mailto:adsroxford@emory.edu) ; 770.784.4690. Unless you have official documentation from the ADSR office, I cannot grant accommodations. If you do not schedule testing in advance, you will have to take our tests during the regular class time without extended time or accommodations. Scheduling for an exam accommodation is your responsibility, and often you cannot schedule times on short notice.

## Course Schedule

[Note: All dates and readings are subject to change]

Week	Topic	Required Reading
1		24 <sup>th</sup> – Syllabus and Introductions
August	I. Models of Politics in the 20 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	

Week	Topic	Required Reading
2 August	<i>Political Realism</i> <i>The Politics Recognition</i>	29 <sup>th</sup> – Weber, “Politics as Vocation” (pdf) 31 <sup>st</sup> – Arendt, pp. 93-108
3 September		5 <sup>th</sup> – Arendt, pp. 108-129 7 <sup>th</sup> – Arendt, pp. 130-153
4 September	<i>Deliberative Politics</i>	12 <sup>th</sup> – Arendt, pp. 178-200 14 <sup>th</sup> – Habermas (pdf)
5 September	<i>The Politics of Difference</i>	19 <sup>th</sup> – Rawls (pdf) 21 <sup>st</sup> – Young (pdf), pp. 156-173
6 September	<i>Agonistic Politics</i>	26 <sup>th</sup> – Young (pdf), pp. 173-end 28 <sup>th</sup> – Mouffe, Chapters 1 and 2
7 October		3 <sup>rd</sup> – Mouffe, Chapters 5 and 6 5 <sup>th</sup> – <b>Midterm</b>
8 October	<i>Cosmopolitan and Postsecular Politics</i>	10 <sup>th</sup> – No class – Fall break 12 <sup>th</sup> – Asad (pdf)
9 October	<b>II. Oppression and the Politics of Liberation</b> <i>Racial Politics</i>	17 <sup>th</sup> – Ingram (pdf) 19 <sup>th</sup> – Mills, Chapter 2, pp. 41-62
10 October		24 <sup>th</sup> – Mills, Chapter 2, pp. 62-end of chapter 26 <sup>th</sup> – Mills, Chapter 3, pp. 91-109
11 November		31 <sup>st</sup> – Mills, Chapter 3, pp. 109 – end of chapter 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Chatterjee, Chapter 1
12 November	<i>Localized Resistance</i>	7 <sup>th</sup> – Chatterjee, Chapter 2 9 <sup>th</sup> – Chatterjee, Chapter 3
13 November	<i>Global Liberation</i>	14 <sup>th</sup> – Dussel, Theses 1, 2, and 3 16 <sup>th</sup> – Dussel, Theses 11, 12, and 13
14 November		21 <sup>st</sup> – Dussel, Theses 14 and 15 23 <sup>rd</sup> – No class, Thanksgiving break
15 December		28 <sup>th</sup> – Dussel, Theses 16, 17, and 18 30 <sup>th</sup> – Dussel, Theses 19 and 20 5 <sup>th</sup> – Project Presentations