

**HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
***Philosophy 2801F: Contemporary Political Philosophy – J. Epp***  
**Course Outline, Fall 2016**

**Mon. 10:30-11:30am**  
**Wed. 9:30-11:30am**  
**HC-A1**

**Instructor: Jennifer Epp**  
**Office: A304**  
**Office hours: Mon. 12:00 - 2:00 pm**  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Very broadly, ancient political thought focused on how best to produce virtuous citizens and a well-ordered Polis. Early Modern political theorists went on to ask about the legitimate use of coercive governmental power and developed social contract theories based in claims about human freedom and equality. These theories often dealt with questions about the nature of sovereignty and property. Our class will investigate attempts by Twentieth Century political theorists to make use of this conceptual inheritance by applying, altering, and rejecting it in relation to uniquely modern circumstances. To do this we will examine the modern social contract theory of John Rawls in conversation with various critics. We will also consider the work of theorists such as Hannah Arendt who have thought beyond and outside of contract theory to try to understand the nature of political action and human community.

Our guiding questions will include with Rawls, “What makes a government legitimate and stable? What form of political arrangement is required in order to respect people as equals and to enable justice?” With Arendt we will ask, “What is the nature of political action? How does human communication and deliberation across difference figure into this process? And, how ought one to theorize power and the human condition after witnessing the atrocities of the Twentieth Century?”

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To develop student’s abilities to identify, understand, construct and critique philosophical arguments. In order to meet this objective, students will enhance their oral and written communication skills, active listening skills, analytical ability and potential for creative problem solving via written assignments, collaborative exercises in interpretation, and class discussion.
- 2) To familiarize students with central debates in contemporary western political thought, and to understand the complexity of these debates. In order to meet this objective students will read relevant literature and engage in written exegesis, conceptual analysis, and respectful debate within class.
- 3) To provide students with resources that may help them to think critically about current political events and about their own position in political communities. In order to meet this objective, students will enhance their ability to formulate theoretical and practical

questions about both course material and the current global and local political landscapes in which they are situated. Questions will be discussed in class.

## **CLASS METHODS**

Class will include interactive lecture time, as well as time for group exercises, and class discussion. Students will sometimes act as peer instructors. Participation is highly encouraged and students are expected to come to class prepared to ask questions, find answers, and discuss the readings. Students will read primary and secondary texts by influential theorists in contemporary Western political philosophy.

## **TEXTS**

All readings can be found either on the internet or in the Resources section of OWL. Addressess for internet based readings are listed in the syllabus below.

## **REQUIRMENTS:**

Students may choose to do either a presentation with a short written component, or the Question and Question answer assignments. You are not required to do the assignments if you present or to present if you do the assignments.

<b>Question Assignment</b> , due Oct. 1	15%
<b>Question Answer Assignment</b> , due Nov. 5	15%
<b>OR (student choice)</b>	
<b>Presentation + Answer</b>	Presentation 15% + Answer 15% = 30%
<b>Class Reflections</b>	15 x 1 % = 15%
<b>Essay</b> , due Dec. 3	25%
<b>Final Exam</b>	30%

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Submit all assignments, except reflections, to the **Assignments** section of OWL. (Do not submit to DropBox. If you have trouble submitting through OWL e-mail your assignment to [jepp6@uwo.ca](mailto:jepp6@uwo.ca) to prevent it from being counted as late.) **No paper copy of the assignments** is needed. Details and evaluation criteria for all assignments, except reflections, will be provided on OWL. See below for details on reflections.

## **ANONYMOUS GRADING:**

To avoid bias I grade your essay, reading reviews, and exam **anonymously**.

- Use **student numbers, not names**, on assignments and the exam.
- Reflections do not need to be anonymous as the grade is guaranteed if you engage with the material.

- Title saved documents like this: student number, assignment name, reading name
- E.g. for the essay: “250111111, Essay, Arendt”
- E.g. for the reviews: “250111111, Question Assignment, Rawls”
- **Failure to do this means a .25 deduction from your grade.** (It takes a lot of time for me to anonymize for you.)

**OWL: check the Announcements section of OWL regularly.**

### **CLASS REFLECTIONS:**

**Due:** One day after a Monday class (your reflection is due on Tuesday night), and two days after a Wednesday class (your reflection is due on Friday night).

Reflections:

- Are organized, written out responses to our class topics.
- They allow you to respond to, comment on, process, ask questions, and more thoroughly learn about course content, *for yourself*.
- They allow me to gauge class understanding and interest and to listen to you in particular.

**Try this:** What puzzles you? What questions do you have for the author or others, and why are they important to ask? Why did something bother you or excite you? Is the author correct? Why or why not? Is there something that is relevant to the discussion that was left out? Does the topic relate to your personal experience or to something you’ve seen in the media? If so, what did you learn? Are there connections between this discussion and things you are learning in other classes? Why is the issue complicated or important? Can you give a unique interpretation of a topic we are discussing? Do you have a suggestion, or objection, or argument that you want to work out?

Reflections must:

- Relate directly to the reading or to class discussion.
- **Engage** with course content and include **reasons**.
- Say something that was not said in class or in the reading.
- Be submitted **only if you were in class**.
- Be submitted by **e-mail**, in a **new message**, from a **UWO account**. Do not “reply” to an earlier message. I am not responsible for lost work if you do not do this.
- **Or** be submitted on paper to the after-hours Dropbox by the information desk in W wing.

**Caution:** Saying that you found something interesting/boring, good/bad or right/wrong, without trying to say why, doesn’t allow you to engage with the material. Go further than that and **explain why**. You cannot engage with the material by simply repeating what was said in class, though you may present different interpretations of what has been said and evaluate them.

**There is no length requirement.** This is a chance to figure out what you think about something, why you think it, and what you do and don’t understand. The length of your reflection will depend on what you need or want to work out for yourself.

**I read every response but I do not comment** on responses except, on rare occasions, to recommend further reading or to raise a question (even when I really want to say more!). That allows you to write freely, without feeling like you have to figure out what I want you to say. In my experience, the quality of the reflections is much higher this way. Think of them as a chance to talk to yourself about what you are learning.

Each response is **worth 1%**, and every submitted response is guaranteed the 1% as long as it **engages** with course content.

### **PLAIGIARISM:**

Work submitted to the Assignments section in OWL is automatically sent to Turnitin.com (a plagiarism checking service). Papers are not graded until they are submitted and checked there.

You may not submit assignments, or portions of assignments, that have been prepared for other courses. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be taken very seriously. Make sure to **cite all direct quotes, use quotation marks, cite all ideas that you got from somewhere else even if you are not using quotes, and include a bibliography or footnotes of any external resources that you use in anything submitted for this class.**

### **ACCESSIBILITY:**

Your success in this course is important to me and there are many ways to learn. I encourage students to discuss their learning styles and needs with me during office hours or at another arranged time, if necessary. Every effort will be made to make this class accessible.

We usually think of disability in relation to accessibility, and that's relevant, but so are many other factors including employment and family responsibilities. Talk to me, to the Student Development Centre, or to your academic counsellor as soon as possible if you have any accessibility or accommodation concerns and we will address them together.

Disabled students are also strongly encouraged to make use of the Services for Students with Disabilities provided by the Student Development Centre including the provision of note-takers, learning strategies assistance, assignment and exam accommodation, and sign-language interpreters. The Accessibility Services Office is located on the fourth floor of the Western Student Services Building, room 4111, visit the Accessibility Services website at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/> for more information. In addition, you can call (519) 661-2147.

### **LATE POLICY:**

Late papers or other work will be accepted with a penalty of 2% per day (weekends included), but will not be accepted after the last day of class without accommodation from an academic counselor. If, at any time, accommodation is required for any assignment worth more than 10% you must see your academic counselor promptly.

**Reading List,  
Phil 2801, Fall 2016**

	Topic	Article	Author
Sept. 12	Modernity & Political Theorizing	Course introduction <i>Political Theory in the Twentieth Century</i>	John Seery
Sept. 14	Modernity & Political Theorizing	Seery continued ... <i>The Question Concerning Technology</i> <a href="http://simondon.ocular-witness.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/question_concerning_technology.pdf">http://simondon.ocular-witness.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/question_concerning_technology.pdf</a>	Martin Heidegger
Sept. 21 & 26	Modernity & Political Theorizing	<i>Understanding and Politics</i>	Hannah Arendt
Oct. 3 & 5 Question due Oct. 1	Modern Social Contract Theory: Rawls	<i>John Rawls</i> , sections 2.3-3.6 <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls">plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls</a>  Topic: Political Legitimacy (Managing difference and maintaining political stability.)	Leif Wenar
Oct. 12 & 17	Modern Social Contract Theory: Rawls	<i>John Rawls</i> , sections 4-4.9 <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls">plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls</a>  Topic: Distributive Justice (The relationship between liberty and equality.)  Recommended: <i>Liberal Equality</i> , sections 1.b – 5.	Leif Wenar  Will Kymlicka
Oct. 19 & 24	Libertarian Critiques of Liberalism	<i>Libertarianism</i> , sections 1-2 & 4  Topic: Objections to Rawlsian Distributive Justice (Entitlement, self-ownership and the relation between liberty and equality.)	Will Kymlicka

Oct. 26 & 31	Anti- Oppression critiques of Rawlsian Liberalism	<i>Rawls on Race/Race in Rawls</i> <a href="http://havenscenter.wisc.edu/files/Mills-Rawls%20on%20Race.pdf">http://havenscenter.wisc.edu/files/Mills-Rawls%20on%20Race.pdf</a>  Topics: Ideal versus non-ideal theory. The social contract as a racial and patriarchal contract.	Charles Mills
Nov. 2 & 7  Question Answer due Nov. 5	Communitarian Critiques of Liberalism	<i>Individualism and the Claims of Community</i>  Topic: critiques of individualism and the value of community	Richard Dagger
Nov. 9 & 14	The Nature of Political Action	“The Activa Vita” from <i>Hannah Arendt: A Critical Introduction</i>  Topic: political action, human freedom, and plurality.	Finn Bowring
Nov. 16 & 21	Plurality, Difference, and Dialogue	<i>Politics and the Limits of Liberalism</i>  Topic: the Who and How of political deliberation in relation to difference.	Chantal Mouffe
Nov. 23 & 28	Plurality, Difference, and Dialogue	<i>Dealing with Difference: A Politics of Ideas or a Politics of Presence</i>  Topic: the Who and How of political deliberation in relation to difference.	Anne Phillips
Nov. 30 & Dec. 5  Essay due Dec. 3	Equality and Justice after Critique	<i>Beyond Equality: Gender, Justice, and Difference</i>  Topic: Justice as a process	Jane Flax

Dec. 7	Catch Up and Review	Class discussion	No reading.
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## **Appendix to Course Outlines**

### **Prerequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities.

In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* at:

<http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/StudentLifeandSupportServices/StudentDiscipline>

### **Technology**

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

### **Academic Accommodation for Medical/Non-Medical Grounds**

**Requests for Accommodation on Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising**

University Senate policy, which can be found at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf), requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform\\_15JUN.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform_15JUN.pdf). The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been informed of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the dean.

**Requests for Accommodation on Medical Grounds for assignments worth less than 10% of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly**

When seeking accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth less than 10% of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been informed of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the dean.

**Requests for Accommodation on Non-medical Grounds: Consult Instructor Directly**

Where the grounds for seeking accommodation are not medical, the student should contact the instructor directly. Apart from the exception noted below, academic advisors will not be involved in the process of accommodation for non-medical reasons.

Where a student seeks accommodation on non-medical grounds where confidentiality is a concern, the student should approach an academic advisor with any documentation available. The advisors will contact the instructor after the student’s request is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the challenge without breaching confidence. The student will be informed that the instructor has been informed that significant circumstances are affecting or have affected the student’s ability to complete work, and the student will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. Before denying a



request for accommodation where documentation has been submitted to an academic advisor, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor's decision is appealable to the dean.

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as "a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action." (CAI Fundamental Values Project, 1999).

A lack of academic integrity is indicated by such behaviours as the following:

- Cheating on tests;
- Fraudulent submissions online;
- Plagiarism in papers submitted (including failure to cite and piecing together unattributed sources);
- Unauthorized resubmission of course work to a different course;
- Helping someone else cheat;
- Unauthorized collaboration;
- Fabrication of results or sources;
- Purchasing work and representing it as one's own.

### **Academic Integrity: Importance and Impact**

Being at university means engaging with a variety of communities in the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and understanding in ways that are clear, respectful, efficient, and productive. University communities have established norms of academic integrity to ensure responsible, honest, and ethical behavior in the academic work of the university, which is best done when sources of ideas are properly and fully acknowledged and when responsibility for ideas is fully and accurately represented.

In the academic sphere, unacknowledged use of another's work or ideas is not only an offence against the community of scholars and an obstacle to academic productivity. It may also be understood as fraud and may constitute an infringement of legal copyright.

A university is a place for fulfilling one's potential and challenging oneself, and this means rising to challenges rather than finding ways around them. The achievements in an individual's university studies can only be fairly evaluated quantitatively through true and honest representation of the actual learning done by the student. Equity in assessment for all students is ensured through fair representation of the efforts by each.

Acting with integrity at university constitutes a good set of practices for maintaining integrity in later life. Offences against academic integrity are therefore taken very seriously as part of the university's work in preparing students to serve, lead, and innovate in the world at large.

A university degree is a significant investment of an individual's, and the public's, time, energies, and resources in the future, and habits of academic integrity protect that investment by preserving the university's reputation and ensuring public confidence in higher education.

**Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

### **Policy on Special Needs**

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at:

[http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting\\_acc](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc)

### **Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

### **Class Cancellations**

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website, <http://www.huronuc.ca/AccessibilityInfo> ("Class Cancellations").

### **Mental Health @ Western**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Academic Advising**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation [see above], students should contact an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services ([huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca)). An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at:

<http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices>

Department Chairs and Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about their individual programs. Their contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/Academics/FacultyofArtsandSocialScience>