



**Raphael: The School of Athens**

# **Introduction to Political Theory**

Political Science 2237E

Dr. Sara MacDonald

Fall Semester

Tuesday 1:30-2:30 and Thursday 12:30-2:30

## **POLS 2237E: Introduction to Political Theory**

**Dr. Sara MacDonald**

**Fall Semester**

Office Hours: By Appointment

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### **Course Description**

In *The Politics*, Aristotle describes human beings as political animals, for, unlike other animals, he believed that humans alone have the capacity to debate questions concerning the good and the just. All political actions and communities are grounded in an understanding of justice, even if it is unspoken or unrecognized. In this course, we will read some of the most important philosophic texts in the western world, seeking to discern the nature of the just, whether and how we might be free, and if there is any legitimate way that one person or group of people might claim to have power over us. We will have the luxury of spending our fall deep in the ancient world, reading, debating, and growing to love (or hate) arguments about human excellence as the foundation of justice. When winter turns its bleak face towards us, we will be immersed in the riot of philosophic thought that erupts after the enlightenment. Winter may seem absolute, but, as with these thinkers, we will know ourselves as free of arbitrary authority. Authors to be read will include, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Hannah Arendt, Toni Morrison, and Martha Nussbaum.

More simply-through an exploration of primary texts in political theory we will examine the central themes and issues in the history of political thought from ancient to modern times.

(Prerequisite: [Political Science 1020E](#).)

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Students learn to read and think critically about political ideas.
2. Students gain the ability to analyze ideas and situations, make considered decisions and form coherent, reasoned and fact-based judgements.
3. Students become familiar with a selection of the writings of the past's great political philosophers, and acquire an understanding of the key components of the western political tradition and the debt our present political arrangements owe to the ideas expounded by philosophers in the past.
4. Students learn how to be clear and concise writers.

5. This course will prepare students for all senior political theory courses.

### **Evaluation**

1 short writing assignments (2-3 pages) 10%

Podcast (10 minutes) 20%

2 Essays (6-8 pages each) 20 % each

Creative Project 20%

Participation 10%

### **Class Format**

This will be a discussion-based class focusing primarily on the assigned readings. You are required to complete the assigned reading before each class so that you can actively and helpfully participate.

### **Tentative Schedule of Classes**

(Please note that this schedule may change depending on the pace with which we move through the readings).

### Tentative Schedule of Classes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
Sept 9	Class Intro.	
Sept. 14	Antigone	
Sept. 16	Antigone	Short Writing Assignment
Sept. 21	Crito	
Sept. 23	Crito	
Sept. 24	Sanctuary Farm	Podcast 1
Sept. 30	Podcast 1/Alcibiades	
Oct. 7	Alcibiades	
Oct. 9	Alcibiades	
Oct. 12	Ethics	Essay 1
Oct. 14	Ethics	
Oct. 19	Ethics	Podcast 2
Oct. 21	Podcast 2/Ethics	
Oct. 26	Ethics	
Oct. 28	Ethics	
Oct. 29	Halluci Nation	Creative Assignment
Nov. 1-7	Break	
Nov. 9	Genesis	
Nov. 11	The Book of Job	
Nov. 16	Julian of Norwich	Podcast 3
Nov. 18	Podcast 3/Julian of Norwich	
Nov. 23	Julian of Norwich	
Nov. 25	Beloved	Essay 2
Nov. 30	Beloved	
Dec. 2	Beloved	Podcast 4
Dec. 7	Podcast 4/Beloved	

## Description of Assignments

### Short Writing Assignments

You will write 1 short essay style papers (2-3 page). These will be on an assigned topic and based on a reading we are doing in class. They will involve close reading and interpretation of the texts in question. You will not use any external sources to write this.

### Essays

You will write two 4-6 page formal essays based on a given prompt or set of prompts.

**Essay format.** A clear introductory paragraph stating the issue or question to be addressed, and the conclusion you reach. This is called a **thesis statement**. In the body of the essay you must clearly explain the author's position(s) with respect to the essay prompt, employing quotations where appropriate as evidence. An excellent essay will demonstrate that you have closely read and analysed the text and are able to clearly and logically lay out an argument. A brief concluding paragraph summarizing your interpretation, principal arguments, and conclusions.

- **Note.** Please consult Professor MacDonald if you require any further assistance with the research, formatting or organization of your essays.

**What makes a good essay?** A clearly stated thesis. A solid grasp of the theory/ideas under consideration. Appropriate use of quotations, illustrations, and arguments. Quotations should be integrated into sentences so that the whole sentence reads grammatically. A thoughtful analysis of the theory/ideas. The essay should be well structured with a smooth transition between points/paragraphs, and it should be well- written (properly structured sentences, with appropriate terminology, grammar and punctuation).

**Endnotes or Footnotes.** Footnotes/endnotes are needed for all quotations and for ideas that are borrowed or paraphrased from texts. The first footnote/endnote citation of a text must include the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to. Succeeding citations to the same text should be rendered in short form.

**Bibliography.** Essays must conclude with a bibliography of all sources used in the writing of the essay, including the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to.

**Page numbering.** The pages of the essay should be consecutively numbered.

**Italicize or underline the titles of books or pamphlets.** The titles of articles or chapters should not be italicized, but enclosed by quotation marks.

**Secondary sources.** No secondary sources are to be used.

### Podcast

In a group of 3-4 other students, you will prepare a podcast. In your podcast, you will examine a current environmental issue in relationship to one of the texts that we will read in the class. You can be creative with your podcast. For instance, you might have the author or one of their characters as a guest or a host of the podcast. You could do an investigative podcast, a business report, etc. The following tasks should be assigned to members of your group: Script writing, podcast hosts/guests, editing. Resources for creating podcasts can be found here: <https://www.huronresearch.ca/podcasting/>.

## **Creative Project**

### **Creative Assignment Rubric**

This is not an assignment meant to terrify or fail you, but to get you think about the things we've been talking about in a different way. As an assignment or skills builder, it's purpose is to get you to see how you can apply (and see) these philosophic concepts to any number of formats. In other words, just as these accounts of what it means to be human underlie much of what we do, they are also present in the creative world around us, including the works of popular culture that we are immersed in every day.

Also, it's important to exercise your imaginative powers. Just as much as thinking about important ideas requires critical reflection and analytical abilities, we also need to be able to imagine things differently or imagine solutions to real problems. So just as reading a difficult text develops your skills to read closely and analyze ideas, so you have to train your imagination to work in tandem with your reflective abilities.

If you are looking for ideas as to what you might create, I'm really open to anything, but here are some ideas of genres — poetry, songs, last semester a student put together a hip hop routine, a collage, drawings, a series of photographs, a video set to music, perhaps a collage of a fashion line that would exemplify the 2021 line based on Homer's Iliad, a video interview where you are both the interviewer and Dante.

You will also include a 3-5 page explanation of what you have created, showing me how this creative piece is a reflection or a response to the text in question.

Your project can be a criticism of the philosophic work you are portraying.

Here's how I will evaluate your projects:

30% Your concept — does it demonstrate a thorough understanding of the philosophic account or literary idea being used? Does the genre or the form of creative work work well with the content matter? For instance, does it make sense to write a pop song to assess the ideas in *Sufferance* (and if so why?) Is it well thought out in both design and content?

30% Creative Product - is it clearly related to the philosophy it is portraying? Is your interpretation of the philosophic work accurate/interesting? Is the finished product well-constructed (ie: is the poem proof read, is the video edited with care taken to sound, is the painting or drawing done with care (ie: not scribbled on the back of napkin unless this is part of the concept).

40% Your Explanation: in your explanation, please explain your concept, why you chose this particular genre of art, how your piece of artwork depicts the philosopher at hand and anything else you think I should know to be able to understand your work. This is where you can show me your philosophic chops in a more explicit way (ie: you might not have footnotes on your painting....) As always, this should be proofread, etc.

## **About Me**

I'm happy to meet with you to discuss any of the things we are doing in class. You can schedule an appointment either by speaking to me before or after class, or sending me an email. During the school week, I will try to return all emails within 24 hours.

## **COURSE GUIDELINES**

### **GRADING OF Written ASSIGNMENTS**

All written assignments will be graded on the basis of: (1) appropriate and adequate substantive content, analysing and explaining the text in relation to the question posed in the assignment. It is crucial that you do not summarize the text. Make sure you provide a detailed argument that is an explicit response to the essay prompt. (2) Writing style, including grammar and construction of a logical argument.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory, students who miss more than 3 unexcused sessions per term, will lose 2% of their final grade for each additional class.

### **PAPER SUBMISSION**

Essays/Assignments must be submitted to the OWL course site. Finished assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm on the day that they are due.

### **ESSAY DOCUMENTATION**

Students must use standard social science reference, footnoting and bibliographic form. **Whenever you use the words or the ideas of someone else, you must give a footnote, endnote or reference, or else you are committing an act of plagiarism** (see Plagiarism and Other Academic Offences below).

## CITING INTERNET SOURCES

**All information obtained through the Internet must be cited in footnotes and bibliographies.** Internet citations must include all of the same information that is provided when citing a book or article. This includes the name of the author, name of the organisation that has posted the website, the title, the date that the website was consulted, and the complete website address.

## GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ 90–100%
  - A 80–89%
  - B 70–79%
  - C 60–69%
  - D 50–59%
  - F below 50%
- **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 website:  
[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).”

Additionally,

A) If written work will be assigned in the course and plagiarism-checking software might be used, the following statement to this effect must be included in the course outline: “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 ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).”

B) If computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be given, and software might be used to check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating, the following statement must be added to course outlines: “ 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.”

**Plagiarism** is an academic offense and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair, or Dean's Office, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the Reference Desk in the Huron University College Library and at [www.huronuc.on.ca](http://www.huronuc.on.ca). In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the Huron University College Library. Information about these resources can be found at <https://huronuc.libguides.com/citingsources>.



## **Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2021 - 2022**

### **Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll 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.

### **Pandemic Contingency**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, typically using a combination of synchronous instruction (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) and asynchronous material (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor. In the unlikely event that changes to the grading scheme are necessary, these changes will be clearly communicated as soon as possible.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University 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. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

### **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.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/attendance.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf).

### **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 website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf). The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf).

### **Turnitin.com**

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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and 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.

### **Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)**

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.

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf) are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation

(for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

### **Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence**

#### **(a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising**

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, 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. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). 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 notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

#### **(b) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email [huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca).**

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at [huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca) for any further questions or information.

### **Support Services**

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

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website,

<https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

### **Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western**

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance.

Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: [huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca)

Community Safety Office: [safety@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:safety@huron.uwo.ca)

Chaplaincy: [gthorne@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:gthorne@huron.uwo.ca)

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through,

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.