



# PHIL\*2280 Key Concepts in Political Philosophy

Fall 2023

Section(s): 01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - September 01, 2023

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

This course presents an in-depth treatment of one or more key concepts in political philosophy. Among the many possible concepts that the course may address are those of freedom, equality, power, community, identity, autonomy, justice, rights, political obligation, representation, authority, legitimacy, exploitation, emancipation, and development. These concepts may be explored historically or through contemporary political and/or philosophical debates.

**Pre-Requisites:** 0.50 credits in either Philosophy or Political Science

**Restrictions:** POLS\*2000

### 1.2 Course Description

This course introduces students to some of the key ideas in political theory. What is the basis for political legitimacy and authority? What is the origin of justice? Is it an instrumental or intrinsic virtue? Are all humans free and equal by nature? What is the best form of government? Etc. We shall examine the views that some of the key figures in political thought have on these questions. We shall discuss concepts such as justice, democracy, liberty, equality etc. We shall also examine some of the major contemporary trends in political thought.

### 1.3 Timetable

M/W/F, 11:30AM - 12:20PM.

Please consult WebAdvisor for location details

Please consult WebAdvisor for your tutorial assignment.

### 1.4 Final Exam

December 14th @ 11:30AM

Please consult WebAdvisor for location details

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

**Instructor:** Please See WebAdvisor for this information.  
**Email:**  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**

### 2.2 Teaching Assistants

John Klasios  
jklasios@uoguelph.ca  
**Teaching Assistant (GTA):** John Klasios will hold office hours after each assignment. The dates and times will be posted on  
**Email:** CourseLink.  
**Office Hours:**

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resources

Swift, Adam (2019). *Political Philosophy*. Wiley (Polity)., New York (2019). ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-3335-0 (pb) (Textbook)  
Available for purchase in campus bookstore.

### 3.2 Recommended Resources

"Origins of the State", *World Development Report 2017 (Article)*  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27043>  
Available online

Miller, David, "Justice", (Readings)  
The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2017). Available online

Lister, Andrew, "The Mirage of Social Justice" (Article)  
[https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/inline-files/SJ017\\_Lister\\_MirageofSocialJustice.pdf](https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/inline-files/SJ017_Lister_MirageofSocialJustice.pdf)  
Article is available online,

**Capitalism Will Eat Democracy: (Other)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GB4s5b9NL3I>

YouTube Video

**Bell, Daniel, "Communitarianism", (Article)**

*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition). Available online.

**Carter, Ian, "Positive and Negative Liberty", (Article)**

*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition). Available online

**Karst, Kenneth L., "Why Equality Matters" (Article)**

[https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/lectures\\_pre\\_arch\\_lectures\\_sibley/48](https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/lectures_pre_arch_lectures_sibley/48)

Available online. See URL.

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a clear grasp of the fundamental concepts, principles, and theoretical debates in political philosophy, including perspectives on the nature of political judgments and different frameworks for making political decisions.
  2. *Identify and critically evaluate* the practical significance of central issues in political philosophy and theory.
  3. Apply the concepts and principles in political theory to contemporary political discourse.
  4. Critically evaluate any viewpoint, argument or theory in political philosophy.
  5. Clearly articulate their own stand on any political issue and construct a sound/cogent argument in its defence.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

See the Schedule of Classes and Readings on the Content page of CourseLink.

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## 6 Assessments

Your final grade will be based on three assignments and a final exam:

1. Weekly reading summaries
2. Three Discussion questions
3. One essay

## 6.1 Assessment Details

### Weekly Reading Summaries (20%)

**Date:** Weekly

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3, 4

Each week, each student is required to submit a 200-word summary of the week's required reading. We read several political thinkers each week and students are required to compare and contrast the views of certain pairs or multiples of them. Students will be evaluated based on the effectiveness of their analyses and their demonstrated grasp of the content. Each student is required to submit 10 of these summaries for 20% of the total marks in the course.

### Discussion Question (15%)

**Date:** Due in weeks 3, 6 and 9

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3, 4

This is aimed at assessing students' grasp of the political views, theories and principles discussed in the course and also, students' ability to apply those theories and principles to practical situations. In this assessment, students are required to post an opinion on some political issue or problem I shall post. Students will be assessed based on the quality of their contributions to the discussion. There will be 3 discussion posts in the course, and each is worth 5 marks.

### Essay (25%)

**Date:** Sun, Nov 12, 12:00 AM

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 3, 4, 5

This essay will be on a topic chosen from a list I shall put up. It should be about 1400 words in length. The criteria for evaluation will be clarity of thought and expression, persuasiveness of arguments, the demonstration of clear understanding of the issues and application of the relevant theoretical viewpoints in the analysis.

### Final Exam (40%)

**Learning Outcome:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Details of the final exam will be supplied when it becomes available on WebAdvisor.

## 7 Course Statements

### 7.1 Late essays, late penalties, & assignment expectations: Essay

Late penalties on the essay are 5% per day, to a maximum of 20%. Saturday and Sunday

count 5% each.

## 7.2 Turnitin

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing academic misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.

## 7.3 Generative AI

Submitted work may not include AI generated content other than sources that are cited and appropriately credited. Any unapproved use of AI in a submitted assignment will attract academic misconduct penalties.

# 8 University Statements

## 8.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

## 8.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### 8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### 8.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### 8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website

<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 8.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## 8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## 8.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

## 8.9 Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g.. final exam or major assignment).

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