



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME

POLS 401: Some Aspects of Modern Social and Political Thought:

Power, Freedom and Justice

30 POINTS

TRIMESTERS 1 and 2 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 29 February to 13 November 2016

Teaching dates: 29 February to 16 October 2016

Easter break: 24–30 March 2016

Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016

Mid-year break: 30 June to 8 July 2016

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 22 August to 4 September 2016

Study period: 17–20 October 2016

Examination/Assessment Period: 21 October to 12 November 2016

Note: students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

Weekly seminar meeting Monday 10:00 - 11:50 Cotton CO119

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Xavier Marquez

Room No: MY541

Phone: 463-5889

Email: Xavier.marquez@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: Come over or make an appointment. My door is usually open whenever I'm not teaching or in meetings.

Course website: On Blackboard. I often write on matters related to the course at <http://abandonedfootnotes.blogspot.com>.

Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and tutorial programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

Prescription

This course explores contemporary attempts to deal with the interrelated questions of power, freedom, and justice in modern society. Topics include the nature of power in general and the forms power takes in modern states; the nature of freedom and its forms, as well as their relation to the forms of power; and the possibility of a just social order under modern conditions. We will approach these themes through careful readings of theoretical and philosophical works by Weber, Berlin, Arendt, Foucault, Habermas, Rawls, and others.

Course content

The course is divided into three main sections, roughly concerned with the topics of Power, Freedom, and Justice. The exact mixture of readings can change during the year in response to student demand.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. articulate and critically evaluate various theories of power, freedom, and justice in contemporary political thought
2. trace the connections between these theories
3. recognise the basic controversies within the contemporary literature on these topics
4. apply some of these theories to the understanding of concrete cases and situations in contemporary politics.

Teaching format

This course is taught by means of a weekly seminar and an online component (on the course website on Blackboard).

The weekly seminar meetings provide opportunities to discuss the assigned readings in a critical and constructive manner. The lecturer will also use the seminar meetings to give some background information and to explain difficult points. Occasionally, the seminar meetings will be used for workshops on research skills.

The online component of the course consists of weekly participation in the discussion board. Participation in the discussion board ensures that the student will be generally engaged with the material covered in class, able to participate in class discussions, and prepared for the research paper due at the end of Trimester 2.

This course is externally assessed. There is a final three hour examination.

Workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 300 hours to the course throughout the trimester, approximately 13 hours a week across the trimester. This total includes the following:

- weekly attendance at seminars (48 hours)

- completion of all set weekly readings for seminars (62 hours)
- research and writing for assessment tasks. (190 hours)

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Research essay (5000-6000 words), due in several stages, with a final draft due at the end of trimester 2	45%	1, 2, 3, 4	Several deadlines. Final deadline Friday 14 October 2016, 4pm.
2	Weekly contributions to the discussion board	25%	1-2, 4	Weekly
3	3hr Final Examination	30%	1, 2, 3, 4	During Exam Period

Details of Assessment and Marking Criteria

This is an honours seminar. Participation in discussion is expected. Though there is no explicit grade for in-class participation, your final grade may be ultimately adjusted upwards for valuable and constructive contributions to seminar discussions.

Research essay

The research essay is an in-depth exploration of some topic related to the course, of about 5000-6000 words. We take research seriously: the essay should not be simply a summary of an existing literature, but a reasonable attempt to answer an interesting question. A truly excellent essay should be of sufficient quality to be presented at a professional conference or published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Since this is primarily a political theory course, your research essay should make a theoretical argument focused on one or more of the thinkers discussed in the course. A number of “patterns” are possible for such an essay:

- Apologetic essays. For example, your essay may first discuss the views of thinker A on some question (e.g., the nature of social justice), discuss some objections raised by B and C, and then defend A against B and C.
- Critical essays. Or your essay may discuss the views of A on some question and then raise some objections that you think are fatal to A’s views, drawn from any number of sources: the writings of B and C, your own arguments, the evidence of some particular country or situation, etc. You will also need to consider possible responses or amendments by A of his/her views and reasons why those responses fail.
- Combination essays. You may discuss the views of A on some question, show that they are insufficient for some purpose, and argue that the views of B complement those of A.
- Historical essays. You may want to trace the ancestry of some view of A, or the connections between the views of A and those of B and C.
- Interpretive-reconstructive essays. Or you may offer an interpretation of some especially puzzling work of A, explaining how the views of A in that work cohere with his/her views on other works, and why your interpretation solves some outstanding puzzles about A’s thought raised by B and C, or how it saves A from some important objection raised by D.
- Application essays, a.k.a. “What would A say?” essays. You may discuss what A might say about some institution or situation. E.g., would Nozick say that the Treaty of Waitangi represents a just settlement with the Maori? (How would he criticize it? What alternatives might he support as a just settlement?). This pattern is especially useful in bringing to bear

A's views to critique some particular institution or situation, but you may also wish to support the institution or situation by appealing to the views of A.

- A variant of this is the critical application essay: you may first discuss what A might say about X (e.g., appropriate responses to the disadvantages experienced by Maori in New Zealand society) and then criticize the shortcomings of A's views. This is especially useful when the views of A seem to offer some support or justification for the institution or situation in question.

There are other patterns, but any essay you write will be centred on an exposition of the views of one or more of the thinkers discussed in the course (or other thinkers, should you wish to explore further afield) and will develop a theoretical argument about those views. You should meet with me to discuss potential topics ahead of time.

A research essay is a complex project that requires consistent work over an extended period of time. It is not possible to write a good research essay at the last minute. Therefore, you will submit the essay in several stages, as follows:

1. A research proposal (1-2 pages), describing the question to be explored and the basic thesis to be argued. This will form the nucleus of the introduction to the paper. It is due on Friday 27 May via Blackboard and posted to the Blackboard discussion board for comments from the class before midnight. Your research proposal may change after this date; you are not locked into it, and you are encouraged to discuss it with me before this date.
2. Along with a revised research proposal, turned into an introduction, you will next submit a section that contains an exposition of the views of A (or A, B, and C) that you plan to defend, criticize, and/or apply to some situation. (E.g., this section may contain a discussion of the views of Rawls and Walzer on the justification of economic inequality). This second draft (background plus revised research proposal turned into the introduction to the essay) will be due on Friday 15 July via Blackboard before midnight.
3. The contents of the third draft will depend on the pattern of your paper (see above): it may contain, along with a revised introduction and the section containing the views of A (or B and C), also critiques of these views, or a description of the case to which they apply. This need not be very complete, but a draft of this will be due on Friday 9 September (after the second mid-trimester break) via Blackboard before midnight.
4. A final draft of the entire essay, with your entire argument, revised and reorganized as needed, will be due via Blackboard AND in hard copy by 4 pm Friday 14 October.

The instructor will provide extensive written feedback at every stage of this process.

You are also encouraged to read each other's drafts at any stage, and provide constructive feedback, though of course all written work should in the final instance be yours alone. In particular, you are encouraged to use the Blackboard discussion board as a place to post responses to other people's proposals or to particular inquiries later in the course.

Discussion Board contributions

Studies show that the best ways to learn are active, participatory and social, rather than passive and purely individual. Studies also show that the best way to learn course material and participate effectively in class discussions is to remain engaged with such material over the course of the trimester. In order to further these objectives, you will be required to contribute to the course discussion board (on Blackboard) each week before the seminar meeting on Mondays.

Your contributions will be assessed on a weekly basis, according to the following scheme:

- 0 points. No contribution
- 1 point. Minimal contribution. A minimal contribution does not show evidence of having done the reading, has many grammatical or other problems that make it difficult to read, or fails to make a sufficiently meaningful point.
- 2 points. Regular contributions. A regular contribution shows some evidence of having done the reading (or at least engaging with parts of it), is clear enough to read, and makes a clear point or raises a clear question. A regular contribution need not always be an argument: you may also raise a question to which you do not know the answer, or respond to other people's ideas and arguments
- 3 points. Exceptional contributions. An exceptional contribution shows an exceptional grasp of the reading, significant research, or original and powerful arguments. Exceptional contributions may also occur in the comments to other people's ideas.

You need to accumulate 50 points over the course of the year to obtain your full 25% mark for this assessment component, starting in the second week of the trimester (7 March). On average, therefore, you need to be accumulating a bit more than 2 points per week (there are 23 weeks in the course, not counting breaks or study periods) if you want to obtain the full 50 points, though you may miss a week occasionally, and you are credited for all contributions you make (regardless of whether you achieve the full 50 points).

The last day for contributions to the discussion board is Monday 10 October.

Final examination

The final examination is cumulative, integrative, and closed book, and will last 3 hours. It will be scheduled during the examination period 21 October to 12 November 2016. The students will answer 3 out of a number of essay questions. Potential questions will be circulated in advance and discussed in class.

Submission and return of work

All work for this course is to be submitted electronically to Blackboard (except for the final draft of the research essay, which must be submitted **BOTH** electronically and on paper). If you are unsure about whether an electronic copy of your work has been received, e-mail the instructor for confirmation. **IT IS ALSO YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT ALL FILES SUBMITTED TO BLACKBOARD ARE READABLE**; if a file cannot be opened, it will be counted as "not submitted" and late penalties may be applied until a readable version of the assignment is submitted. If you are in doubt about readable file formats, submit your work as a Word or PDF file.

Comments and other feedback will be available via Blackboard as soon as possible after specific pieces of assessment are due. Note that we reserve the right to check any assessable work via Turnitin.com (see www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Late submission of **assignments** will **not be accepted** unless the student makes an appointment as soon as practically possible with the course coordinator to explain the lateness (preferably before the assignment is due to be submitted). The circumstances under which an extension will be considered are outlined in section 3.2.1 of the Assessment Handbook.

(See: www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf).

Penalties

Students will be penalised for late submission of assignments – **a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days**. Penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary. Extensions on deadlines for written work will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.

Though only the final draft will receive a grade, failure to turn in any of the intermediate stages on time (or to present the proposal to the class) will result in the deduction of at least 5% of the final grade. For example, if you fail to submit the research proposal on the due date, you may lose 5% of the 45% that the research essay is worth (2.25 points of your total grade) the first day, plus 2% of the 45% that the research essay is worth for every additional day up to 8 days; so that you may lose up to 19% of the 45% of the research essay for every missed section of the essay (or about 8.55 points of your total grade).

Set texts

The exact mixture of readings will be determined in consultation with the students at the beginning of the term (see separate document with seminar topics and readings for an initial list). Some of the following books will nevertheless be available for purchase in Vicbooks, since it is likely that we will read two or more of them; you can also order them from other suppliers:

- Foucault, Michel. 1995 [1975]. *Discipline and Punish*. Translated by A. Sheridan. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*: Palgrave Macmillan. (2nd Revised Edition).
- Rawls, John. 1971 (Revised edition 1990). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Walzer, Michael. 1983. *Spheres of Justice: a Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Scott, James C. 2010. *The Art of Not being Governed: An Anarchist History of Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2011. *Democracy and the Limits of Self-Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nozick, Robert. 1974. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schmidtz, David. *Elements of Justice*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

All of these books will also be available on 3 day reserve in the library.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first meeting of the course.

Student feedback

Student feedback for this course has been extremely positive. In response to student comments, some changes to the reading list have been made. Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz