

The College of the Humanities Humanities Program

HUMS4000: Politics, Modernity and the Common Good

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Lectures: Mondays and Thursdays; 14:35-15:55 (Paterson 303)

Tutorials: G-1. Thursdays 16:05-17:25; G-2 Mondays 13:05-14:25 (Paterson 302)

Description

The Bachelor of Humanities program focuses on the human condition and the civic virtues. Year one approached humanity as *homo dei*, year two centered on human reason, and year three considered humanity in its aesthetic dimensions. The fourth-year core seminar explores how, beginning with the French Revolution, the most radical forces of modernity set out to emancipate humanity from all forms of traditional authority. How did this project unfold and what efforts were made either to restrain or intensify it? Although new and radical, these ideas emerged from a debate stretching all the way back to ancient Greece. The fourth-year core seminar, therefore, brings the whole adventure of the Bachelor of Humanities curriculum to a conclusion and returns the conversation to the world of the 21st century.

The theme for the first term is the emergence of modernity and its significance for political theory and the common good. The term “modern” came into use during the Renaissance. It was a contraction of the Latin phrase *modus hodiernus*, meaning “the way of today.” To identify oneself with the way of today meant that one repudiated the way of yesterday, meaning the way of classical political philosophy and medieval Christianity. Therefore, in order to understand the meaning of the modern, we must see it in the context of the tradition that it was defining itself *against*. To do this, we will return to some territory covered in previous core courses, but from the perspective of political theory and practice. We begin with the classical natural right teaching of Plato and Aristotle, tracing its adaptation by Christianity. With the Renaissance, we arrive at the threshold of modernity and its secular and religious streams, as represented by Machiavelli and the Reformation. That leads to the full-blown teaching of modern natural right systematized by Hobbes and Locke, drawing on the new physics of matter in motion — the theoretical origins of modern liberal democracy. We conclude with the great protest against liberal modernity inaugurated by Rousseau and elaborated by the German historical school as represented by Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. The early modern social contract theories of Hobbes and Locke had taken issue with the classical tradition by stressing the importance of the individual as opposed to the political community; by stressing the importance of freedom as opposed to virtue; and by stressing the importance of material self-interest as opposed to the sacrifice of one’s self-interest

on behalf of the common good. The historical school attempted to restore the priorities of classical political thought, once again elevating the common good over individual self-interest. But it did so, not on the basis of an appeal to a Platonic and Aristotelian cosmology of the eternal truth — thought to have been disproven by modern natural science — but on the basis of historical progress and the attempt to synthesize ancient virtue with modern liberty. Ending with Nietzsche, we reach the verge of contemporary existentialism and post-modernism.

In the second term, we continue with the presupposition that underlined the first semester, namely that a gigantic paradigm shift happened in human consciences as well as its consciousness. However, while the first term took the conversation through a philosophical debate as to the nature of these new ideas, this part of the course will look at the unfolding of those ideas in the real world as the civilization of modernity. The “common good,” however defined, requires a robust civilizational framework to help its materialization. The Athenian civilization proved the breeding ground for the ideas, notions, and concepts that form the foundation of the modern West. The new ideas, concepts and notions have led to the emergence of a civilization with autonomy, independent, and freedom as qualities for agency, the *modus operandi*, and the social structures, that not only have led to the emergence of the self as agent/actor, but also to the societal form of the sovereign state, and the anarchical society of states, and the global capitalist system. What are the nuances of this transformation? What did it entail? The First half of the term concentrates on the unfolding of modernity process into a civilization through the works of the giants of our time.

We begin the term with the classic work of the American/German philosopher, Hannah Arendt, on the human condition. Even though she has been described as one of “Heidegger’s children,” she has gone beyond the German tradition and provides a giant revival of the Aristotelian question of what does it mean to be human but within the context of the modern condition. Then through examining the works of our own Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, we explore the *modus operandi* of the modern civilization. For Taylor the modern condition of secularity means a great dis-embedding from the brink of tradition, where the self is left on his/her own reason and how this idea has led to the emergence of an all-pervasive order. We shall continue with the works of the International Relation Theorist, Hedley Bull, who provides an insightful portrait of the spatial structures and organizations (or the international system) that shapes the public square in the modern civilization. In the second part of the course, we turn to thinkers who are harsher about the modern civilization than the aforementioned thinkers are. They argue that in practice, power politics and money, not freedom, and autonomy dominate the public domain in the unfolding of the industrial European and American worlds and more so, it extended to the non-Western world as well. We deal with the literary, philosophical, religious, and post-modern treatments of the modernity-based civilization. Here, we begin with Salman Rushdie and continue with Edward Said and Gandhi, ending with Michael Foucault. These thinkers invite us to a radical reconsideration of the present condition of globalized and yet fragmented world. They provide insightful meditation on our present epistemology, the nature of our relation with the world and the divine and may help us comprehend the prevalence of the various forms of extremism, politics of identity, terrorism and 21st century tribalism.

Course Requirements (for each term): The final grade of this course would be the combined grades of the followings for both terms;

Following the lectures and participation* (30%)

A paper** (40%)

Take-home exam*** (30%)

* Attendance of lectures and discussion groups is obligatory, not optional. Grade is based on regular class and discussion attendance, and participation through asking questions and offering comments. Students may be asked to make presentations in the discussion groups, on an equally rotating basis, on the readings for that week. **NB: Please DO NOT switch discussion groups without a valid excuse. The only valid excuse is a conflict with another regularly scheduled Carleton University course — i.e., not a directed studies tutorial or any form of extra-curricular activity. It is essential that we keep the two groups with as equal numbers as possible to schedule the presentations evenly across the groups and to distribute the opportunity to contribute to the discussion evenly across the groups. If you do have a valid excuse due to a course conflict, please inform Prof. Newell for the Fall and Prof. Rajae for the Winter as soon as possible.**

** 12 pages double-spaced typed. To be submitted **Friday December 11** in the Fall and **Friday April 9** in the winter term. Topics will be provided, but students are encouraged to think of the topic they like to pursue. Due to expected continuing restrictions on access to campus because of COVID-19, E-submissions will be acceptable. Late papers will be fined by a fraction of a grade (i.e., A to A-) for each day.

***In accordance with University regulations, the take-home exam will be released at the last lecture class. It will be due on the last day of the exam period (December 23rd for the fall and April 23rd for the Winter) by 12 noon. The questions will cover the entire semester of readings and themes, with some degree of choice. E-submissions will be acceptable.

Delivery of the course. As you are aware due to COVID-19, the Fall term is online (and we think that the winter term also will be online, although we hope that it would not be). So, there is a change in the delivery of the course material. Our course will be a blend of asynchronous and synchronous. The lectures will be asynchronous, delivered by podcast and will be available through CULearn for you shortly before the assigned date and will remain there afterward. The discussion groups will be synchronous, and we will conduct them as though we are in person, the means of which will be conveyed to you before the Fall term begins through email. The way we hold office hours will be conveyed to you later.

Fall Term Texts:

Plato. *The Republic*. Hackett.
Aristotle. *Politics*. Hackett.
Niccolo Machiavelli. *The Discourses*. Hackett.
Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Oxford.
John Locke. *Second Treatise of Government*. Dover.
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*. Hackett.
Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. Hackett.
Immanuel Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Yale.
Friedrich Schiller. *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. (see NB).
G.W.F. Hegel. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Prometheus.
G.W.F. Hegel. *The Preface and Introduction to The Phenomenology of Spirit*.
Macmillan.
Karl Marx. *On the Jewish Question*. Hackett.
Karl Marx. *The Communist Manifesto*. Hackett.
Friedrich Nietzsche. *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*.
Hackett.
Friedrich Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Dover.

NB: ALL OF THESE TEXTS ARE ON ORDER AT THE BOOK-STORE. BUT ALL OF THEM ARE AVAILABLE AS A PDF ON LINE, IF YOU PREFER THAT OPTION. I WILL PROVIDE THE SCHILLER READING.

Approximate Schedule of Readings for the Fall Semester:

Lecture 1 (Sept. 10). Introductory Remarks. Ancients versus Moderns. Basic Themes in the Emergence of Modern Political Theory and its Contrast with Platonic and Aristotelian Political Thought.

Lecture 2 (Sept. 14). Physis versus Nomos. The emergence of Greek political philosophy against the backdrop of the moral and political crisis of the 5th century B.C.

Lecture 3 (Sept. 17). Plato. *Republic*. Books 1-3.

Lecture 4 (Sept. 21). Plato. *Republic*. Books 4-7.

Lecture 5 (Sept. 24). Plato. *Republic*. Books 8-10.

Lecture 6 (Sept. 28). Aristotle. *Politics*. Book 1-2.

Lecture 7 (Oct. 1). Aristotle. *Politics*. Books 3-5.

Lecture 8 (Oct. 5). The Reception of Classical Political Philosophy by Christianity.

Lecture 9 (Oct. 8). Machiavelli. *The Discourses*. Book 1.

OCTOBER 12: CLASSES SUSPENDED

Lecture 10 (Oct. 15). Machiavelli continued.

Lecture 11 (Oct. 19). The Renaissance and Reformation: Two Paths to Political Modernity.

Lecture 12 (Oct. 22). Hobbes. *Leviathan*.

OCTOBER 26 TO OCTOBER 30: FALL BREAK

Lecture 13 (Nov. 2). Hobbes continued.

Lecture 14 (Nov. 5). Locke. *Second Treatise of Government*.

Lecture 15 (Nov. 9). Locke continued.

Lecture 16 (Nov. 12). Rousseau. *First Discourse*.

Lecture 17 (Nov. 16). Rousseau. *Second Discourse*.

Lecture 18 (Nov. 19). Kant. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Parts 1-2. Schiller. *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. To be provided.

Lecture 19 (Nov. 23). G.W.F. Hegel. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*.

Lecture 20 (Nov. 26). G.W.F. Hegel. *The Preface and Introduction to The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Lecture 21 (Nov. 30). Marx. *On the Jewish Question; The Communist Manifesto*.

Lecture 22 (Dec. 3). Nietzsche. *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*.

Lecture 23 (Dec. 7). Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Lecture 24 (Dec. 10). Concluding remarks. Release of Take-Home Exam.

Winter Term Texts:

Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*
Hedley Bull. *The Anarchical Society*
Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*
M. K. Gandhi. *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*
Salman Rushdie. *Midnight's Children: a Novel*
Edward Said. *Orientalism*
Charles Taylor. *Modern Social Imaginaries*

A NUMBER OF THESE TEXTS ARE NOW IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND AVAILABLE FREE ONLINE, IF YOU WISH TO PURSUE THIS OPTION.

Approximate Schedule of Themes and Readings for the Winter Semester:

Civilization

Lecture 1 (Jan. 7): Introductory Remarks; Non-holistic worldview and its Civilization

The Civilization of Modernity

Lecture 2 (Jan. 11): Being Human (Arendt, 1-78)

Lecture 3 (Jan. 14): Labour and Work (Arendt, 79-174)

Lecture 4 (Jan. 18): Action (Arendt, 175-247)

Lecture 5 (Jan. 21): Modern Age, and the Good (Arendt, pp. 248-325)

Lecture 6 (Jan. 25): Modern order and “Self-Understanding” (Taylor, 1-67)

Lecture 7 (Jan. 28): “Social Self-Understanding” I (Taylor, 69-107)

Lecture 8 (Feb. 1): “Social Self-Understanding” II (Taylor, 109-161)

Lecture 9 (Feb. 4): Consequence; Secularity (Taylor, 163-196)

Lecture 10 (Feb. 8): Anarchical Society (Bull, 3-50)

Lecture 11 (Feb. 11): Ends of AS: Order and Justice (Bull, 51-94)

February 15–19 Winter Break

Lecture 12 (Feb. 22): Means in AS-I (Bull, 97-155)

Lecture 13 (Feb. 25): Means of AS-II (Bull, 159-222)

II: Critics of the Civilization of Modernity

Lecture 14 (Mar. 1): The World of Optimism Disease (Rushdie, 1-288)

- Lecture 15 (Mar. 4): The Fractured Modern Soul (Rushdie, 289-533)
- Lecture 16 (Mar. 8): Swaraj as the Human Condition (Gandhi, 5-41)
- Lecture 17 (Mar. 11): The Reality of India (Gandhi, 42-65)
- Lecture 18 (Mar. 15): True Civilisation (Gandhi, 66-119)
- Lecture 19 (Mar. 18): Said and Orientalism (Film)
- Lecture 20 (Mar. 22): Anatomy of "Orientalism" (Said, 1-28, 31-110, and 284-328)
- Lecture 21 (Mar. 25): The New Phase of Orientalism (Said, 329-352)
- Lecture 22 (Mar. 29): Constructed Worlds (Foucault, 3-31)
- Lecture 23 (Apr. 1): The Working of the System (Foucault, 135-169)
- Lecture 24 (Apr. 5): Maintaining the System, Surveillance (Foucault, 195-228)
- Lecture 25 (Apr. 8): Summation and Take Home Exam



Humanities

University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

Academic Dates and Deadlines

This schedule contains the dates prescribed by the University Senate for academic activities. Dates relating to fee payment, cancellation of course selections, late charges, and other fees or charges will be published in the Important Dates and Deadlines section of the Registration Website.

Copies of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course

[Academic Integrity Policy](#)

[Academic Integrity Process](#)

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.

Parental Leave: The Student Parental Leave Policy is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of a pregnancy, birth or adoption and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a child or for health-related parental responsibilities.

Religious obligation: Carleton University accommodates students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities is available through the [Paul Menton Centre](#) by evaluations that are carried out on an individual basis, in accordance with human rights legislation and University policy, and with the support of relevant, professional/medical documentation.

Survivors of Sexual Violence

Individuals who disclose that they have experienced sexual violence will be provided support services and will be treated with dignity and respect at all times by the University and its representatives. A person affected by sexual violence is not required to report an incident of or make a complaint about sexual violence under the formal complaint process of the Sexual Violence Policy in order to obtain support and services, or in order to receive appropriate accommodation for their needs.

[Supports and services available at the University to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support.](#)

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. [More information.](#)

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean."

The [system of grades](#) used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion, is listed below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value.

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

[More information](#)

Student Rights and Responsibilities at Carleton

Carleton University strives to provide a safe environment conducive to personal and intellectual growth, free of injustice and characterized by understanding respect, peace, trust, and fairness.

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) governs the non-academic behaviour of students. Carleton University is committed to building a campus that promotes personal growth through the establishment and promotion of transparent and fair academic and non-academic responsibilities.

[7 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

1. Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due. The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. In all cases, formative evaluations providing feedback to the student should be replaced with formative evaluations. In the event the altered due date must extend beyond the last day of classes in the term, the instructor will assign a grade of zero for the work not submitted and submit the student's earned grade accordingly; the instructor may submit a change of grade at a later date. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

2. In cases where a student is not able to complete term work due to illness or injury for a significant period of time/or long term, the instructor and/or student may elect to consult with the Registrar's Office (undergraduate courses) or Graduate Registrar (graduate courses) to determine appropriate action.

[More information of deferred Term Work](#)

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made.

The application for a deferral must:

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [here](#).

[More information on Final Exam Deferrals](#)

[Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal](#)

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#). Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. You can do this via the [MyCarleton Portal](#). A fee adjustment is dependent on registration being canceled within the published [fee deadlines](#) and dependent on your course load.

Department Contact Information

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CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

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