



**PHIL 3330 A  
Topics in History of Social and Political Philosophy  
Winter 2025**

**Instructor:** Gloria K. Sánchez-Cuevas, MA, MBA & Ph.D. (Candidate) Ethics & Public Affairs

**Email:** gloria.sanchez@carleton.ca

**Office:** N/A

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Class Meeting:** Thursday 18:05 -20:55

**Course Calendar Description:**

A critical examination of selected topics and perspectives in the history of social and political philosophy.

Precludes additional credit for PHIL 3300.

Prerequisite(s): a course in philosophy or second-year standing.

**Course Description:**

This course critically examines the concept of public reason and its potential to foster political agreement amidst significant social and political polarization. Beginning with foundational ideas from philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, students will trace the historical development of public reason and its influence on modern and contemporary political philosophy. The course emphasizes both the historical evolution and the contemporary relevance of public reason, exploring its role in promoting mutual understanding, resolving conflicts, and upholding democratic values in diverse and divided societies. By integrating historical analysis with practical application, students will develop the tools to critically evaluate the challenges and opportunities that public reason offers in addressing pressing societal issues.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

- Analyze the historical and philosophical foundations of public reason and its evolution over time.
- Critically evaluate the practical implications of public reason for contemporary political discourse and decision-making.
- Identify and assess the key challenges, objections, and limitations associated with the concept of public reason.
- Apply the principles of public reason to real-world cases of political conflict and polarization.

**Required Materials:**

Readings: All required and supplemental readings will be posted on Brightspace. Students are not required to purchase textbooks for this course.

**Final Exam Date:** There will be no final examination in this course. Instead, an oral examination will take place during class time on March 27 and April 3. The scope of the examination will encompass the topics of the latter half of the course.

**Drop Course Policy:** The final day for withdrawal from Winter semester courses is March 15.

### Communication with Instructor:

I am available to meet with you in person or online for office hours. However, I do not have a fixed schedule for these meetings. If you need to ask me anything or want to book a consultation, please send me an email. I will try to get back to you within 24-48 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. Please be aware that I usually use Brightspace to make class announcements, so make sure that you regularly check your Carleton email or the Brightspace portal to keep up with any updates. The office hours are intended to help you understand concepts and answer any questions that cannot be answered easily by consulting the course outline or by sending an email. Please do not use your personal email; only use your Carleton email account.

### Grading Scheme:

Your final grade for the course will be calculated based on the percentage score assigned to each component. Once a grade has been assigned, you can review the rubric and/or personalized feedback. The sum of the percentage scores for each component will be your final course grade as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Philosophical Position Papers (2)	<b>30%</b>
Group presentation	<b>15%</b>
▪ Presentation 10%	
▪ Q&A 5%	
Class-participation	<b>25%</b>
Mid-term	<b>15%</b>
Oral exam	<b>15%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Philosophical Position Papers (30%)

Students will submit two position papers, each 500–800 words, critically analyzing a key idea or reading from the course. Each paper will respond to a specific prompt or question provided by the instructor, with prompts released at the end of class. Students are free to select any prompts they wish to write about. Papers are due one week after the corresponding prompt is released.

The position papers should critique or support a philosopher's argument while connecting the week's readings to a contemporary political or social issue. The goal is to demonstrate how principles of public reason can address or shed light on current challenges.

Each paper should be structured as follows:

- **Introduction:** Clearly state your position in response to the prompt and briefly outline your reasoning to support it.
- **Analysis:** Critically engage with the assigned philosopher or theory, using evidence from the readings to substantiate your argument.
- **Relevance/Application:** Draw explicit connections between the philosophical argument and a real-world issue or example, illustrating the practical implications of public reason.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize your argument, highlight key insights, and reflect on the broader significance of public reason for addressing societal challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> In case you have a Letter of Accommodation from the PMC, please inform me as soon as possible. This will enable us to review the suggested academic accommodations for any evaluation component(s) and come to an agreement on the most suitable accommodation or replacement.

The position papers should be single-spaced. All references and citations must adhere to APA style guidelines. Papers must be submitted via Brightspace. Students can submit more than two position papers during the term. In such cases, the highest two grades will count toward their final mark, providing an opportunity for improvement and exploration of multiple topics.

### **Group Presentation (15%)**

The aim of this presentation is to promote teamwork and discussion. During the presentation, teams will be required to present the main claims of the assigned reading and contrast them with previous material, with a maximum of two authors and/or readings. You will have around 15-20 minutes to present, followed by 15-20 minutes of Q&A from the rest of the group. Your ability to respond to the Q&A will account for 5% of your presentation grade. Although the use of a slide deck is encouraged, it is not mandatory. You must select your group and topic by the end of the first session via Brightspace. Time will be given in class to do so. Each individual's contribution to their group will be assessed by peer evaluation. A deduction in the points earned for the group assignment will be made based on group peer evaluations. Low team evaluations may result in a decrease in an individual's overall presentation grade. Free riding will be identified and penalized in this course.

### **Class Participation (25%)**

The course will be structured like a seminar, with more emphasis on class discussion of the readings rather than traditional lectures. Therefore, students will need to take a more active role in their learning by completing assigned readings before classes and preparing to discuss them with the instructor and fellow students in class. Regular class attendance and contribution to class discussion are expected, and full presence from start to end of class is required. The only prerequisite is a willingness to think critically about the content while taking alternative views seriously.

Students will be graded on their participation in class discussions. The grade will be based on both the quantity and quality of their contributions. Every time a student makes a quality contribution, they will earn one or more *participation tokens*. In weeks 12 and 13, students will exchange these tokens for their final participation grade. Please note that you will be fully responsible for your tokens once you receive them. If any tokens are lost, they will not be replaced. The class participation threshold for the maximum grade (25%) will be determined by the mean and standard deviation of tokens earned by the class.

Your participation tokens reflect your engagement and contribution to the class. You lose tokens for:

- Arriving late or leaving early: You'll lose tokens if you're more than 10 minutes late or leave early.
- Missing key classes: Skipping two weeks of class in a row or being absent during your team's presentation will cost you tokens.
- Non-collegial behaviour: Behaviours like aggressively dominating discussions, interrupting others, displaying hostility, overt rudeness, or showing bored body language (e.g., scrolling aimlessly on your phone) will lead to token loss.
- Lack of preparation: Presenting ideas clearly showing you have not done the assigned readings or prepared for class will cost you tokens.
- Disrespecting class time: Using class time to work on other coursework or engage in unrelated activities—including texting or scrolling on your phone—will result in lost tokens.

Being present, prepared, and respectful helps you keep your tokens and get the most out of this course!

### **Midterm Exam (15%)**

The midterm exam will focus on the topics covered during weeks 1 to 5. Students will write their responses during class time and are permitted to refer to their notes and course materials. The purpose of the midterm is to assess your understanding of the course material and your critical thinking skills. Please be aware that the use of AI generative tools is strictly prohibited, and any instances will be reported as potential academic misconduct.

### **Oral Exam (15%)**

Oral exams are crucial for philosophy students to demonstrate their grasp of concepts through argumentative clarity and critical thinking. Unlike written tests, oral exams allow for immediate discussion, encouraging the development of skills in formulating coherent arguments and responding to counterarguments. They are a vital component of a well-rounded philosophical education and mirror real-life situations where philosophers must articulate and defend their viewpoints.

The process for the oral exam is as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- To schedule an exam slot, you need to log in to Brightspace and select your preferred date between March 27<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please make sure to do this before February 27<sup>th</sup>.<sup>3</sup>
- On March 20<sup>th</sup>, you will be required to select three readings from the course materials discussed during weeks 8 to 10. These readings will serve as the foundation for your examination. After you submit your choices, later that same day, you will be assigned two of the three selected options, which will be determined according to your stated preferences.
- On the day of the exam, you will have about 5 to 10 minutes to summarize the main points of the texts. After that, we will spend the next 5 to 10 minutes discussing follow-up questions. These questions will test your understanding and your ability to analyze or critically evaluate an argument.<sup>4</sup> Please remember that this is a closed-book exam, but you are allowed to use bullet point-style notes to structure your initial presentation of the arguments.

All examinees must attend the entire session. Students have the opportunity to submit a short response paper, up to 600 words, on any of the claims discussed during the examination for bonus points applicable to their oral exam. This can earn them up to 5 points out of the 15 points available. Submissions must be turned in before April 9. Please note that the use of AI generative tools is strictly prohibited for this option.

### **Late Policy for Coursework**

Assignment extensions or new deadlines will only be granted at my discretion and on a case-by-case basis. The only exceptions are verifiable illnesses and emergencies. These must be communicated to me directly within three (3) business days following the due date.

If your personal circumstances are negatively impacting your performance in the course, it is essential that you notify me immediately. I am here to support you in meeting the course requirements, but I can

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<sup>2</sup> If you have a Letter of Accommodation from the PMC, it is important that you inform me as soon as possible to discuss the academic accommodations recommended for your oral examination. By working together, we can reach an agreement on an appropriate accommodation that will enable you to perform your best on the exam.

<sup>3</sup> If you would like to have a private or one-on-one exam session, please let me know when you select your preferred exam slot. I want to make sure that you have the best learning experience possible.

<sup>4</sup> The amount of time taken by a student to respond to a question does not affect their grade. In fact, it is possible for a student to answer just two questions and still achieve a high grade. The main factor is the quality of the answers provided, rather than the time taken to respond.

only do so effectively if you reach out sooner rather than later. Contacting me after missing multiple sessions or assignments will severely limit my ability to assist you.

**Group presentation:** No extensions will be granted for group assignments, as group members are expected to work together to cover for individual students unable to contribute to any team project components.

**Late Assignments:** To ensure fairness for all students, penalties will be applied to late assignments without medical certificates. Failure to submit an assignment on time will result in an initial penalty of five (5) percentage points, followed by an additional (5) percentage points per day thereafter. For example, an assignment that would normally merit a grade of 20% would receive a grade of 15% if submitted after the deadline on the due date, 10% if submitted the following day, and so on.

**Mid-term and oral exam:** Requests for rescheduling the mid-term or oral exams will be considered in cases of illness, family emergency, or other exceptional circumstances

**COURSE SCHEDULE <sup>5</sup>**

Week	Date	Reading	Deliverable/Deadline
1	Jan 9	No assigned reading. Class introduction.	Group and topic selection for group presentations
2	Jan 16	<p><b>The Roots of Public Reason pt.1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hobbes, T., Rogers, G. A. J. (Graham A. J., &amp; Schuhmann, K. (2005). Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan. (A critical edition / by G.A.J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann.). Continuum. Select chapters of Part II: Of Commonwealth</li> <li>Locke, J., &amp; Hay, R. (2000). Two treatises on government. McMaster University. Part II An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government: Chapter 2, 9 and 10.</li> </ul>	
3	Jan 23	<p><b>The Roots of Public Reason pt.2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rousseau, J.-J. (2014). The Social Contract &amp; Discourses. (G. D. H. (George D. H. Cole, Tran.). Project Gutenberg. Select chapters of Book 2</li> <li>Kant, I (1794/1996) "An Answer to the Question, 'What is Enlightenment?'" in Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy, ed. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 11-22.</li> </ul>	
4	Jan 30	<p><b>Public Reason and Overlapping Consensus: Rawls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rawls, J. (1993). Lecture VI: "The Idea of Public Reason," in Political Liberalism. New York: Columbia University Press. 212-254.</li> <li>Rawls, J. (1987). The idea of an overlapping consensus. Oxford Journal of Legal Studies, 7(1), 1–25.</li> </ul>	
5	Feb 6	<p><b>Rethinking Consensus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taylor, C. (1999) "Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights," in J. Bauer and D. Bell, East Asian Challenge for Human Rights. Cambridge University Press. pp.124-44</li> <li>Sen, A. (2009). The idea of justice. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Chapters 5, 6, pp. 114-52.</li> </ul>	

<sup>5</sup> Please note that the schedule may change during the term, and students will receive advanced notice in such cases.

6	Feb 13	Midterm	
7	Feb 20	No class, Winter break	
8	Feb 27	<p><b>Convergence vs. Consensus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaus, G. (2015). 'Public reason liberalism,' in Steven Wall (ed.), <i>The Cambridge Companion to Liberalism</i>, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 112-134</li> <li>Billingham, P. (2016). 'Convergence justifications within political liberalism: A defence,' <i>Res Publica</i> 22(2): 135–153.</li> </ul>	Deadline to schedule an oral exam slot.
9	Mar 6	<p><b>Contemporary Views on Public Deliberation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dryzek, J. &amp; Niemeyer, S (2006). Reconciling Pluralism and Consensus as Political Ideals. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 50 (3, July): 634–649.</li> <li>List, C. (2007). 'Deliberation and agreement,' in Shawn W. Rosenberg (ed.), <i>Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern?</i> London: Palgrave Macmillan.</li> </ul>	
10	Mar 13	<p><b>Discourse Ethics and Deliberative Politics in Habermas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habermas, J., Cronin, C., &amp; De Greiff, P. (1998). The inclusion of the other : studies in political theory. MIT Press. Chapter 5 What Is Meant by "Deliberative Politics"?</li> <li>Habermas, J. (1996). <i>Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy</i>. Polity Press. Chapter 7. Deliberative Politics: A Procedural Concept of Democracy.</li> </ul>	
11	Mar 20	<p><b>Case Study: Political Agreement and Basic Income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lenczewska, O., Schwartz, A.M. (2020). Disagree to agree: Forming consensus around Basic Income in times of political divisiveness. In: Caputo, R., Liu, L. (eds.) <i>Political Activism and Basic Income Guarantee. Exploring the Basic Income Guarantee</i>. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.</li> <li>De Wispelaere, &amp; Stirton, L. (2004). The many faces of Universal Basic Income. <i>The Political Quarterly</i>, 75(3), 266–274.</li> </ul>	Deadline for providing two reading options for the oral exam. Topic to be assigned later that day.
12	Mar 27	Oral Examinations Group A	Submit your participation tokens after the exam
13	Apr 3	Oral Examinations Group B	

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2024-25)

### **Assignments:**

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

### **Evaluation:**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. 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.

### **Deferrals for Term Work:**

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

### **Deferrals for Final Exams:**

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

### **Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *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. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 4	Classes start.
Sept. 17	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 14	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 21-25	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 22	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 6	Last day of fall term classes. <b>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</b> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 9-21	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 21	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 6	Classes begin.
Jan. 17	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 17	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 17-21	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 15	Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses.
Mar. 25	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 8	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 11-26	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 18	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 26	All take-home examinations are due.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:  
[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)  
520-2110

Registrar's Office:  
[www.carleton.ca/registrar](http://www.carleton.ca/registrar)  
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:  
[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)  
520-7850

Writing Services:  
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>  
520-3822

MacOdrum Library  
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>  
520-2735