

**FYSM 1611 (B)**  
**First Year Seminar:**  
**Legitimacy in Politics? Does Anybody Care?**  
Tuesdays, 11:35 – 2:25pm  
(Please confirm location on Carleton Central)

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**Course Description**

Does it matter if election results are contested? Or if people don't trust their governments? Or if they don't agree on political or historical facts? Is it ever acceptable for governments to deny to individuals due process? What should happen when groups feel unrepresented in their political institutions? Should governments face any consequences for breaking promises or violating treaties they have signed?

What distinguishes legitimate from *de facto* authority? Does the distinction matter? Should we consider legitimacy the essential measure for evaluating exercises of political power? Should we care about political legitimacy at all? What, if any, limits do you think should apply to the powers that a government can exercise? Who should have the authority to set those limits? On what terms? What consequences should follow if a government ignores or breaches the limits?

These and other similar questions have been debated for centuries. In this course, which is a seminar in the history of political thought, we will read and discuss texts, dating from the sixteenth through to the twentieth century, that defend, contest, and raise questions about different views on political legitimacy. Through your participation in this seminar, you will develop your understanding of historical debates that continue to influence how many of us think about political legitimacy today. In addition, you will develop academic

skills necessary for designing and conducting research projects on the questions that interest you most.

The seminar will meet weekly and in person. To begin each session, the professor will offer introductory remarks on the readings for that week's discussion. The bulk of each meeting will be devoted to an open discussion in which students will be expected to participate actively. The open discussion will be based, in part, on questions that students in the seminar will submit in advance (see below under "Participation").

Each meeting of the seminar will also include discussion of a particular aspect of academic research and writing. Throughout the term, students will work on a research essay. Each week, we will discuss a new step or aspect of these projects. By the end of the term, each student will have designed, researched, and written an essay on a political event that, in their view, raises particularly important questions related to political legitimacy.

The principal learning objectives for the course are:

- 1) For students to develop knowledge and understanding of some significant texts and debates in the history of western political thought that address questions to do with legitimacy in politics.
- 2) For students to critically examine the texts under study.
- 3) For students to engage in critical and constructive dialogue in seminar discussions with fellow students and with the professor.
- 4) For students to develop their academic research and writing skills.

### **Evaluation at a Glance**

- Reflection Paper 1 (max. 1000 words)	15%	<b>(Due October 10)</b>
- Reflection Paper 2 (max. 1000 words)	15%	<b>(Due November 7)</b>
- Annotated Bibliography	8%	<b>(Due October 28)</b>
- Research Essay (max. 2500 words)	40%	<b>(Due December 5)</b>
- Participation	22%	

### **Evaluation in Detail**

#### **Reflection Papers: 15% each**

Each student will write and submit two reflections papers (max. 1000 words each). The assignments will ask students to draw upon course readings to reflect upon questions that arose in seminar discussions. Students will receive detailed instructions for these assignments that will include specific reference points in the seminar discussions upon which they will be asked to reflect. For each paper, students will have several options from which to choose the focus for their reflections.

PLEASE NOTE: In these assignments, students will be required to write about specific elements of discussions that took place in the seminar in addition to passages from the assigned readings.

#### Annotated Bibliography: 8%

Each student will submit an annotated bibliography as part of their work toward completing their research essay. Detailed instructions for this assignment will be circulated through Brightspace and discussed in class.

#### Research Essay: 40%

Students will submit one research essay on a topic partially of their choosing. Students will be asked to select a political event (contemporary or historical) and to identify what, in their opinion, are the most consequential questions, puzzles, or problems related to political legitimacy that it raises. The assignment will call for research involving both primary sources (such as the assigned texts that we will read in class) and secondary sources (such as scholarly journal articles, academic books, newspapers, news magazines, etc.). Detailed instructions for this assignment will be circulated through Brightspace and discussed in class.

#### Participation: 22%

Attendance will be taken in every meeting of the seminar except for Week 1. Students will receive one mark for every class they attend.

In advance of every meeting of the seminar (with the exception of Week 1), each student will have the opportunity to submit one discussion question through Brightspace. The questions must be based on the readings for that week. They will structure part of the discussion in class.

Students will receive one mark for every discussion question that they submit, conditional upon them attending the corresponding class (maximum one question per week).

Participation grades in the course will be calculated out of 22 marks (11 discussion questions and attendance in 11 classes). Participation grades will be discussed in detail in class on Sept. 9.

#### Summary

Students are required to:

- 1) Complete assigned readings prior to each meeting of the seminar
- 2) Attend weekly meetings of the seminar and submit one discussion question in advance of assigned weeks (22%)

- 3) Write and submit two reflection papers (15% each)
- 4) Write and submit one annotated bibliography (8%)
- 5) Write and submit one research essay (40%)

### **Readings:**

All of the readings for this course are available in electronic format online and free of charge.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1 (Sept. 9): Introduction to the Course**

- Topics:
  - o Introductions
  - o Discussion of the seminar format and course requirements
  - o Introductory discussion of the concept of legitimacy in the history of political thought and of questions to consider when drawing upon historical texts and arguments to speak to contemporary political concerns.
- Research And Writing Topic: What's in a Question?

#### **Week 2 (Sept. 16): Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527)**

- Readings: *The Prince* (1531)
  - o Dedicatory Letter; chs. 6, 7, 9, 15, 17, 18, 25
  - o Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Academic Publishing; Library Presentation

#### **Week 3 (Sept. 23): Étienne de la Boétie (1530-1563)**

- Readings: *The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* (1574)
  - o Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Ideas and Historical Contexts

#### **Week 4 (Sept. 30): Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)**

- Readings: *Leviathan* (1651)
  - o Introduction; ch.10 (para 1-16); ch. 11 (para.1-4); chs. 13, 14, 17.
  - o Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Strategies for Preliminary Research

#### **Week 5 (Oct. 7): Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)**

- Readings: *On the Social Contract* (1762)
  - o Book I: chs. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8

- Book II: chs. 1, 3, 6, 7, 12
- Book III: chs. 1, 15
- Book IV: ch. 2
- Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Annotated Bibliography

#### **Week 6 (Oct. 14): Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)**

- Readings: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)
  - Dedication; Preface; Introduction; Chapter 2
  - Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Narrowing Your Research

#### **Week 7 (Oct. 21): Fall Break**

- NO CLASS

#### **Week 8: (Oct. 28): Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)**

- Readings: "Civil Disobedience" (1849)
  - Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Writing Workshop

#### **Week 9 (Nov. 4): John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)**

- Readings: *On Liberty* (1859)
  - Introduction; Part 3
  - Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Engaging with Secondary Literature

#### **Week 10 (Nov. 11): Max Weber (1864-1920)**

- Readings: *Economy and Society* (1921; first English translation in 1968)
  - Part 1, Chapter 3: "The Types of Legitimate Domination" (abridged)
  - In *Theories of Social Order: A Reader, Second Edition*, edited by Michael Hechter and Christine Horne (de Gruyter, 2009)
  - Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Honing Your Argument

#### **Week 11 (Nov. 18): John Rawls (1921-2002)**

- Readings: "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" (1997)
  - Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Editing

#### **Week 12 (Nov. 25): Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997)**

- Readings: "The Pursuit of the Ideal" (1988)
  - o Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Proof Reading

### **Week 13 (Dec. 2): Judith Shklar (1928-1992)**

- Readings: "Obligation, Loyalty, Exile" (1993)
  - o *Political Theory* 181 (May 1993): 181-197.
  - o Available online: ARES (in Brightspace)
- Research And Writing Topic: Finishing Touches

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### **Key Dates: Summary**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Main Topic</b>	<b>Research and Writing Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
September 9	Intro to the Course	What's in a Question?	
September 16	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Academic Publishing; Library Presentation	
September 23	La Boétie, <i>The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude</i>	Ideas and Historical Contexts	
September 30	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>	Strategies for Preliminary Research	
October 7	Rousseau, <i>On the Social Contract</i>	Annotated Bibliography	
<b>October 10</b>			<b>Reflection Paper 1 Due</b>
October 14	Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>	Narrowing Your Research	
October 21	No Class: Fall Break		
<b>October 28</b>	Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"	Writing Workshop	<b>Annotated Bibliography Due</b>
November 4	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>	Engaging with Secondary Literature	
<b>November 7</b>			<b>Reflection Paper 2 Due</b>
November 11	Weber, <i>Economy and Society</i>	Honing Your Argument	
November 18	Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited"	Editing	
November 25	Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal"	Proof Reading	

December 2	Shklar, "Obligation, Loyalty, Exile"	Finishing Touches	
<b>December 5</b>			<b>Research Essay Due</b>

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## Course Policies

**Copyright:** Lectures and course materials (including any PowerPoint presentations, videos, or similar materials) are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not allow others to reproduce, distribute, or make available lecture notes and/or course materials, whether publicly or for commercial purposes, without the professor's express written consent.

## Citations and Bibliography

All written assignments must include a full list of sources used. In addition, students must indicate all references to the texts in footnotes or in-text citations. You are free to use either MLA or Chicago style references, so long as you employ your chosen style consistently and correctly throughout your assignment. For more details on how to provide proper citations, please consult the MacOdrum Library website:

<https://library.carleton.ca/help/citing-your-sources>

As a university student, you are a member of a community of scholars in this class, at Carleton University and, more generally, with others around the world. A core ethical principle that undergirds all of these scholarly communities is the responsibility of every scholar to give credit to others for the work that they have produced and to refrain from taking credit for work that is not their own. This ethical principle is very democratic. It applies equally to the internationally renowned scholar whose list of published works runs for many pages and to the first-year university student, fresh out of high school, who has yet to publish their first piece of writing.

If you have any questions at all about your obligations as a member of these scholarly communities, please consult your professor. Every student should familiarize themselves with Carleton University's Academic Integrity Policy (<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-2021.pdf>). For examples of what constitutes plagiarism and for details of possible consequences for students found to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy, please see below (p.11) and consult the University's page on academic integrity: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

## Oral Examinations of Written Assignments

The professor reserves the right to examine any student in-person on the content of written work they have submitted in the class.

## Late Penalties & Extensions

Written assignments (essays and term papers) submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 4% per day (including Saturdays and Sundays). The professor will accept late submissions up to seven days past the deadline. Assignments that are more than seven days late will not be accepted except in cases where the student has received an extension from the professor.

Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the professor and only for serious medical reasons or for other emergency personal circumstances. Please note that having assignments and/or exams due in other courses will not be considered sufficient grounds to justify an extension in this course. Requests for extensions submitted after the due date will usually not be considered.

If you are ill or have any other legitimate reason for requesting an extension, it is your responsibility to contact the professor as early as possible. Do not assume that you will receive an extension until one has been granted by the professor. Students should be prepared to provide proper documentation to support their request for an extension.

At any point, if you are experiencing mental health-related challenges, please consider availing yourself of the resources that Carleton University offers:

<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

### **Grade Appeals**

If you feel that an assigned grade does not fairly reflect the quality of your work, the professor will be happy to discuss your assignment and the grade with you. If you would like to have your grade reviewed, you must submit a one-page justification for your position that responds directly to the comments and grade that you received. You must also indicate the grade that you believe your assignment deserved. Submit your one-page justification to the professor no later than one week after receiving your grade. A request for review can result in the professor raising or lowering your original grade.

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## **Political Science Course Outline Appendix**

### **REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

#### **Student Mental Health**

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

#### **Emergency Resources (on and off campus):**

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

#### **Carleton Resources:**

Mental Health and Wellbeing:

<https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services:

<https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):

<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

#### **Off Campus Resources:**

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>

ood2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic:

<https://walkincounselling.com>

#### **Academic consideration for medical or other**

**extenuating circumstances:** Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term

periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University.

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

**Pregnancy:** 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. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at [equity@carleton.ca](mailto:equity@carleton.ca) or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

**Religious obligation:** 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. For more details [click here](#).

#### **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, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

**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 its survivors are supported through academic

accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

**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 will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me 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.

#### PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within **three working days** to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

#### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

#### WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's official withdrawal dates

#### OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's Official Exam Period (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton Calendar](#).

#### GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#).

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.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

#### PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as *"presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own."*

This can include:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, 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.