

PSCI 4318A/5308A
Concepts of Political Community 1
Thursdays, 2:35 p.m. – 5:25 p.m.
Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

General information

Instructor: Philippe Azzie
Office Hours (In-person): 310 Paterson Hall, Thursdays 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Email: philippe.azzie@carleton.ca

Course description

What constitutes a well-ordered political community? Posing this question opens a floodgate through which a torrent of related questions comes pouring in such as: is political association natural or artificial?, what is the ultimate goal or purpose of political association (e.g the pursuit of the common good or the peaceful pursuit of individual self-interest?), what is the best type of political regime?, should we expect our political leaders to foster virtue (i.e. make us better) or ensure peace and prosperity (i.e. make us better off)?, does citizenship involve participating actively in political life or being guaranteed certain rights and freedoms?

In this course students will explore how important thinkers in the tradition of Western political thought have explored such fundamental issues. The focus will be on two representatives of 'ancient' political thought (Plato and Aristotle), and four representatives of modern political thought (Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill). While the course focuses on political philosophers, it is intended to appeal to students of political science regardless of their area of specialization because of the formative influence of these thinkers on notions commonly employed in the discipline for the study of political phenomena. Such notions include 'power', 'democracy', 'tyranny', 'rights and freedoms', 'sovereignty', 'citizenship', 'constitutionalism'.

The main objectives of this course include the following:

- For students to identify, understand, and critically assess key assumptions informing ancient and modern conceptions of the nature of political association.
- For students to understand basic continuities and differences between ancient and modern approaches to this fundamental issue.
- For students to deepen their interpretive and analytical skills through written assignments and in-class discussions.

Course Format

As per university specifications for this course, classes will take place on campus (i.e. in-person). Except for the first meeting on September 4th, the class will take the form of a seminar. Each session will begin with a presentation from the instructor. Typically, such presentations will provide contextual and background information on the thinker and text under consideration, introduce weekly topics and readings, and review or summarize the previous week's discussion. The bulk of each session will be a class discussion of the reading assigned for the week in question. Students are expected to participate actively in these discussions which will be guided by questions they may submit in advance of each class (see below under "Participation").

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Acquire or deepen the ability to interpret and discuss foundational texts in political philosophy.
- Thoughtfully assess the insights of thinkers from the past and the extent to which they can be made a party to debates surrounding contemporary political issues.
- Incorporate relevant insights of key thinkers in the history of Western political thought into their own work, whatever their particular research interests.
- Better understand their own assumptions and presuppositions regarding the nature of political association.

Communication and Contact

Office hours will take place on Thursdays, from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm. Students are invited to communicate with the instructor by email at any time, but the office hours represent the weekly time period during which the instructor is available in-person to students. Students who would like a meeting but who cannot attend regular office hours may request a meeting to be scheduled at a mutually convenient time (either in-person, by phone, or by Zoom). Such requests may be made in person or by email.

Emails to the instructor should include the course code in the subject line (PSCI 4318A/5308A) and students should sign off with their full name. Every attempt will be made to respond to emails within 24 hours, and students will receive a reply within 48 hours. It is recommended that students use email for exchanges that require only short replies. Carleton requires that students, staff, and faculty use Carleton email accounts when conducting University business. Students are strongly encouraged to check their email as well as the class Brightspace page on a regular basis for any announcements or updates.

Texts/Required readings

Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course. All required readings for the course are accessible through the course website on Brightspace. Students who wish to bring hard copy versions of the required texts to class are encouraged to do so. Used copies should be readily available at secondhand bookstores (e.g. Black Squirrel). Students should feel free to consult the instructor regarding particular editions.

Course Requirements

Requirements for this course include the following, all of which will be discussed in more detail during the first session on September 4th:

1. Completing the assigned readings before each class.
2. Attending all classes and remaining for the duration of the class.
3. Participating in class discussions on a regular basis.
4. Completing all course work in order to receive a passing grade. The following specifications also apply to course work:
 - Work must be submitted electronically, either by email or by being uploaded to the course website.
 - The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce assessed content (i.e. written work submitted for this class) is prohibited. The instructor reserves the right to examine any student in-person on the content of written work they have submitted in the class.
 - Students may not submit work previously submitted to another course.

Note about class attendance: Valid reasons for absences include observance of religious holidays and serious and unforeseen circumstances (e.g. medical reasons, accidents, family emergencies). Please make sure to notify the instructor about such absences and be prepared to provide appropriate documentation (i.e. a medical note).

Course Work/Evaluation

The evaluation for this course will consist of the following:

Component	Due Date	Percentage of Final Mark
Participation	Tracked weekly	35%
Thought experiment assignment	October 9th	10%
Research paper	December 5th	30%
Take home exam	December 20th	25%

NOTE: 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.

Participation (35%): Because this is a seminar, class attendance and participation in discussions is crucial both to the overall quality of the course and to students' success in it. The participation grade will be based on three components: attendance, submission of discussion questions, and contribution to class discussions.

- Attendance: Attendance will be taken in every class. Students will receive one mark for every class they attend (maximum of 13 marks out of 35). Attendance means showing up and remaining in class for the duration of the session.
- Submission of discussion questions: In advance of class meetings for weeks 2 through 13, students will have the opportunity to submit one (but no more than one) discussion question through

Brightspace. For weeks 2 through 12, questions must be related to the readings for that week. As these questions will help guide the discussion in class, students should endeavour to submit questions about issues that the text raises (e.g. strengths, weaknesses, problems). For week 13, questions may focus on any final or outstanding issues students would like to raise or discuss. Students will receive one mark for every discussion question that they submit, conditional upon them attending the corresponding class (maximum of 12 marks out of 30). Questions must be uploaded to Brightspace no later than 1 pm on the day of the session to which the question pertains.

- **Contribution to class discussions:** Participation will also be evaluated based on the extent to which students actively contribute to class discussions. This includes more than the number or frequency of interventions. It includes students demonstrating that they have read the text under discussion, their ability to discuss the issues it raises, and their ability to respond in a meaningful and respectful way to the input of others (maximum of 10 marks out of 30).

Thought experiment (10%): This assignment asks students to reflect on a contemporary political issue, topic, or problem of their choice from a classical perspective, i.e. with the objective of exploring the issue from either a Platonic or Aristotelian perspective. Drawing on their understanding of the thought of Plato or Aristotle, students should focus on exploring the following sorts of questions: why would this be an important, significant, or relevant issue for the thinker in question?, how might the thinker in question approach the issue (e.g. how would they go about analyzing or diagnosing the issue?, what factors would they consider?, what kinds of questions would they ask?), how does this approach help us understand or diagnose the issue in question? The assignment should be between 500 and 750 words in length and will be discussed in greater detail in class. The assignment is due on October 9th.

Research Paper (30%): Students will be required to write a research paper (3,000-3,500 words for 4th year students, 3,500-4,000 words for graduate students). Students will be given complete freedom with regard to the topic, as long as it is related to the course material. While students are free to choose their own topic, they must inform the instructor about their chosen topic once they have selected it. A document with precise guidelines for the research paper will be available on Brightspace on September 4th. The research paper is due on December 5th.

Take Home Exam (25%): Students will be required to write a final take-home exam that will cover the material covered in the course (this includes the texts as well as the themes and issues explored in class discussions about them). The questions will be available to students on Brightspace on December 4th and completed exams must be submitted by December 20th. Part of the final class on December 4th will be devoted to a discussion of the final exam.

Evaluation criteria

All written work submitted by students (i.e. thought experiment, research paper, take home exam) will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- *Clarity* (i.e., is the paper written in a clear, easy to understand style).
- *Coherence* (i.e., does the paper develop logically and hold together in a coherent manner).
- *Comprehension* (i.e., does the student demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic or issue).
- *Completeness* (i.e. has the student included everything required to address the topic).

Assignments will be returned to students electronically approximately 2 weeks after being submitted. Late assignments will be subject to a 5% deduction per day unless students provide documentation proving that serious unforeseen circumstances have arisen (e.g. illness, accident, family affliction). For example, a paper submitted one day late, that would have received a mark of 80%, will receive a mark of 75%).

Course schedule

Below is the schedule for the course, including the required readings for each week.

Week 1 (Sep. 4): Introduction to course: Presentation and discussion of subject matter, course structure, pedagogical approach, and course requirements.

Week 2 (Sep. 11): Plato

Required reading: Gorgias, pp. 25-70 in assigned edition (447a-481b)

Week 3 (Sep. 18): Plato

Required reading: Gorgias, pp. 71-129 in assigned edition (481c-527e)

Week 4 (Sep 25): Aristotle

Required reading: Nicomachean Ethics, Book 10, chapter 9; Politics, Books 1-4

Week 5 (Oct. 2): Aristotle

Required reading: Politics, Books 5-8

Week 6 (Oct. 9): Thomas Hobbes

Required reading: Leviathan, Part 1: Introduction, chapters 13-16

*Due date for thought experiment assignment

Week 7 (Oct. 16): Thomas Hobbes

Required reading: Leviathan, Part 2, chapters 17-21, 23-24, 26-27, 29-30

Fall Term Study break (Oct. 20-24)

Week 8 (Oct. 30): John Locke

Required reading: Second Treatise of Government, chapters 1-9

Week 9 (Nov. 6): John Locke

Required reading: Second Treatise of Government, chapters 10-19

Week 10 (Nov. 13): Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Required reading: Social Contract

Week 11 (Nov. 20): John Stuart Mill

Required reading: Benjamin Constant, On the liberty of the ancients compared with that of the moderns; John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, sections 1-3

Week 12 (Nov. 27): John Stuart Mill

Required reading: On Liberty, sections 4-5

Week 13 (Dec. 4): Review and Conclusion

Key dates

Date	Topic	Assignment
September 4	Introduction to course	-
September 11	Plato	-
September 18	Plato	-
September 25	Aristotle	-
October 2	Aristotle	-
October 9	Hobbes	Thought experiment due
October 16	Hobbes	-
October 23	Study break/no class	-
October 30	Locke	-
November 6	Locke	-
November 13	Rousseau	-
November 20	Constant/Mill	-
November 27	Mill	-
December 4	Review and conclusion	-
December 5	-	Research paper due
December 20	-	Take home exam due

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 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 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.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777)	B640 Loeb
Registrar's Office (3500)	300 Tory
Centre for Student Academic Success (3822)	4 th floor Library
Academic Advising Centre (7850)	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608)	501 Nideyinn
Career Services (6611)	401 Tory