

PSCI 5705F
Approaches to the Study of Political Theory
Fridays, 8:35am – 11:25am
(Please confirm location on Carleton Central)

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Course Description

How is the activity of studying the history of political thought best understood? What does it mean to read or interpret a text honestly? On what grounds do we distinguish persuasive from unconvincing interpretations of particular texts? Should a student of the history of political thought seek to understand the ways in which particular ideas or concepts have been debated, transformed, and developed over time, or should the student instead study particular deployments of ideas in particular historical and ideological contexts? To what extent are elements of the past retrievable? Should students aspire to ascertain the true intentions of the authors they study? If so, how do esoteric and exoteric readings of texts enter differently into that endeavour? How do we define a period in the history of political thought? Are there any perennial problems? Are truth and knowledge objective categories, or are they discursively structured? How does the notion of canonical texts shape the study of political theory? Why does the standard canon in the history of political thought include so few texts written by women authors? Are any of the primary concepts employed in the study of the history of political thought inherently gendered?

How we answer these and other related questions will shape the ways in which we read, interpret, and understand texts in the history of political thought. In this course, we will

distinguish different methodological approaches and explore major methodological debates in the field with an eye to improving the intellectual rigour of our work as political theorists.

Readings:

All readings for this course will be held on reserve at MacOdrum Library or be available online through ARES in Brightspace.

Evaluation at a Glance

One-Page Response Papers (x4)	20% (5% each)
Term Paper (max. 6000 words)	45% (Due December 6)
Seminar Participation	25%
Research Progress Report	10% (Due November 15)

Evaluation in Detail

One-Page Response Papers

Each student must submit one response paper during each of the following four sets of weeks:

- 1) Weeks 2, 7 & 12
- 2) Weeks 3 & 4
- 3) Weeks 5 & 6
- 4) Week 9 & 10

The response papers can be single-spaced in a font as small as 10pt. However, the page limit is firm. The papers should develop a critical discussion of the week's readings. They should not merely summarize the readings. Students must upload their response papers to Brightspace no later than noon the day before the seminar for which they are written. Papers received after that time will not be accepted. Except in cases of documented medical conditions or other emergency personal circumstances, there will be no option to make up missed response papers.

Term Paper

Each student will be required to submit a term paper of 6000 words in length (maximum). The term paper assignment will be discussed during the first seminar on September 6 and the papers will be due in Brightspace by 11:59pm on December 6.

The final seminar of the term will be set aside for a mini conference during which students will present their term paper research and have an opportunity to comment on the work of others.

Seminar Participation

Participation grades will reflect each student's overall contribution to the scholarly environment of the seminar. I expect students to arrive every week prepared to engage with their colleagues in a critical discussion of both the week's readings and the one-page response papers.

Research Progress Report

Each student will submit a Research Progress Report in Brightspace by 11:59pm on November 15. There will be no seminar the week of November 15. Instead, students will use the week to advance their term paper research and to produce their Report. This assignment, along with the plan for the research week, will be discussed in greater detail in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Sept. 6): Introduction to the Course

Week 2 (Sept. 13): The History of Ideas

- Readings:

- Arthur O. Lovejoy. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1936), ch.1.
- Isaiah Berlin. "Does Political Theory Still Exist" in Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (eds), *Berlin, The Proper Study of Mankind*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 59-90.
- Isaiah Berlin. "The Counter-Enlightenment" in Henry Hardy (ed), *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1-25.
- Isaiah Berlin. "The Hedgehog and the Fox" in Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (eds), *Berlin, The Proper Study of Mankind*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 436-98.

Week 3 (Sept. 20): Leo Strauss and Esoteric Writing

- Readings:

- Leo Strauss, "On Collingwood's Philosophy of History," *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (June 1952), 559-586.
- Leo Strauss, "Introduction," in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*,

(Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), 7-21.

- Leo Strauss, "Persecution and the Art of Writing", in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), 22-37.
- Leo Strauss, "Exoteric Teaching", in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 63-71.

Week 4 (Sept. 27): Strauss on Machiavelli

- Readings:

- Leo Strauss, "Introduction," and "The Twofold Character of Machiavelli's Teaching," in *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958).
- Leo Strauss, "Machiavelli's Intention: The Prince," *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 51, No. 1 (1957), 13-40.

Week 5 (Oct. 4): Quentin Skinner and the "Cambridge School"

- Readings:

- R.G. Collingwood, "The Logic of Question and Answer" in *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), 29-43.
- Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* Vol.8, No.1 (1969), 3-53.
- Quentin Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts," in James Tully (ed), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 68-78.
- Quentin Skinner, "Preface", in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), ix-xv.
- Quentin Skinner, "Political Philosophy and the Uses of History," in Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *History in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 194-210.

Week 6 (Oct. 11): Skinner on Hobbes

- Readings:

- Quentin Skinner, "History and Ideology in the English Revolution," *The Historical Journal*, Vol.8, No.2, (1965), 151-178.
- Quentin Skinner, "The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation" in Maurice Cranston and Richard S Peters (eds.), *Hobbes and Rousseau: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972) 109-142.
- Quentin Skinner, "Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy," in G.E. Aylmer (ed.), *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, (London: Macmillan, 1974), 79-93.

Week 7 (Oct. 18): Reinhart Koselleck's Practice of Conceptual History

- Readings:

- W.B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, (1955-56), 167-98.
- Reinhart Koselleck, "Introduction and Prefaces to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*" *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 6, 1(2011), 1-37.
- Reinhart Koselleck, "*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History", in *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 75-92.
- Reinhart Koselleck, "Fiction and Historical Reality" and "On the Meaning and Absurdity of History," in *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories* (Cultural Memory in the Present), Translated and edited by Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 10-23 and 177-196.
- Reinhart Koselleck, "Some questions regarding the conceptual history of 'Crisis'" in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Cultural Memory in the Present) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 236-47.

Week 8 (Oct. 25): No Seminar (Fall Break)

Week 9 (Nov. 1): Feminist Approaches to the History of Political Thought

- Readings:

- Penny Weiss, “The Politics of the Canon: Gatekeepers and Gate Crashers”, in *Canon Fodder: Historical Women Political Thinkers* (Penn State University Press, 2011).
- Linda Zerilli, “Feminist Theory and the Canon of Political Thought”, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 106-124.
- Cynthia Freeland, “Feminism and Ideology in Ancient Philosophy,” in *Apeiron*, Volume XXXIII, Number 4, (Dec., 2000), 365-406.
- Michèle Le Doeuff, *Hipparchia’s Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 1-53.

Week 10 (Nov. 8): Feminist Readings of “Canonical” Texts

Readings:

- Mary O’Brien, “The Root of the Mandrake. Machiavelli and Manliness”, in Maria J. Falco (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Machiavelli*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 173-195.
- Catherine H. Zuckert, “Fortune Is a Woman— But So Is Prudence. Machiavelli’s Clizia”, in Maria J. Falco (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Machiavelli*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 197-211.
- “Hobbes, History, Politics and Gender: A Conversation with Carole Pateman and Quentin Skinner”, in Nancy J. Hirschmann and Joanne H. Wright, *Feminist Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).
- Joanne H. Wright, “Choice Talk, Breast Implants and Feminist Consent Theory. Hobbes’ Legacy in Choice Feminism”, in Nancy J. Hirschmann and Joanne H. Wright, *Feminist Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).
- Lynda Lange, “Rousseau and Modern Feminism,” in Lynda Lange (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 24-41.

- Leah Bradshaw, “Rousseau on Civic Virtue, Male Autonomy, and the Construction of the Divided Female,” in Lynda Lange (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 65-88.

Week 11 (Nov. 15): Research Week

- There will be no seminar this week
- Agenda for the research week will be discussed in class
- Research Progress Reports due in Brightspace by 11:59pm on November 15

Week 12 (Nov. 22): Michel Foucault on Method

- Readings:
 - Michel Foucault, “Introduction” and “Archeology and the History of Ideas”, in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 3-17; 135-140.
 - Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in Donald F. Bouchard (ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139-64
 - Michel Foucault, “Politics and the study of discourse,” in *The Foucault Effect*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Chicago, 1991), 53-72.
 - Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 3-31.

Week 13 (Nov. 29): Mini Conference

Key Dates: Summary

Date	Topic	Assignment
September 6	Intro to the Course	
September 13	The History of Ideas	
September 20	Leo Strauss and Esoteric Writing	
September 27	Strauss on Machiavelli	
October 4	Quentin Skinner and the “Cambridge School”	
October 11	Skinner on Hobbes	
October 18	Reinhart Koselleck’s Practice of Conceptual History	

October 25	No Class: Fall Break	
November 1	Feminist Approaches to the History of Political Thought	
November 8	Feminist Readings of “Canonical” Texts	
November 15	No Seminar	Research Progress Report Due
November 22	Michel Foucault on Method	
November 29	Mini Conference	
December 6		Term Paper Due

Course Policies

Late Penalties & Extensions

Written assignments (essays and term papers) submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade per day (including Saturdays and Sundays).

Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the professor and only for serious medical reasons or for other emergency personal circumstances.

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.

Appendix

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/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

Deferred final exams, which must be applied for at the RO, are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course. The course outline must stipulate any minimum standards for good standing that a student must meet to be entitled to write a deferred final exam.

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

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances:

Please contact your instructor if you are experiencing circumstances that (a) are beyond your control, (b) have a significant impact your capacity to meet your academic obligations, and (c) could not have reasonably been prevented.

Decisions on academic consideration are in your instructor's discretion; they will be guided by the course learning outcomes and the principle of good faith.

Please see [here](#) for more details. For considerations relating to course work, your instructor may request that you complete the [Self-Declaration form](#). To apply for a deferral of your final exam, you must submit the Self-Declaration form to the Registrar's Office no later than three days after the scheduled examination or take-home due date.

Pregnancy accommodation: 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. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

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

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation, or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities 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. For more information, please [click here](#).

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

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.

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4

77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

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.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

Carleton Political Science Society

The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.
