



Lakehead University
POLI 3517 (2023WA)
Modern Political Thought
T/Th 1-2:30

Professor: Dr. Patrick Cain (Political Science)

Contact Information: pnccain@lakeheadu.ca

Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES

This course is a lecture course that emphasizes student experiential learning and participation through a number of formats and exercises.

Of special concern to us will be a careful examination of landmark concepts in modern political philosophy, and especially the political theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Hobbes and Locke are key architects of modern politics; they lay the groundwork for a new technological political science that attempts to control human and non-human nature in order to secure the pursuit of individual pleasures, especially material goods. This project entailed a rejection of Aristotelian political science, which offers an alternative to the modern project by emphasizing the relational side of the human person, especially as it relates to the political community, friendship, and human flourishing. We will explore the implications of modernity's successful overthrow of Aristotelian political science, suggesting that the West's current crisis ultimately shows the urgency of recovering classical political science and its concern with the most fundamental human questions.

Although we will focus on the theories and writings of the aforementioned thinkers, the course's aim is not simply to cover specific information or to provide students with pre-arranged sets of learned material. Rather, it is designed to develop and enhance students' ability to: (a) freely partake in the art of thoughtful and reasoned discussion about the most important human questions; (b) produce reasoned and well organized writings about the most important human questions; (c) read, analyze, and consider important and complex texts with care and insight, attempting to understand them as they were understood by the authors themselves, while reflecting on how their insights might illuminate and guide our own lives and communities.

Required Texts/Resources:

- a. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*
- b. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago), translated by Bartlett and Collins
- c. Hobbes, *Leviathan*
- d. Locke, *2nd Treatise on Government*

Grading and Assignment Details:

In-class assignments: 5 X 5% each = 25%
(8 will be given, with the top 5 scores counted)
2 Presentations: 2 X 12.5% = 25%
Participation: 25%
Final Take Home Exam: 25%

In-Class Assignments

There will be 8 assignments (some of which may take the form of quizzes), which will typically be given in-class. These assignments will not be announced in advance, and will often be given at the beginning of class. Each assignment will be based on the assigned readings for the day and are especially designed to encourage, develop and measure students' careful completion of the assigned readings, and their preparation for class time, including the degree to which students engaged and comprehended the assigned reading in preparation for in-class discussion. Therefore, these assignments cannot be made up. However, to allow some leeway students can miss up to 3 of these assignments for excused absences (37.5% of these assignments). Students who complete more than 5 assignments will have ONLY their top 5 scores counted.

Presentations

Students will sign up for **two 6-8 min** presentations—one from part one of the course, and one from part two. Each presentation should **identify, outline and explain** an argument found in that day's assigned readings. The presentation should outline the chosen argument in a way that illuminates the text and its complexities. Presenters must provide all class attendees with a one page handout that outlines a summary of their presentation's analysis. All presentations are scheduled for Tuesdays, but Thursdays will be used to cover presentations we could not fit in on Tuesdays. So in signing up for a Tuesday presentation date, student's are also committing to present on that week's Thursday, if necessary.

Presentation Handout

The presentation handout is to include: (a) a three sentence summary of the reading that identifies the central argument and themes the you are focussed on, including what part of the text is central to your account; (b) a one to two sentence thesis that summarizes your reading of the author's argument; (c) three quotes from the reading that supports and develops your account of the readings—after each quote give a sentence or two that shows how the quote supports or develops your account; (d) a concluding sentence that illuminates the importance of your presentation.

Take Home Exam

There will be a take-home exam

Participation

For class meetings all students are expected to:

1. Attend (having read assigned material carefully)
2. Be prepared to discuss the readings
3. Bring the hard copies of the readings to class
4. Discuss the readings with fellow students during class time
5. Stay focused on the class discussion; use of electronic devices is prohibited
6. Avoid: (a) excessive absences and tardies; (b) private conversations; (c) being inattentive and/or appearing inattentive.

In addition to demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the assigned readings, to achieve a high participation mark, students should participate with regularity, integrating the readings into the discussion in a way that (a) primarily responds to the readings (b) recognizes the contribution of others to the discussion; and (c) moves forward our consideration of the reading and the issues at hand. Students are free to voice and defend controversial opinions about the intellectual questions at stake, either because they think them true, or for the sake of exploring the strength or weakness of conventional opinion (e.g. playing “devil’s advocate”).

Zoom Participation Guidelines (if necessary)

When using Zoom students must follow the class guidelines of the professor, including following guidelines regarding the use of the video function, chat, annotation, breakout rooms, and other Zoom functions. Student cameras must remain on while in meetings.

Class Readings: This course readings involve complex ideas and arguments. Moreover, the presentations of these ideas and arguments sometimes take forms that may be unfamiliar to students. To grasp their content and prepare for reading quizzes and discussion students should read the assigned texts carefully, slowly, and at least several times before class time. Papers and the exam will also require students to focus on class texts.

Other Policies:

Recording of Classes is Prohibited

To protect the security and freedom of all members of the class, and the intellectual property of the professor, no audio or video recording of the class is allowed without the written permission of the professor, which likely will not be given. If recording is permitted, it will be strictly for private use and cannot be shared with others without the written permission of the professor.

Communication

The professor will regularly communicate with students about a variety of matters, both through in-class announcements and via email (using students’ Lakehead account).

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is expected of all Lakehead University students. Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make themselves fully familiar with Lakehead’s policies in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, it is worth emphasizing the following:

Plagiarism involves presenting another’s work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one’s own.

To avoid plagiarism, writers should always:

1. Put quotation marks around any words from sources
2. Paraphrase material completely; changing or rearranging a few words or the tense of a verb is NOT paraphrasing.
3. Give accurate and complete citations for all material *including paraphrased material*.
4. Avoid borrowing entire arguments or approaches to a subject from another writer. Make it 'original' while staying faithful to the assignment parameters.

Accessibility and Accommodation

Students with accessibility issues or with requested accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>.

READING and PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Tuesday classes are generally focussed on student presentations.

Thursday classes will generally begin with a short lecture from the professor, followed by Q and A, and general student driven discussion about that week's readings.

1/10 Course Outline and Introductions

1/12 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Preface, Introduction (pp. 1-8)
Presentation Sign-up Day (in-class)

1/17 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Introduction, Ch. 1

1/19 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Ch. 1

PRESENTATIONS PART 1

1/24 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Introduction, Ch.1

Presenters (Intro): _____

Presenters (Ch.1): _____

1/26 Strauss, *Natural Right & History*, Ch. 2-3, especially pages: 35-36, 74-75, 81-86; 96; 118-119)

1/31 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 1, ch.1-2, 4-5, 7-13
(Recommended: Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Ch. 4)

Presenters (Ch.1-2): _____

Presenters (Ch.4-5): _____

2/2 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 1, ch.1-2, 4-5, 7-13

2/7 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 1, 7-13
Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 2

Presenters: _____

Presenters: _____

2/9 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 2

2/14 Hobbes, *Leviathan*
"Epistle Dedicatory and Introduction"
Ch. 8 (Sec. 1-20 only): "Of the Virtues Commonly Called Intellectual"
Ch. 10: "Power, Worth, Dignity Honor and Worthiness"
Ch. 11: "The Difference of Manners"

Presenters: _____

Presenters: _____

2/16 Hobbes, *Leviathan*
"Epistle Dedicatory and Introduction"
Ch. 8 (Sec. 1-20 only): "Of the Virtues Commonly Called Intellectual"
Ch. 10: "Power, Worth, Dignity Honor and Worthiness"
Ch. 11: "The Difference of Manners"

2/21 STUDY BREAK

2/24 STUDY BREAK

2/28 Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Ch. 13: "The Natural Condition of Mankind"
Ch. 14, Sec. 1-4: "The First and Second Natural Laws"
Ch. 15, Sec. 1-7, 21-24: "Other Laws of Nature"
Ch. 17: "Causes, Generation and Definition of Common-Wealth"
Ch. 18: "Rights of Sovereigns by Institution"

Presenters: _____

Presenters: _____

3/2 Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Ch. 13: "The Natural Condition of Mankind"
Ch. 14, Sec. 1-4: "The First and Second Natural Laws"
Ch. 15, Sec. 1-7, 21-24: "Other Laws of Nature"
Ch. 17: "Causes, Generation and Definition of Common-Wealth"

PRESENTATIONS PART 2

3/7 Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Ch. 18: "Rights of Sovereigns by Institution"
Ch. 21: "Liberty of Subjects"
Ch. 26, Sec. 1-13, 23-24, 44: "Of Civil Laws"
Ch. 27: "Of Crimes, Excuses, and Extenuations"
Ch. 28: "Of Punishments and Rewards"
(Recommended: Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 5)

Presenters (Hobbes): _____

Presenters (Hobbes): _____

3/9 Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Ch. 18: "Rights of Sovereigns by Institution"
Ch. 21: "Liberty of Subjects"
Ch. 26, Sec. 1-13, 23-24, 44: "Of Civil Laws"
Ch. 27: "Of Crimes, Excuses, and Extenuations"
Ch. 28: "Of Punishments and Rewards"
Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 5

3/14 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Ch. 5 (Hobbes section only)
Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 5

Presenters: _____

Presenters: _____

3/16 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Ch. 5 (Hobbes section only)
Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 5

3/21 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 8

Presenters: _____

Presenters: _____

3/23 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book 8

3/28 Locke, *2nd Treatise on Government*, Ch. 2-3, 5, 7

Presenters: _____

Presenters: _____

3/30 *Locke, 2nd Treatise on Government*, Ch. 2-3, 5, 7

4/4 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Ch. 5 (Locke section only)

4/6 Catch up and Review