

## **P0280: Big Debates in Modern Political Thought**

*Wilfrid Laurier University*

Fall 2016

**Instructor:** Thomas O. Hueglin

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**Lecture Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00pm-5:20pm

**Classroom:** SBE1220

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00pm-3:45pm (or by appointment)

**Office:** DAWB 4-124

*Wilfrid Laurier University uses software that can check for **plagiarism**. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form have it checked for plagiarism.*

*Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier's **Accessible Learning Office** (<https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/>) for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Academic Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.*

*Additional information on Foot Patrol, Counselling Services the WLUSU Food Bank can be found on the last page out this outline.*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

From its beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the modern world has been accompanied and shaped by debates about the role of the state in society, power of the majority, protection of human rights, individual liberty and social equality. This course revisits these debates in the classical texts of political thinkers from Locke and Rousseau to Marx and Nietzsche by critically examining their continued relevance for a postmodern world.

In order to allow for some intensity of study and discussion, the selection has been limited to eight political thinkers in four segments:

- We begin with **Locke** and the **Iroquois**, contrasting their precepts for a well-ordered political community.
- We then explore the works of **Rousseau** and **Tocqueville** and their views on majority rule.
- We then turn to **Burke** and **Wollstonecraft** and the confrontation of conservatism with feminism.
- And finally, we examine **Nietzsche** and **Marx** as two critics of modernity.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students should be able to to examine, understand and criticize the meaning of these texts in their own time, and to reflect on their relevance for our own time.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Locke: *Two Treatises of Government*
2. The Constitution of the Five Nations (Iroquois)
3. Rousseau: *Social Contract*
4. Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*
5. Burke: *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
6. Wollstonecraft: *The Vindications*
7. Nietzsche: *The Gay Science*
8. Marx: *The Communist Manifesto*
9. Hueglin: Classical Debates for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## ORGANIZATION

The course has three components: 1) lectures on the readings and their contextual background to be attended by the entire class; 2) group workshops on particular authors and themes to be

attended by group members only and in preparation for 3) group presentations and debates before the entire class.

For this purpose, the class will also be divided into eight groups for presentation (GP) of approximately 15 students, and each of these will be subdivided again into three groups of about 5 each. In each of the eight group presentations two of these groups will present and debate contrasting views of the two authors, while the role of the third group is to provide a comparative perspective. The purpose of the workshops is to prepare these presentations with the help of the instructor.

A sign-up sheet will be circulated during second day of class. After that, **late sign-ups will only be allowed during office hours.**

## REQUIREMENTS I: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

All students have to read all assigned texts and attend lectures as well as group presentations. The workshops have to be attended only by those segments and groups preparing for the next round of presentations.

During **group presentations**, an active participation of all group members is expected. There will be a collective grade for each group with the possibility of up/downgrading for particularly strong/weak performances.

## REQUIREMENTS II: ESSAY

In addition, each student has to hand in a **seven page essay** (type-written, double-spaced, one inch margins) related to the text material. The suggestion is to elaborate further on one particular problem, idea or theory arising from the text.

These essays are **due one week after group presentation.**

The main criteria for the evaluation of these essays are:

- intensive text interpretations with text citations
- placement of chosen topic within author's larger context
- originality of own argument, analysis and conclusion

Employment and proper citation of **at least five** significant references from the secondary literature that are taken neither from textbooks nor from the internet.

## REQUIREMENTS III: FINAL EXAM

The final exam will consist of **four brief essay questions**, each taken from one of the four segments of the course.

Students have to answer **two** questions but may not choose the question from the segment of their own presentation. This effectively will give a choice of **two out of three.**

The questions may focus on one of the two authors in each segment, or they will be of a comparative nature.

While the final exam covers the entire course, nothing will be asked that has not been subject to a significant treatment in either lectures or group presentations.

## EVALUATION

The course grade will be calculated on the following basis:

- **presentation 30%**
- **essay 40%**
- **final exam 30%**

**Note: Students need a passing grade in each of the components in order to pass the course.**

## PAPER WRITING RULES

1. The papers for PO280 can be on any topic related to the course. But I encourage students to develop them from their group presentations. Regardless of what students write on, the papers are due **one week** after their presentation.
2. Significant secondary sources are specialized book publications (not textbooks), and/or scholarly journal articles and chapters in edited scholarly books. The use of electronic journals through the Laurier library system is of course encouraged. These journal articles then have to be cited the same way as if they were hard copy (i.e. without the electronic address). Some electronic sources do not provide the original journal pagination. If that is the case, they cannot be used.
3. The paper should contain a clearly defined investigation or argument (cf. my lecture on writing skills). As a rule of thumb, about 80% of the paper should be on text interpretation. The primary texts used have to be cited properly (book, chapter, paragraph etc. rather than just page numbers of the edition used).
4. **The papers are due one week after students' presentation, and they are due in class. Papers handed in any time later, even if it is on the same day, are automatically downgraded by half a grade (e.g. B to B-).** The same deduction then applies for each subsequent period in between classes (papers are no longer dated and stamped in the department office and must be deposited directly in my mail box).
5. All papers have to have the following information on the front page:
  - Name of student
  - Title of paper
  - Course number (i.e. PO280)
  - Name of instructor (i.e. Dr. Hueglin)
  - The number of the Group Presentation (i.e. GP1 to GP8)
  - The letter identifying the specific group (i.e. A, B, or C)
  - Due Date of the PaperAny of this information missing will automatically lead to a grade deduction for the paper.
6. Only stapled papers will be accepted. All others will be treated as not submitted.

## CITATIONS

All citations must be identified by:

**In-text reference:**

**Primary sources:** (author, chapter/paragraph etc.)

**Secondary sources:** (name: year, page)

complete bibliography at the end

(in other words: no footnotes or endnotes!)

## LATE PENALTY AND ACCEPTANCE

1. Apart from the grade deductions for incorrect paper submissions applying on the due day, further half-step deductions (e.g. from B+ to B) will be applied from class to class.
2. I will not accept papers after the final exam (there may be an exception for GP 7/8). Students will then have to petition.

## COMMUNICATION

An active **WLU e-mail** account is required as a means of communication. Please ensure that your account is active; check it regularly.

I do not use MLS. **Important general information only will be given in class.**

I strongly encourage students to **come to office hours** for all specific questions and problems particularly in relation to the essay.

Extensions or other accommodations as well as clarifications on any aspect of the course will only be discussed in person during office hours (or by appointment).

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Mon 12 Sep **Introduction and Writing Skills**

Wed 14 Sep **Introduction: Political Thought**

Mon 19 Sep **Lecture:** Locke

Wed 21 Sep **Lecture:** Constitution of the Five Nations

Mon 26 Sep **Workshop I**

Wed 28 Sep **GP1:** individual v. community

Mon 3 Oct **GP2:** unitary state v. confederation

Wed 5 Oct **Lecture:** Rousseau

Mon 17 Oct **Lecture:** Tocqueville

Wed 19 Oct **Workshop II**

Mon 24 Oct **GP3:** social contract v. popular sovereignty

- Wed 26 Oct **GP4:** general will v. tyranny of the majority
- Mon 31 Oct **Lecture:** Burke  
 Wed 2 Nov **Lecture:** Wollstonecraft
- Mon 7 Nov **Workshop III**  
 Wed 9 Nov **GP5:** prejudice v. equality
- Mon 14 Nov **GP6:** prescription v. emancipation  
 Wed 16 Nov **Lecture:** Nietzsche
- Mon 21 Nov **Lecture:** Marx  
 Wed 23 Nov **Workshop IV**
- Mon 28 Nov **GP7:** culture v. economy  
 Wed 30 Nov **GP8:** herd v. proletariat
- Mon 5 Dec **Course Review and Course Evaluations**  
 Wed 7 Dec **Wrap-Up**

## ASSIGNED READINGS

All lectures build on the textbook (Hueglin: Classical Debates). Read for each group of lectures the respective chapter in the book. The exception is the chapter on Locke v. Montesquieu: here you only read the part on Locke. There is no extra reading for the Constitution of the Five Nations.

Regarding the primary texts, you should read all but here is an indication of what is essential:

**Locke:** entire second Treatise

**Constitution of the Five Nations:** numbered sections 1-117 (pp. 30-60).

**Rousseau:** entire Social Contract

**Tocqueville** vol. 1, part 1, ch. 2, 8; part 2, ch. 1, 5, 8, 9; vol., part 1, ch. 2; part 2, ch. 12

**Burke:** esp. pp. 138-69, 183-206, 280, 372

**Wollstonecraft:** all of vindication/men; vindication/woman: ch. 1, 2, 4, 9, 12

**Marx:** entire Communist Manifesto

**Nietzsche:** paragraphs 2, 4, 42, 109, 116, 121, 125, 149, 174, 283, 285, 335, 343, 348, 349

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic integrity is greatly valued in this course. Academic misconduct occurs in a variety of forms. Students are required to familiarise themselves with the University policies on Plagiarism Academic Dishonesty as well as the associated penalties which can be severe. **Plagiarism:** According to the Academic Calendar (2016-17), plagiarism “involves using the thoughts, ideas, or writings of another person passing them off as your own (adapted from the Oxford English

Dictionary definition). It can involve taking credit for ideas that were not your own or using the words of others without properly citing them.” Further information can be found at <https://students.wlu.ca/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>. Should you have any questions about these issues please feel free to discuss them with me. **Collaboration:** all of the work produced by students needs to be the product of their own individual efforts. Although discussion of topics is to be expected this work needs to reflect original individual ideas be written independently.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

The University provides a large selection of professional, academic personal support services to assist students to succeed in their academic careers. Please consult the University website for available resources.

### ON BEHALF OF WLUSU ([wlsu.com](http://wlsu.com))

#### Foot Patrol Walk Home Service:

1.519.886.FOOT x3668

Foot Patrol is a volunteer operated walk-home service, available daily during evening hours. Male-female, radio-dispatched teams trained in Emergency First Aid are available on request to escort students to and from campus as well as to off-campus destinations, either by foot or by van.

#### Counselling Services and Peer Help Line:

1.886.281.PEER x7337

Counselling Services are available to help students deal with emotional, psychological and social challenges of university. Counselling, consultation or referrals are available at the Student Wellness Centre. Peer Help Line, a confidential listening, referral, information and support line, is available during evening hours to provide support.