

POL2295F: Women and the Philosophy of Rights (Special Topics)



Department of Political Science, Huron University

Dr. Sara MacDonald

Thursdays 9:30-12:30 – HUC V207

POLS 2295F: Women and The Philosophy of Rights

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Office Hours: Tuesday: 1:30-2:30, Wednesday 10:30-11:30 (or by appt.)

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Course Description

Historically, beauty has been claimed as a cause of injustice. The Trojan War occurs because of Helen's great beauty and Adam is expelled from the Garden because of the temptations of Eve. Those in power have used these examples as reasons to both idolize and tyrannize women. In this course, we will explore works by women, philosophical as well as literary, who reverse this proposition - seeking to understand beauty as a source of justice and thereby create a space in our political landscape for works of the imagination and those for whom these give voice.

Course Objectives:

1. Students learn to read and think critically about political ideas.
2. Students gain the ability to analyze ideas and situations, make considered decisions and form coherent, reasoned and fact-based judgements.
3. Students become familiar with a selection of the writings of both political philosophers and literature.
4. Students learn how to be clear and concise writers.
5. Students gain experience in presenting a seminar.

Required Texts

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Oxford Classics, ISBN: 019953716X

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, Vintage Books, ISBN: 1400033411

Sappho, *Stung With Love*, Penguin, ISBN: 0140455574

Elain Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*, Princeton University Press, ISBN: 0691089590

Virginia Wolfe, *Mrs. Dalloway*, Harcourt, ISBN, 0156628708

Evaluation

2 Essays 6-8 pages 15% each

1 "Seminar" Presentation 15%

2 Seminar Responses 10%

Short Assignments, including 1 page responses, quizzes, etc. 10%

Creative Response 5%

Participation and Attendance 15%

Exam 15%

Class Format

This class will be discussion intensive. We will discuss and debate the ideas raised in the texts being considered. For this to work we all have to read the assigned material and treat it as well as each other with care. While we certainly will disagree about some things, it's important that we do so in a way that respects one another.

Tentative Schedule of Classes

Date	Reading	Assignments Due	
Sept. 6	Class Intro.		
Sept. 13	Frankenstein		
Sept. 20	Frankenstein		Presentations Begin
Sept. 27	Creative Project		
Oct. 4	Scarry	Essay 1 Assign.	
Reading Week			
Oct. 18	Scarry/Wolfe		Creative Project Due
Oct. 25	Wolfe	Essay 1 Due	
Nov. 1	Weil		
Nov. 8	Weil/Sapho	Essay 2 Assign	
Nov. 15	Sapho/Arendt		
Nov. 22	Arendt/Beloved	Essay 2 Due	
Nov. 29	Beloved		
Dec. 6	Beloved		

COURSE GUIDELINES

GRADING OF ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments will be graded on the basis of two equally crucial components: (1) appropriate and adequate substantive content, describing and discussing the issue, idea or theory under consideration; and (2) the student's evaluative judgement employed in the critical assessment of the issue, idea or theory.

LATE POLICY

There is a late penalty of 2 marks applied for each day past the deadline for the submission of papers, weekends included. *Papers more than two weeks late will not be accepted.*

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. As each class counts for one weeks worth of material, any student who has more than one unexcused absence, will lose 2% of their grade for each additional class.

COMPUTERS/CELL PHONES

As this will be an intensive, discussion-based course, the use of computers in the classroom is not advisable. Those who do use computers may do so only for the purposes of taking notes. If you are using your computer or cell phone in class for other purposes you will be immediately asked to leave the classroom and not return until the following week.

See <https://t.co/tfAhaE5MZz?sr=true>

PAPER SUBMISSION

Essays must be emailed to the instructor smacd245@hurown.uwo.ca by **midnight the day they are due**. All other written assignments must be handed to the instructor directly in class or placed in the essay drop-off box outside the FASS Office, A15, in the Administrative Building at Huron.

ESSAY DOCUMENTATION

Students must use standard social science reference, footnoting and bibliographic form. Whenever you use the words or the ideas of someone else, you must give a footnote, endnote or reference, or else you are committing an act of plagiarism (see Plagiarism and Other Academic Offences below). Each note or reference must include the name of the author/editor, the complete title of the book (or the complete title of the essay/chapter if an edited collection or journal article, and then the name of book/journal in which it appears, plus volume number), the name of the publisher and the place and date of publication, and a page number. Subsequent references to the same source should appear in short form in the notes.

CITING INTERNET SOURCES

All information obtained through the Internet must be cited in footnotes and bibliographies. Internet citations must include all of the same information that is provided when citing a book or article. This includes the name of the author, name of the organisation that has posted the website, the title, the date that the website was consulted, and the complete website address.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ 90–100%
- A 80–89%
- B 70–79%
- C 60–69%
- D 50–59%
- F below 50%

ESSAY GUIDELINES

- (1) **Grade for essays.** Students write two essays each term. The essays are each worth 15% of the final grade.
- (2) **Submission of essays.** Email your essays to sara.macdonald@huron.uwo.ca.
- (3) **Title page.** The title page of the essay must clearly identify by number which question is addressed in the essay. See the list of essay topics above.
- (4) **Essay format.** A clear introductory paragraph stating the issue or question to be addressed, and the key elements of the discussion in your paper, and conclusions reached. The essay must explain the philosopher's position(s) and main arguments, employing quotations where appropriate, and should include a **critical analysis** of the philosopher's ideas. For example: Are there any problems of logic or coherence? Do the ideas make sense? Are there different possible interpretations of what the philosopher has written? Are there any issues related to the feasibility of the ideas? A brief concluding paragraph summarizing your interpretation, principal arguments, and conclusions.
- **Note.** Please consult Professor MacDonald if you require any further assistance with the research, formatting or organization of your essays.
- (5) **What makes a good political theory essay?** A clearly stated thesis. A solid grasp of the theory/ideas under consideration. Appropriate use of quotations, illustrations, and arguments. Quotations should be integrated into sentences so that the whole sentence reads grammatically. A thoughtful analysis of the theory/ideas. The essay should be well structured with a smooth transition between points/paragraphs, and it should be well-written (properly structured sentences, with appropriate terminology, grammar and punctuation).
- (6) **Endnotes or Footnotes.** Footnotes/endnotes are needed for all quotations and for ideas that are borrowed or paraphrased from texts. The first footnote/endnote citation of a text must include the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to. Succeeding citations to the same text should be rendered in short form.

- (7) **Bibliography.** Essays must conclude with a bibliography of all sources used in the writing of the essay, including the full name of the author, complete title of the work, place and date of publication, and the page number quoted or referred to.
- (8) **Page numbering.** The pages of the essay should be consecutively numbered.
- (9) **Italicize or underline the titles of books or pamphlets.** The titles of articles or chapters should not be italicized, but enclosed by quotation marks.

(10) **Secondary sources.** No Secondary sources are to be used.

Seminar Presentations: Each student will sign up for one 15 minute seminar presentation. In your presentation you will address a significant element of the assigned reading—something that stands out to you as important or problematic. You will tie the work in question to at least one other work covered in the class and show how the authors are in conversation, even if they are in disagreement, about the point that you have raised. Be certain to directly reference the texts in question and lead us through the argument or point you are made. At the end of your presentation you will raise at least two questions for the class to take up. At least 24 hours before your presentation you will post the key points of your argument to OWL.

You will be graded on the substance of your comments, the depth of your knowledge of the particular topic and the assigned reading, and your ability to tie the work to other texts in an interesting and important way.

Seminar Responses: Each student will sign up for two 5 minute seminar responses. While your comments will be primary based on the material the presenter posts on OWL, you should also address any important new information that comes out in the seminar presentation. These are not meant to be critiques of the presentation, but a way reflecting on someone else's argument.

GUIDE FOR CITATIONS IN ESSAYS FOOTNOTES/ENDNOTES and BIBLIOGRAPHIES

1. Bibliography.

1.1. Must include all works used in the research for the essay, not only those works expressly cited or quoted.

1.2. *Complete publication details* must be given for every item included in the bibliography and endnotes or footnotes.

2. Footnotes or endnotes.

2.1. Either footnotes or endnotes are to be used for citations, not citations in brackets within the body of the essay. Citations in brackets are only acceptable in tutorial reports.

2.2. Sequential Arabic numbers for footnotes/endnotes: 1, 2, 3, etc.

2.3. In the first citation in a footnote/endnote *complete publication details* must be given (as per the bibliography),

together with the specific page(s).

2.4. Subsequent citation of a work for which you have already given complete publication details in a previous

footnote/endnote, should be rendered in short form. "Ibid." may be used (meaning the same as before, i.e. the work cited in the previous footnote/endnote, plus the page number).

3. Examples of Citations in a Bibliography and in Footnotes or Endnotes

Complete publication details: Plato, "Crito," in *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. John M. Cooper, 3rd edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001).

Short form: Plato, "Crito," in *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, p.20.

Complete publication details Machiavelli

Complete publication details: Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1513–16), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton, 2nd edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008). **Short form:**

Machiavelli, *The Prince*, in *Modern Political Thought*, ed. Wootton, p.12.

Complete publication details: Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten books of Titus Livy* (ca. 1517), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton, 2nd edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008). **Short form:** Machiavelli, *Discourses*, in *Modern Political Thought*, ed. Wootton, p.67.

Complete publication details: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton, 2nd edn. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008).

Short form: Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *Modern Political Thought*, ed. Wootton, pp.176–77.



The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.