

Political Philosophy



Fall 2025

Mondays 11:30 pm–2:20 pm, D 121

Dr. Joseph Carew

Contact: joseph.carew@ufv.ca

Website: www.josephcarew.com

The University of the Fraser Valley is located on the unceded territory of the Stó:lō peoples. We gratefully acknowledge our ability to live and work on the traditional territory.

PHIL 210: Political Philosophy

Course Description

This course will introduce students to prominent figures and problems in the history of political philosophy from the early modern period to the present day. We will focus on three frameworks—social contract theory (Hobbes, Rousseau), dialectics (Hegel, Marx), and ideology critique (Žižek)—and how each offers a distinct way of understanding the nature of politics. In so doing, we will explore how different thinkers seek to understand the structures that hold societies together and the antagonisms that pull them apart. Topics to be examined include, but are not limited to: the emergence of the state, the role of conflict, the relationship between the individual and society, and the unmasking of the lies and illusions that pervade the political order.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate central concepts in political philosophy.
- Interpret highly influential positions in political philosophy.
- Analyze different approaches in political philosophy.
- Provide close readings of foundational and important texts in political philosophy.
- Apply theories in political philosophy in conversation and writing.

Texts

The textbook listed below is required and is the basis for coursework. It is available through the bookstore. Other readings will be made available on Brightspace.

- Andrew Bailey et al., eds. *The Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought: From Machiavelli to Nietzsche*. Broadview, 2018.

Background Reading

If you are seeking supplementary texts to help you navigate the world of philosophy, there are many excellent resources available. Both the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) and the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) are free and reputable. Another valuable resource is the [Very Short Introductions](#) book series published by Oxford University Press. All three are written by experts for a general audience, making them ideal for students. They are a great place to get your bearings in the discipline.

Requirements and Grading	Holistic Assessment	15%	
	Exam 1	25%	October 6
	Exam 2	30%	November 17
	Final Exam	30%	<i>See university exam schedule</i>

Holistic Assessment

Holistic assessment will be determined not only by regular attendance and contributions to discussions, exercises, and activities but also by preparation, improvement in academic performance throughout the semester, and eagerness to acquire course-specific knowledge and skills.

Exams

The three exams will consist of short essays on the philosophical concepts, theories, and arguments studied throughout the term. The final exam is non-cumulative.

Course Schedule

Unit	Date	Topic
	Sep. 8	Introduction to Course
1	Sep. 15	<p>The State of Nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>, The Introduction, Part 1, Chapters 13-14, and Part II, Chapters 17-18 Recommended: Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>, The Introduction, Part II, Chapter 19
2	Sep. 22	<p>The General Will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i>, Book 1 and Book 2, Chapters 1-6 Recommended: Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i>, Book 3, Chapters 1-6
3	Sep. 29	<p>The Struggle for Recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i>, "The Truth of Self-Certainty", ¶¶167-168, 174-175, and 177 Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i>, "Lordship and Bondage" Recommended: Stern, <i>The Routledge Guidebook to Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"</i>, Chapter 3 <p><i>First and third readings on Brightspace</i></p>
	Oct. 6	Exam 1
	Oct. 13	Thanksgiving—Holiday
4	Oct. 20	<p>Contradiction, the Motor of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i>, "The Ethical Order" Recommended: Stern, <i>The Routledge Guidebook to Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"</i>, Chapter 5 <p><i>Both readings on Brightspace</i></p>
5	Oct. 27	<p>Alienation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marx, "Thesis on Feuerbach" Marx, "Estranged Labor," <i>Economic and Political Manuscripts</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended: Marx, "On Bruno Bauer's <i>On the Jewish Question</i>"
6	Nov. 3	<p>Class Struggle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marx, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>
	Nov. 10	Reading Break
	Nov. 17	Exam 2
7	Nov. 24	<p>The Critique of Ideology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Žižek, <i>The Sublime Object of Ideology</i> Recommended: Carew, "Real, Imaginary, Symbolic," <i>The Bloomsbury Handbook to Slavoj Žižek</i> <p><i>Both readings on Brightspace</i></p>
8	Dec. 1	<p>Fascism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Žižek, <i>The Sublime Object of Ideology</i> <p><i>Reading on Brightspace</i></p>
9	Apr. 11	The Political Now

Course Procedures and Policies

Professionalism

I require that students maintain a professional attitude. This entails doing all readings before each session, paying attention during lectures, participating in class discussions with meaningful interventions, completing in-class activities, arriving on time, not leaving early, and being respectful to the instructor and one's peers.

Email Communication

The subject line should include the course number and the nature of the inquiry. I do my best to respond within 2 workdays. If that timeframe has passed without a reply, feel free to reach out with a friendly reminder. Should it be an urgent matter, indicate so in the subject line. That way, I can prioritize getting back to you as soon as possible. Kindly note that UFV's Instructional Responsibilities Policy 46 states that "Instructors are not expected to respond to student emails on weekends or statutory holidays."

AI Use

Students are strictly prohibited from using generative AI for any requirements. In alignment with UFV's Student Academic Misconduct Policy 70, it "shall be an offense knowingly to [...] submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source." This includes work created by generative AI tools.

Missed Exams

Please contact me within 24 hours, if possible. If you are excused (for medical reasons, bereavement, etc., as determined on a case-by-case basis), you must reschedule through [Assessment Services](#).

Rewrites

While I admire the dedication to academic success that students show when they request a rewrite, I do not permit rewrites of exams. It is inequitable to offer some students and not others the opportunity to improve their grades. I encourage you to make use of my office hours throughout the term for any specific questions or concerns you may have regarding course material, learning outcomes, and requirements. For your information, the [Academic Success Centre](#) and the [Library](#) also offer personalized support in the form of [tutoring](#) and [consultation, writing support tools](#), and [Citation Style Guides](#) to aid

you in your studies. By taking advantage of all the resources available to you, you will be prepared for each requirement by its scheduled time.

Grade Grubbing

Grade grubbing is when a student requests, threatens, or pleads for a grade increase for no legitimate academic reason. Instances include asking or begging for a grade bump, seeking preferential treatment, disputing grades based on subjective rather than objective criteria, and seeking to complete requirements long after they were scheduled or due. The course syllabus clearly articulates students' responsibilities in demonstrating learning outcomes through the listed requirements and policies regarding missed requirements. Furthermore, the grading scheme and rubrics will be made available on Brightspace. There will be no grade changes that are not rightfully earned.



"Man is by nature a political animal."

— Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, 1253a3-4