

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**PHIL 1010: Introductory Philosophy:  
Introduction to Social and Political Issues (F'18)**

**Course Description**

This course is a philosophical introduction to current social and political issues. Public discourse is in a sorry state: partisanship is rampant; the left is becoming alarmingly authoritarian; the right is becoming increasingly transgressive. Fortunately, philosophy provides us with the tools necessary to navigate, examine, and evaluate positions in a clear and systematic manner. In this course, we will consider many of the most important problems of modern times. It will directly deal with current events and seek to understand their causes and effects. Topics of discussion will include but are not limited to: the state of nature; free speech; the legislation of force; racism; affirmative action; privilege; rights; the redistribution of wealth; and, the permissibility of violent rebellion.

**Contact Information**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Sections</b>	<b>Office &amp; Hours</b>
Dr. Kyle Bromhall	kbromhal@uoguelph.ca	Instructor	TBA

**Required Course Texts**

1. Warburton, Nigel. *Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford UP, 2009).
2. Wolff, Jonathan. *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, 3d. ed. (Oxford UP, 2016).
3. Various readings posted on Ares.

**Primary Learning Outcomes**

- Knowledge: Students will be able to identify and critically evaluate the practical and cultural significance of central issues in social and political philosophy.
- Skills: Students will develop the ability to prepare a sustained piece of academic philosophical writing in which: a topic is articulated clearly; a stance on that topic is supported by appropriate and well thought-through reasons; and, the paper is prepared efficiently and clearly.
- Values: Students will acquire an interest and ability to contribute to and participate in civic life, and articulate and understand different viewpoints in the realm of discourse. Students will appreciate the role that viewpoint plays discourse, and how to accommodate the viewpoints of others without abandoning their own.

# Course Requirements

## Summary

Requirement	Description	Weight	Date
Seminar Engagement	Near-weekly reflections and ongoing participation.	15%	Ongoing
Response Papers	Two short, formal essays.	55%	14 Oct & 11 Nov
Final Examination	One sit-down, cumulative examination.	30%	TBA

## Seminar Engagement (15%)

This course requirement has two components: near-weekly reflections and seminar participation.

The reflections will be short (250-word) responses to questions about the week's reading(s). Each reflection will receive one of three grades: **Unsatisfactory** (1 point); **Satisfactory** (2 points); or, **Excellent** (3 points).

Participation will be assessed by your Teaching Assistant on a weekly basis. If you make a meaningful contribution to your seminar, you will receive a bonus point on your reflection for that week. If you do not, you will not. *You must submit a reflection to receive a bonus point on it.*

Once you have received fifteen points for this component of the course, you are no longer required to submit further reflections. Those who have not received fifteen points by the end of the term will receive a grade equal to their total points.

## Response Papers (55%)

The first paper is a short (1000-word) essay on the material from the unit "Liberalism: Not What You Think It Is" on a topic assigned by the Instructor. Submissions close at **2300** (11:00 PM) on **14 October**. This essay is worth **25%** of your final grade.

The second paper is a shortish (1250-word) essay on the material from the unit "The Past is Now!" on a topic assigned by the Instructor. Submissions close at **2300** (11:00 PM) on **11 November**. This essay is worth **30%** of your final grade.

While these essays will be guided and shaped by the questions at hand, these papers are *formal essays* and ought to be treated as such; that is, they have an introduction, a thesis statement, a conclusion, and formal language throughout.

## Final Examination (30%)

Who doesn't love an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency with the material under time constraints? Love it or hate it, your final examination for this course will be held on **at a date, time and location** to be determined by the helpful folks at the Registrar. I don't pick the time. Sorry. Anyway, you should expect standard fare: multiple choice, short answer, and the like. And yes, it is cumulative to the beginning of the course.

# Course Policies

## Course Requirements

### Due dates & late penalties

The due dates for all assignments are found on the second page of this syllabus. With the obvious exception of the near-weekly reflections, you will have at least two weeks—and usually longer—from the time that the assignment is distributed to when the assignment is due.

All deadlines are firm, and lateness is penalized harshly. All assignments are date-stamped automatically by the online submission system; your *latest* date stamp will be taken as your submission date. **Late assignments are not accepted.** There are no make-up assignments or extra credit. The only exceptions shall be for medical or compassionate reasons, provided that you have the necessary evidence.

TL;DR: if you foresee a problem, talk to us ASAP, and bring evidence.

### Submitting assignments

The near-weekly reflections are to be submitted directly to your Teaching Assistant, in paper, at the end of your tutorial.

The response papers are to be submitted through the dropbox function of CourseLink by the time indicated on the assignment or as amended. You may not submit assignments through email. You must submit these assignments in either \*.docx or \*.doc format. You have access to Office 365 **for free through the university**; Microsoft has a free online version of Word that you can use if for some reason you don't. I will post the link on the course website.

*NB. Under no circumstances are you to submit work in \*.odt (OpenOffice) or \*.pages (Apple Pages) format, as both CourseLink and Turnitin have difficulties processing those file types. DON'T DO IT.*

### Style and formatting

Formatting plays a subtle but crucial role in the development of your papers. Clean, consistent formatting ensures that your reader's energies are focused where they should be—on your content—instead having to overcome technical inefficiencies. Each assignment will have formatting requirements, **including citation style**, that you are required to follow. Failure to follow the requirements will be penalized.

## Technology

### CourseLink

I will use CourseLink extensively. There you will find news items, errata, grades, minor announcements, the course FAQ, assignments, the assignment dropbox, and so on. It is your responsibility to check the course website on a regular basis. If you have a question, you should check there (especially the FAQ) first.

## Turnitin

This university has adopted Turnitin to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the university.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

## Document distribution

All non-textbook readings are on electronic reserve through the library. The library will determine the format in which they are available and which functions are enabled.

All lectures will be posted in Portable Document Format (PDF) on CourseLink for online viewing. You will need a program like Adobe Reader, Nitro Reader, or Microsoft Word to open these files. Note that printing has been disabled.

All assignments will be posted in PDF on the course website with printing enabled.

## Laptop and smartphone use

You should be aware that there is a battle waging in pedagogical circles about whether laptops should be allowed in classrooms, or whether they should be banned outright. Here is the problem: Study after study have shown that laptops have a negative effect not only on *your* ability to retain and process information, but also on that of *everyone else*. That said, they can serve a benefit if and only if they are used properly and are a fixture in an accessible classroom.

So here is my compromise: Laptops are allowed in lecture just as long as they are being used for course-related purposes. If I deem that they are causing a nuisance, I will take measures such as requiring laptop users to all sit together in the back of the room or banning them. Your Teaching Assistant has absolute authority with respect to what s/he will allow in tutorials.

Smartphones have no place in the classroom. Refrain from using them. If it is difficult for you to go through the entire class without interacting with your phone, you should seek help. I may ask you to leave the room to go get said help if I catch you using your phone during lecture.

## Contacting the Instructor

Email is my preferred method of communication outside of class or office hours. I will try my best to respond to your email within a few hours of receiving it, although please understand that circumstances may not always permit this. I am also available to talk via Skype by appointment only.

Note that you should be directing inquiries to your Teaching Assistant first. They will have their own policies for contacting them, but will all hold office hours and will all respond to email.

## Use of recording devices

You may not record lectures or seminars.

## **Governance**

### **Distractions**

Be aware of actions that others may find distracting. Talking, accessing social media, texting and so on all have a *scientifically-demonstrated* negative effect on your grade, but also on those around you. It is also extremely disrespectful. Therefore, please refrain from doing anything that would distract others. If any of these things start to be a problem, I may impose limitations on the class and/or ask the offenders to leave the room.

### **Tolerance**

More so than in many other disciplines, philosophy asks you to vigorously and precisely defend your own position and to attack those of others. This does not mean that at any time you should ever show any sort of disrespect towards another student or use abusive language. As philosophers, we exhibit significant tolerance for differences of view, and it is expected that you demonstrate this tolerance. Offense is one thing; abuse is another.

### **Transparency**

This course is not a democracy, but that does not mean that we are inscrutable. If you have an issue with something in the course, we will provide you with a full explanation of the process. We will honestly reconsider our position should the situation call for it.

### **Accessibility**

I am passionate about making my classrooms as accessible as possible. If any of my policies or classroom management strategies are making the course difficult for you, please do not hesitate to contact me about it. I will do everything within my power to ensure everyone has full access to the course.

### **Seminars**

Unless your Teaching Assistant explicitly specifies otherwise, you should expect that seminar sections will follow the same policies as lectures.

## **Territorial Acknowledgement**

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

# College of Arts Standard Statements

## Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their mail.uoguelph.ca email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

## When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and email contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

## Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, 02 November 2018**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar.

## Copies of Out-of-Class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable backup copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

## Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email [sas@uoguelph.ca](mailto:sas@uoguelph.ca), or see the website: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/>

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

## Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment

that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

## **Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## **Resources**

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

## Course Schedule

*All information subject to change with notice.*

Week	Topic	Day	Readings
01 Sep 03	No lectures or tutorials.	Mon	[no class]
		Weds	[no class]

### Liberalism: Not What You Think It Is

02 Sep 10	Standpoints	Mon	Syllabus; Intro (IPP 1-5)
		Weds	E: James
03 Sep 17	The State of Nature	Mon	Hobbes (IPP: 9-17)
		Weds	Locke (IPP: 17-24)
04 Sep 24	The Social Contract	Mon	The Social Contract (IPP: 39-49)
		Weds	The Principle of Fairness (IPP:55-60)
05 Oct 01	Free Speech I	Mon	Mill on liberty (IPP: 104-114)
		Weds	FS: Chapter 2

### The Past is Now!

06 Oct 08	Canada's Shameful Legacy	Mon	[Rescheduled to Nov 30]
		Weds	E: Truth & Rec; Probs (IPP: 125-32)
07 Oct 15	Racism & Oppression	Mon	E: Du Bois; Justice (IPP:188-95)
		Weds	E: West (Ch 1)
08 Oct 22	Male Privilege: What It Is & Isn't	Mon	E: McIntosh; Misogyny (IPP: 200-3)
		Weds	E: Mulvey
09 Oct 29	Equality & Equity	Mon	E: Cool; IPP: Rights for Women
	Free Speech II	Weds	FS: Chapter 3

### Democracy: The Worst Form of Government\*

10 Nov 05	The Lie of <i>Vox Populi</i>	Mon	Plato... (IPP: 66-77)
		Weds	Rousseau... (IPP: 77-93)
11 Nov 12	Democracy vs democracy	Mon	E: Dunning.
		Weds	E: Dewey
12 Nov 19	Civil Disobedience	Mon	Rawls (IPP: 153-170)
		Weds	E: King
13 Nov 26	Free Speech III	Mon	E: Arendt
		Weds	FS: Chapter 5 & Conclusion
		Fri	[Review]

\*except all the others

**Legend.** E: Electronic Reserve; FS: *Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction*; IPP: *Introduction to Political Philosophy*.