

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**PHIL 1010: Introductory Philosophy:  
Introduction to Social and Political Issues (W'19)**

**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.

## Assessments

### Seminar Engagement (15%)

This course requirement has two components: near-weekly assignments (NWAs) and seminar participation.

The NWAs are short (250-word) responses to questions about the week's reading(s). They are pass-fail; each pass is worth one point. They have a particular structure that you must follow *to the letter* in order to pass. Consult their specifications for details.

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 NWA for that week. If you do not, you will not. *You must submit a reflection to receive a bonus point on it.*

You will receive equal to the number of points you earn, even if you exceed fifteen 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 **12 February**. 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. 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

### Preparing and Submitting Your Work

#### How to submit your work

You must submit a paper copy of each NWA directly to your Teaching Assistant at the end of your seminar. No electronic submission is necessary or possible.

You must submit your Response Papers through the dropbox function of CourseLink. No paper copy is required or desired.

**You may not submit any work via email, at any time, for any reason.**

#### Electronic submissions

All electronic submissions must be in one of the following file formats: Microsoft Office (docx, doc) (preferred); Portable Document Format (pdf); Rich Text Format (rtf).

Under no circumstances are you to submit work in the following formats: Google Docs (gdoc); Apple Pages (pages); LibreOffice (ott, odt). CourseLink and Turnitin are unable to process these file types.

Any submission that is unable to be processed by CourseLink or Turnitin will not be accepted. This includes corrupted or empty files.

#### Due dates & late penalties

NWAs are due at the end of your seminar. If you do not hand in a NWA, for any reason, you will receive a **zero** on that NWA.

Response Papers that are late by **six hours** or less (as indicated by the latest date stamp on dropbox) will incur a non-negotiable **5%** penalty. You will know if you are incurring this penalty because dropbox will indicate that your paper is late. Assignments **more than six hours** late are **no longer accepted**; that is, you will receive a **zero** on that assignment.

Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will generally only be made on medical, humanitarian, or compassionate grounds. I reserve the right to require evidence for longer or last-minute requests. You should contact me as soon as you are aware of circumstances which could compromise your ability to submit work on time.

#### How to format your work

All formatting requirements can be found in the course Style Guide. It is your responsibility to know and follow these requirements. Note that the Response Papers must follow **Chicago Style (Notes & Bibliography)** for citations.

## Turnitin

**The boilerplate.** 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.

**A note about Originality Scores.** When you submit your work to Turnitin, Turnitin will generate an "Originality Score" for your assignment. The Originality Score merely represents the percentage of your paper (by word count) that can be found in other papers in their database. It **does not** indicate how much of your paper is plagiarized. In fact, it makes no judgement about plagiarism at all. There are **no penalties** associated with having an Originality Score of any value. It is up to the Instructor and/or Teaching Assistant to interpret the Originality Score and decide whether any academic misconduct has occurred.

## Engaging with the Course

### Where to find course-related information

I will use CourseLink extensively. There you will find news items, errata, grades, minor announcements, assignments, the dropbox, and so on. It is your responsibility to check it regularly. If you have a question, you should check there first.

Moderately and highly important announcements will be made in lecture and/or via email. You are responsible for knowing what is going on in the course; the best way to do that is to go to all lectures and seminars, and keep an eye on your email inbox.

### How to access readings, assignments, and lectures

All non-textbook readings are on electronic reserve through the library.

All assignments will be posted in PDF on CourseLink.

All lectures will be posted as non-printable PDFs on CourseLink, usually within forty-eight hours. **Please do not bug me about this. They will be up when they are up.**

**A note about availability.** Course material from week 02 onwards will only be available after you have successfully completed the introductory quiz on CourseLink. We will give no consideration on the basis of not having access to the course material.

### In-lecture technology policies

**Laptops** are allowed in lecture just as long as they are being used for course-related purposes. I reserve the right to take whatever measures necessary to mitigate any problems they cause.

**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 reserve the right to remove repeat offenders from the lecture.

You may **not** record lectures.

## How to contact us

The Teaching Assistants and I will hold weekly **office hours**, except for Week 07 or when announced in advance. This is the best time to get personalized, detailed answers to whatever questions you may have. Office hours will be posted in this Course Outline and on the CourseLink homepage for this course.

Outside of office hours, **email** is the official mode of communication. You should always use your Guelph email address for any communication for this course.

I cannot speak for the TAs, but I do not answer any emails marked high priority, high importance, or have the words "URGENT" or "IMPORTANT" in the title. They are deleted without being opened.

**A note about response times.** If you email one of us during business hours (0900-1700), you should expect a response some time that day. If you email one of us during the evening, you should expect a response by the end of business the following day. If you email one of us on the weekend, you should expect a response by the end of business on Monday at the absolute latest.

## Governance

### The Instructor-Teaching Assistant paradigm

This course has an **Instructor** and multiple **Teaching Assistants**.

The **Instructor** is responsible for the planning and execution of the course from inception to completion. The Instructor chooses topics, themes, and readings, as well as developing appropriate assessments, rubrics, and course policies. The Instructor develops and delivers most lectures. The Instructor is responsible for ensuring that students are treated in a consistent and fair manner across all seminar sections.

**Teaching Assistants (TAs)** are the semi-autonomous seminar leaders and front-line contact between you and the course. TAs develop learning-enhancing activities for seminar time and have the authority to set policies which ensure effective learning. They also do the bulk of the grading and are responsible for ensuring equitable treatment between students within their seminars.

### If you are dissatisfied with a grade

Grading is a complicated process and we do not assign grades lightly. Whatever grade you receive is what your TA judges to best reflect the quality of your work, given the assignment's specifications and drawing from their many years of experience.

Your TA will leave you detailed comments about your work. If they are unclear or suggest that your TA has missed something in your paper, then you should contact them about it. If things are still unclear, you should schedule a face-to-face meeting to go over your paper and receive a more detailed rationale for your grade. If the TA deems it appropriate, they may decide, at their discretion, to: revise your grade; regrade the assignment entirely; or, let the grade stand. They will make this decision within twenty-four hours of your meeting, and may consult me for advice.

In most cases, it is inappropriate for me to intervene with grading. However, part of my role is to ensure that grading is consistent and fair across all sections. If and only if you have met with your TA and still believe--not feel--that you are being graded unfairly, then it is appropriate to ask me to look into it. Cases are taken on an individual basis, and revisions are exceedingly rare.

**A note about cooling off.** As a word of advice, you should only contact someone about your assignment after you have waiting twenty-four hours after receiving your grade. This helps cooler heads prevail.

## **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.

## Course Schedule

All information subject to change with notice.

Week	Topic	Day	Readings
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### Liberalism: Not What You Think It Is

01 Jan 07	Standpoints	Mon	Course Outline
		Weds	James
02 Jan 14	The State of Nature	Mon	Hobbes (IPP: 9-17)
		Weds	Locke (IPP: 17-24)
03 Jan 21	The Social Contract	Mon	The Social Contract (IPP: 39-49)
		Weds	The Principle of Fairness (IPP:55-60)
04 Jan 28	Liberty and Duty	Mon	Mill on liberty (IPP: 104-114)
		Weds	Probs with liberalism
05 Feb 04	Free Speech, I	Mon	FS: Chapter 2

### The Past is Now!

05 Feb 06	Racism & Oppression	Weds	E: Truth & Rec; Probs (IPP: 125-32)
06 Feb 11		Mon	E: Du Bois; Justice (IPP:188-95)
		Weds	E: West (Ch 1)
07 Feb 18	<b>WINTER BREAK</b>		
08 Feb 25	Privilege: What It Is & Isn't	Mon	E: McIntosh; Misogyny (IPP: 200-3)
		Weds	E: Mulvey
09 Mar 04	Equality & Equity	Mon	E: Cool; IPP: Rights for Women
	Free Speech II	Weds	FS: Chapter 3

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

10 Mar 11	The Lie of <i>Vox Populi</i>	Mon	Plato... (IPP: 66-77)
		Weds	Rousseau... (IPP: 77-90)
11 Mar 18	Your Guide to Mob Rule	Mon	Rousseau... (IPP: 90-94)
		Weds	E: Dunning.
12 Mar 25	...except all the others	Mon	Rawls (IPP: 153-170)
	Civil Disobedience	Weds	E: King
13 Apr 01		Free Speech III	Mon
		Weds	FS: Chapter 5 & Conclusion

\*except all the others

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