



POIR617

Thinking Politically

S2 External 2015

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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W6A 429

Lecturer

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to GradCertPP or GradCertIntRel

Corequisites

Co-badged status

POIR617

Unit description

This unit presents an introduction to key political concepts such as justice, equality, democracy and the rule of law, as well as the role of morality in political judgement. It explores the concept of ideology and examines the most commonly encountered ideologies in current political debates, including liberalism, nationalism, conservatism, and fundamentalism. The unit examines the work of key classical political thinkers including Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli and Hobbes, and applies their ideas to contemporary political and policy debates.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form

Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts

Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory

The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Dialogue	20%	Friday 21 August
Major Essay	30%	Friday 9 Oct
Exam	40%	examination period
Participation	10%	ongoing

Dialogue

Due: **Friday 21 August**

Weighting: **20%**

Imaginary dialogue

Instructions: Construct a three way dialogue (modelled on Plato's writings) between Plato, Gordon Graham, and a modern voter. The dialogue should focus on the key issues that are raised in Graham's essay 'Reason and Politics', (from *The Case Against the Democratic State*) in week 3 of the unit. The dialogues of Plato and Graham should reflect their central ideas and you are to imagine how they might respond to each other. The 'modern voter' can play a role akin to one of the minor characters in Plato's dialogues (such as Glaucon or Adeimantus in the *Republic*) who could be convinced either way.

The mark you receive will be based on the following criteria: demonstrated understanding of the central ideas; critical analysis; creativity; style and presentation.

Length: 900-1100 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts

Major Essay

Due: **Friday 9 Oct**

Weighting: **30%**

Essay 1500-2000 words. (2500 words for POIR617 students) Questions and instructions to be distributed in week 5 of unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
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- The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Exam

Due: **examination period**

Weighting: **40%**

2 hour exam

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
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- The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Tutorial participation for internal students. Online participation for external students

On successful completion you will be able to:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory

Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

Day and External

This unit will use:

ilearn and echo recordings for lectures. You will need access to a computer and internet.

Times and Locations for Lectures and Tutorials:

Lectures: Thursday 11-12 and 3-4.

W5A. P.G.Price Theatre

Tutorials: consult the MQ timetables website: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>

Required and Recommended resources:

Most of the unit readings can be found on e-reserve in the library. Type the unit code or name into the multi-search facility. Many of the classic texts that we read in this unit can be accessed electronically. These texts are listed in the unit schedule on the ilearn site. However you might like to purchase hard copies of some of these texts and they are available relatively cheaply in the Penguin series. These texts include: Plato, *The Republic*, Aristotle, *The Politics*, Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Thomas More, *Utopia*, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*.

A recommended textbook for this unit is Bruce Haddock, *A History of Political Thought* (Polity, 2008). There are copies of this available in the reserve section of the library and the co-op has some copies for purchase.

Feedback:

Feedback and unit evaluation

The Faculty of Arts values student feedback and seeks to continually improve its teaching. At present, the Faculty collects student feedback in two ways:

1. Anonymous evaluation surveys which are disseminated at the completion of each unit.
2. Student feedback meetings which are held twice a year in the Faculty of Arts. These meetings are advertised on campus and all students are encouraged to attend.

Based on feedback obtained from past students, this unit has been adapted in the following ways:

Some alteration of unit content and assessment tasks.

Unit Schedule

Week 1. Theory and politics

Week 2. The Greek Polis; The Sophists and Socrates; Philosophy, Rhetoric and Politics.

Week 3. Plato on Politics as an Art.

Week 4. Aristotle on Politics, Rhetoric, and the Human Good.

Week 5. Thomas More - Utopia

Week 6. Machiavelli on Power, Virtue and Politics

Week 7. Thomas Hobbes, the English Civil War, and the New Civil Science

Week 8. Reading Week.

Week 9 The Concept of Ideology and Nationalism

Week 10. Liberalism

Week 11. Against Ideology? Conservatism

Week 12. Fundamentalism

Week 13. The Contemporary Scene – the end or the resurgence of ideology? Unit summary and revision.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts
- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory

- The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Assessment tasks

- Dialogue
- Major Essay
- Exam
- Participation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory

Assessment task

- Participation

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts
- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory

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Assessment tasks

- Dialogue
- Major Essay
- Exam
- Participation

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts
- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory
- The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Assessment tasks

- Dialogue
- Major Essay
- Exam
- Participation

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts
- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory
- The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Assessment tasks

- Dialogue
- Major Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about a range of political phenomena in oral and written form
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary political texts
- Think more critically and systematically about politics, the relationship between political ideas and political action, and differentiate between types of political theory
- The ability to integrate and synthesize a range of theoretical literature by giving an account of the history and relationship of key political ideas and ideologies.

Assessment tasks

- Dialogue
- Major Essay
- Exam
- Participation

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's

historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment tasks

- Dialogue
- Major Essay
- Participation