



POL 206

Modern Political Thought

S2 Day 2014

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 433

TBA

Co-convenor

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or (3cp in HIST or MHIS or POL units)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

What are the limits of the legitimate use of force by political authorities? How should the power of government be limited? When is a government or political regime legitimate? These and related questions have been the subject of a continuous debate in political theory since the sixteenth century. This unit examines the various theories of human rights and of social contract as well as theories which reject the liberal/democratic approach to the question of legitimacy. Among the authors to be read are Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Burke, Marx, Rawls, Schmitt, and Foucault.

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:

Theoretical arguments for and against the need to consent to the exercise of political power as well as arguments against such an approach to the question of legitimacy

The concepts - such those of social contract, of political participation, of natural or basic rights - which are deployed in the debate on political legitimacy

The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

The above three are called "skills" in the current educational jargon. A more accurate term would be "knowledge" and "understanding". It does not matter how you call them, as long as you acquire them.

General Assessment Information

IN ORDER TO PASS THE UNIT YOU NEED TO PASS ALL THREE ASSESSMENT TASKS.

In this unit, there are **no late submissions of** essays. You need to submit your essay on time. The only grounds for an extension is unavoidable disruption in study. Requests for extensions are handled through the web portal (ask.mq.edu.au) dealing with disruption of study and not through the convener.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Tutorial presentation	10%	Set in class
Short paper (external)	0%	26 September
Essay	40%	7 November
Final exam	50%	University examination period

Tutorial presentation

Due: **Set in class**

Weighting: **10%**

Each student will give a 10-15 minute oral presentation in a tutorial. The topic will be chosen from the lecture questions or set by the student. The presentation should be concise, focused, coherent and raise further questions for discussion in the class.

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approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

- The above three are called "skills" in the current educational jargon. A more accurate term would be "knowledge" and "understanding". It does not matter how you call them, as long as you acquire them.

Short paper (external)

Due: **26 September**

Weighting: **0%**

The students should attempt to answer only one of the questions listed under the Lecture topics in the Lecture topics of this unit guide. The short essay should not exceed 800 words. It should show the comprehension of the assigned texts and the ability to briefly outline the arguments found there. It should be concise, focused and coherent. The paper will be assessed only on pass/fail basis and should give the students feedback as to how they are progressing in this unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Theoretical arguments for and against the need to consent to the exercise of political power as well as arguments against such an approach to the question of legitimacy
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- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system
- The above three are called "skills" in the current educational jargon. A more accurate term would be "knowledge" and "understanding". It does not matter how you call them, as long as you acquire them.

Essay

Due: **7 November**

Weighting: **40%**

Weight: 40 % internal; 50% external

The essay writing should test your ability to articulate arguments for or against specific theories or theses discussed in the course; in articulating your arguments you would be expected to draw on the required texts; the required texts are your primary (but not necessarily only) sources. You

are advised to consult works from the secondary sources as well as the more comprehensive bibliography on the unit iLearn webpage. Remember, however, to acknowledge your debts to any secondary sources. The essays will be marked in accordance with the marking criteria posted on the unit webpage.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system
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Final exam

Due: **University examination period**

Weighting: **50%**

You will be expected to answer 3 or more questions out of a choice of questions. The answers will be in the form of the short essay. The exam will test your ability to outline and contrast the views and arguments discussed in the lectures and found in the required readings. In this way it will test your comprehension of the readings and lecture and your ability to use the concepts discussed in the class.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system
- The above three are called "skills" in the current educational jargon. A more accurate term would be "knowledge" and "understanding". It does not matter how you call them, as long as you acquire them.

Delivery and Resources

Classes

Each week there is a two hour lecture and one hour tutorial. For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations. Note, below, that most lectures are WRITTEN and not delivered orally.

Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

Required readings listed on the iLearn webpage are available through e-reserve.

Technology Used and Required

Most of the lectures in this unit are **written** and available through iLearn, accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>. The written lectures have no recordings - because they are written! The co-convener of the unit, Dr Ian Tragenza, will deliver lectures in his lecture sessions on Burke (lect 6), on Marx and Schmitt (lect 9) and on Foucault (lect 12). These lectures will be recorded.

The written lectures are conceived as commentaries on the required readings. Each lecture topic has a corresponding selection of readings by the author(s) whose theories are discussed in the lecture. These are listed in the Required Readings. These selections listed in the Required readings are available on e-reserve.

Students are recommended to read the lecture first before reading the text selection for that topic. While reading the original texts, students should attempt to answer at least some of the questions listed under each lecture topic below. These questions are intended help them understand the text and follow the arguments. Your answers to the questions and any comments on the text may be kept in a separate notebook or a computer file. These answers and comments may turn out to be quite useful when revising for the final exam. After reading the required text, it is useful to return to the lecture and note any agreement or disagreement with the lecturer's interpretation; these notes could also be kept the same notebook or computer file.

Lecture sessions consist of discussions of the topics and questions raised in the written lectures and required readings. For this reason it is essential that students read the lecture and the required reading selection BEFORE the lecture session at which this topic will be discussed.

ATTENDANCE AT LECTURE SESSIONS IS COMPULSORY. MORE THAN THREE UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES FROM LECTURES MAY LEAD TO A FAIL GRADE.

Unit Schedule

Week	Topic
1	Power and legitimacy: an introduction
2	Political power and how to hold on to it: Machievalli's advice

3	Consent and the right to political power: Hobbes's social contract theory
4	Sovereign power restricted by a social contract: Locke's argument from natural rights
5	How to remain free and yet live in a state: Rousseau's proposal
6	Legitimacy through tradition: Edmund Burke
7	Legitimacy through representative government: John Stuart Mill
8	Can fairness and an overlapping consensus provide legitimacy? Rawls's reconstruction of liberalism
9	The liberal state – illegitimate and inconsistent? Marxism, Anarchism and Decisionism (Carl Schmitt)
10	The liberal state with a higher (moral?) goal: the legitimacy restored? Communitarianism, republicanism and deliberative democracy.
11	Challenging patriarchal legitimacy: feminist perspectives on political power. Guest lecturer
12	Disciplinary power: Foucault's overthrow of the sovereign power Lecturer: Dr Ian Tregenza
13	Why worry about legitimacy?

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/

Student Support

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

dents.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

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

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

- Theoretical arguments for and against the need to consent to the exercise of political power as well as arguments against such an approach to the question of legitimacy
- The concepts - such those of social contract, of political participation, of natural or basic rights - which are deployed in the debate on political legitimacy
- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

Assessment tasks

- Short paper (external)
- Essay
- Final exam

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

- Theoretical arguments for and against the need to consent to the exercise of political power as well as arguments against such an approach to the question of legitimacy
- The concepts - such those of social contract, of political participation, of natural or basic rights - which are deployed in the debate on political legitimacy
- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial presentation
- Short paper (external)
- Essay
- Final exam

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

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- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Final exam

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 outcome

- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Final exam

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

- Theoretical arguments for and against the need to consent to the exercise of political power as well as arguments against such an approach to the question of legitimacy
- The concepts - such those of social contract, of political participation, of natural or basic rights - which are deployed in the debate on political legitimacy
- The conceptual tools needed to explore further theoretical questions in this area and to approach, critically, questions of the legitimacy of any particular government or political system

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial presentation
- Short paper (external)
- Essay
- Final exam

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:

Learning outcomes

- Theoretical arguments for and against the need to consent to the exercise of political power as well as arguments against such an approach to the question of legitimacy
- The concepts - such those of social contract, of political participation, of natural or basic rights - which are deployed in the debate on political legitimacy

Assessment tasks

- Essay
- Final exam

Changes from Previous Offering

This time the unit is co-convened with Dr Ian Tregenza who will deliver three lectures in the unit.