**General Information**

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Michael Olson
[mailto:michael.olson@mq.edu.au](mailto:michael.olson@mq.edu.au)

W6A Room 723
Tuesdays 10:00-12:00 and by appointment

Credit points
3

Prerequisites
(39cp at 100 level or above) or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
Social philosophy is a type of philosophical investigation that focuses on issues affecting individuals and communities as a result of dysfunctions in modern society. Using the tools of philosophical analysis, it seeks to define the perspective from which criticism can be formulated, and how possible solutions can be found. The unit draws on key social philosophers of the 20th century to address some of the most pressing issues faced by contemporary societies, such as the social and environmental impacts of the current economic system; the effects of technology upon human bodies and lives; and the limitations placed on individual rights and freedoms by new forms of state and corporate institutions.

**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](https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates)

**Learning Outcomes**

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

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant
disciplinary approaches.
To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Quiz</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contemporary application</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philosophical Essay</strong></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Throughout the term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Online Quiz**

Due: **Week 4**

Weighting: **10%**

An online quiz to be completed in Week 4. This quiz will involve writing short answers to questions based on the topics covered in the first three weeks of the course. The quiz will be available online and accessible to students for one week; once a student commences the quiz, there will be a set period (30-45 minutes) to complete the quiz.

The assessment criteria for this quiz are the accuracy and completeness of student responses.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

**Contemporary application**

Due: **Week 7**

Weighting: **30%**

In this essay, students will connect the themes and ideas discussed in the unit to contemporary
world events. Students will identify a recent news item and explain how it reflects, challenges, or supports the claims and arguments of one of the authors we have read. This will require students to synthesise their philosophical engagement with the principles of and objections to Enlightenment social philosophy with their appreciation of the important events of our own world.

Assessment criteria for this essay are detailed in the rubric provided on ilearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

**Philosophical Essay**

**Due:** **Week 13**

**Weighting:** **45%**

This major assignment aims to test your ability to engage with a topic in depth. Writing an essay tests your ability to express, analyse, and organise ideas clearly and systematically, and to develop an argument or position in a sustained, coherent, and persuasive manner. In this essay (of approximately 2500 words), you will articulate and defend your own position on a matter of your choosing vis-a-vis one or more of the texts we have considered during the term.

Assessment criteria for this essay are detailed in the rubric provided on ilearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
Participation

Due: **Throughout the term**
Weighting: **15%**

Regular and active participation in class discussions—in tutorials for in-the-flesh students and on ilearn for external students—is an essential ingredient in coming to grips with the historical and present significance of the ideas we will discuss in this unit. This is an advanced unit, and so I expect students to take the lead by arriving to the discussion having read the assigned material carefully and prepared questions or objections based on their responses to the material.

The criteria by which this assessment is evaluated include both the quality (insight, concision, comprehension) and quantity of student participation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

Delivery and Resources

Lecture and Tutorial Times

There are two lectures per week:

**Monday 1:00-2:00**

**Tuesday 3:00-4:00**

Tutorials for in-the-flesh students will follow the Tuesday lectures, meeting from 4:00-5:00.

Consult the University timetable for up-to-date meeting locations.

External students will be required to lead and participate in online discussions on ilearn. Just like in-the-flesh students, external students are expected to spend an hour a week posting questions, reading classmates' posts, and making constructive comments. I will also participate in these discussions from time to time, mainly in a facilitating role.

All required readings will also be made available through the library and iLearn.
Readings

Interested students might think about purchasing the following books, which we will refer to regularly:


Unit Schedule

**Week One: Defining the Enlightenment in France**


**Week Two: Defining the Enlightenment in Prussia**

- J.K.W. Möhisen, “What is to Be Done Toward the Enlightenment of the Citizenry?,” in *What is Enlightenment?*, 49-52.
- Immanuel Kant, “Answer to the Question: What is enlightenment?,” in *What is Enlightenment?*, 58-64.

**Week Three Enlightenment Politics—Rationality and Progress**

2007) 41-53.


Week Four: Instrumental Reason and the Dialectic of Enlightenment


Week Five: A Crisis of Legitimacy

- Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition. (Yes, the whole thing).

Weeks Six and Seven: Reaffirming the Enlightenment

- Michel Foucault, “What is Critique?,” in What is Enlightenment? 382-398.

Weeks Eight and Nine: The Enlightenment and Race

- Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro.”
Week Ten: The Enlightenment and Gender


Week Eleven: Australian Colonisation


Weeks Twelve and Thirteen: Preparing your Essays

In the final two weeks of the semester, we will focus on your essays. In Week 12, I will discuss how best to structure longer, argumentative essays. You will workshop paper ideas. In Week 13, you will peer review each others' essays before submitting them at the end of the week.

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:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_and_teaching/) 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/](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/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**Learning Skills**

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://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](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/disability/) 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](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

**IT Help**

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/)

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/acceptability_policy/).

The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.
Graduate Capabilities

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 outcomes**

- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

**Assessment tasks**

- Philosophical Essay
- 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**

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
Assessment tasks

• Online Quiz
• Contemporary application
• Philosophical Essay
• 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

• A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
• A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
• An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
• To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
• To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment tasks

• Online Quiz
• Contemporary application
• Philosophical Essay
• 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 outcome**

- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Contemporary application
- Philosophical Essay
- Participation

**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**

- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Contemporary application
- Philosophical Essay
- 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:

**Learning outcomes**

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Contemporary application
- Philosophical Essay
- Participation

**Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible**

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Contemporary application
- Philosophical Essay
• Participation

## Changes from Previous Offering

Since last being offered, this unit has undergone the following changes:

• revision of learning activities, outcomes, and assessment tasks;
• revision of curriculum mapping of relationship between activities, outcomes, and graduate capabilities;
• addition of new content, including new topics and weekly readings.