

SYLLABUS

Political Science 305 A1: *Contemporary Political Theory*

**Fall Semester 2018, T/R 0930-1050
HM Tory 1-105**

Course website: <http://cressidahey.com/students/political-science-305a>

This website requires a password, which you'll be given in class.

Please don't share the password with anyone except other students registered in this course.

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Office hours: Tuesdays 1230-1430 starting September 11 and ending December 11 (no office hours on October 9 or November 13). Also by appointment, preferably on Tuesdays or Thursdays. I reply to work-related email during office hours and will get back to you within 48 hours.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) section of the *University Calendar*.

This syllabus is only available on-line as a PDF at <http://cressidahey.com/students/political-science-305a>. It may be amended to correct errors, or to make minor additions or changes as the course progresses only with consent of students registered in the course; subsequent editions of the syllabus will be posted alongside the original. The most recent version of the syllabus is binding.

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan.

Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Course description

The course offers a thematic way in to western political thought of the postwar twentieth century through consideration of themes of **citizenship, kinship, and population**, as interpreted through frames of **gender and sexuality** (intersectionally understood). Some questions we will address include:

- How does (and should) genetic relatedness inform citizenship and belonging?
- How has the family served as a model for the liberal polity, and how have historical transformations in both institutions reshaped this relation?
- Who is tacitly or explicitly included or excluded from the nation-state or polity? How in 2018 can we think about shifting understandings of the rights of migrants, kinship as the basis for citizenship, the rights of animals, or of people with disabilities?
- Why do nation-states have interests in regulating and managing sexuality?
- What does it mean to describe political power as shifting from sovereign, to disciplinary, to bio?

The course will be fairly small and taught with an active learning component—i.e. in addition to listening to me lecturing, students will be expected to participate in neighbourly or small group conversation, reading comprehension, writing, or problem-solving exercises, and class discussion or Q & A. Important qualities for success include not just ability to think theoretically but also a willingness to be open to diverse perspectives and to engage in thoughtful criticism, including quite possibly self-criticism. I try hard to make the class into a positive environment for students of all genders/sexualities, cultural or ethnic backgrounds, and political affiliations, and this effort also relies on the good faith, compassion, and generosity of all participants.

Reading

All readings for the course are freely available on-line to U of A students with library access. The course website includes a reading list with links to each reading. The reading averages two articles or chapters per week, and careful preparation for class activities and discussion is expected. Give yourself time to access and read the texts. If you find yourself perplexed by the level of detail at which the readings are discussed, or unable to recall the content of arguments you've read when we analyse them in class, you may not be reading well. Look at the reading guidelines posted on the course website. NB that you should always have a (digital or paper) copy of the reading being discussed in front of you in the classroom.

Calendar prerequisite:

POL S 210, 211, 212 or the consent of the Department. The prerequisite will be enforced but I am happy to authorize permission to register to any student who shows commitment and capacity for a 300-level theory course.

Schedule

Class will meet from **Thursday September 6** to December 6 every Tuesday and Thursday 0930-1050, with the exception of **Tuesday October 9**, when I am away giving a talk, and during fall term break (November 13 and 15). Please make every effort to arrive on time for class and do not leave early unless you have an unavoidable reason on a particular day.

Etiquette and use of technology

The use of laptops and tablets is permitted in the classroom ONLY for purposes of notetaking or accessing course readings. Please, switch off your phone in class. Do not use your laptop or tablet for game-playing, social media, or any other purposes not related to the material of the day's class. A recent study indicated that not only do students who use their devices in these ways during class negatively affect their own focus, comprehension, and retention, but they also negatively affect those around them, including their teacher. We only spend 160 minutes per week together: please respect that time, and respect the rights of others to be part of an engaged and focused class.

Learning goals

1. Content-oriented goals

This course aims to...

- Teach you a rigorous yet accessible set of concepts and methods for making sense of some literatures in postwar western anglophone political thought.
- By approaching the field through connected themes of citizenship, kinship, and population in contexts of gender and sexuality to show you alternative, critical ways of understanding some of the mainstream conceptual moves in political theory.
- Link political theory with the broader humanities and social sciences in ways that will be intellectually useful in other courses.

2. Skill-based goals

This course aims to...

- Show you how to read moderately difficult academic texts closely and well.
- Teach you how to ask a good critical question about a text.
- Model unpacking complex political positions and constructing stepwise arguments in their defence, or raising strong and charitable objections.
- Teach you how to represent and communicate complex texts or ideas in short, pithy, accessible pieces of writing.

Evaluation

See also the guiding documents on the website under “evaluation,” which are appendices to this syllabus.

- Attendance and participation will count for 10% of your grade. Included in this component are points for: consistent attendance; arriving on time and staying to the end of class; listening attentively to lecture or other students’ contributions to class; *not* using devices in prohibited ways in the classroom; asking good questions; participating in class activities; showing through your participation that you have done the reading carefully in advance.
- Short papers: during the term you’ll write **five** short papers (maximum length strictly 500 words). Each paper will summarize an assigned article for your purposes and then motivate and pose a critical question about it. Each paper will be worth 10% of your grade. The papers will be assigned on articles we have already discussed, so that you can draw on the class. They will be due at the beginning of the class *after* the class in which we discussed the reading(s).
- Blogpost assignments: as take-home assignments you’ll write two blogpost-style essays that relate what you’ve learned in class to a relevant topical issue (maximum length strictly 1000 words). Each is worth 20% of your grade.

There is no final exam in this course.

“Every course outline must include an indication of how students will be given access to past or representative evaluative course material” (GFC 23.4). As this course does not include an exam, this regulation is not applicable. I will, however, post examples of successful past short papers and blogposts from similar classes on the course website in advance of due dates.

Late penalty for written assignments is one grade increment per 24 hours or part of 24 hours: e.g. a 3.3 (B+) paper due on Thursday at 0930 but handed in on Friday at 1400 will receive a 2.7 (B-). Late papers may be e-mailed as Word attachments but otherwise please hand in a paper copy of your work in class. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed, consult section 23.3 (1) of the University Calendar.

Grading practice: Students in the class will be graded on the 4.0-scale to a standard of merit, not on a curve (i.e. it’s possible for everyone to get an 4.0—or a 1.0!). Nonetheless, my historical grading record tracks the U of A averages for 300-level courses, with the median grade typically being a 3.0 or B. Final grades will be assigned mathematically using normal rounding practice; the only exception is students whose number grades land exactly between letter grades, who will be evaluated based on the instructor’s discretionary evaluation of the term’s work, e.g. a gradesheet final score of 3.5 might be rounded down to 3.3 (B+) or up to 3.7 (A-).

Resources and policies:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility:

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible,

inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

If you already have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term. If you are not already registered with Accessibility Resources, contact their office immediately at 492 3381 or arrec@ualberta.ca. If something changes and you need accommodation, don't hesitate to let me know.

If something goes terribly wrong in your life, avoid at all costs skipping class, not handing your work in or doing it really badly, and then showing up in December when you realize a poor grade is inevitable to plead your case. If you explain yourself as soon as possible it is much easier to help you.

Policy on academic integrity:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

If you are unsure how to reference texts, want to know how much collaboration constitutes cheating, or need any other advice about academic integrity, please consult [the Academic Integrity website](#) or ask me ahead of time for guidance. You will never be penalized for asking for help in advance of submitting work.

University of Alberta sexual violence policy:

As defined in the policy, sexual violence is any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. Sexual violence is a complex and serious problem in society and on university campuses. Sexual violence can affect individuals of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations, as well as those from all ages, abilities, racial, cultural and economic backgrounds. Through this policy, the University of Alberta recognizes its responsibility to reduce sexual violence in the University community. The university aims to do so by fostering a culture of consent and support through education, training and policy. The University recognizes the possible effects of trauma on those who have experienced sexual violence and supports the efforts of individuals to seek support and recover. To read the policy in more detail, please visit: <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Sexual-Violence-Policy.pdf>.

Class-by-class schedule

Week 1: Icebreaker

September 4: NO CLASS. Read Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas”

September 6: Introduction to the course, including discussion of Le Guin.

Week 2: Opening debate: the biological body and social belonging

September 11: Harder, “Does Sperm Have a Flag?”

September 13: Tallbear, “Genomic Articulations of Indigeneity”

[optional background reading] Rubin, “The Traffic in Women”

Short paper #1 on Harder due Sep 13, to be returned by September 15 for those who request early grading

NB: September 17 is drop/add deadline.

Week 3: Kinship and the family in the late liberal state

September 18: Okin, “Gender, the Public and the Private”

September 20: [optional] Brown, “Liberalism’s Family Values”

(Supplemental short paper #1 on any of the material to date due Sep 20, only for late-joining students who missed the Sep 13 assignment)

Week 4:

September 25: Young, “Reflections on Families”

September 27: Hochschild, “Global Care Chains”

Short paper #2 on Okin or Young due Sep 27

Week 5:

October 2: Harder, “The State and the Friendships of the Nation”

October 4: Catch-up/wrap-up/preview

Short paper #3 on Harder or Hochschild due Oct 4

Week 6: Citizens and Nations: Who’s In? Who’s Out?

October 9: NO CLASS.

October 11: Arneil, “Disability, Self Image, and Modern Political Theory”

Week 7:

October 16: Ferguson, “I ♥ My Dog”

October 18: Donaldson and Kymlicka, “Rethinking Membership and Inclusion”

Week 8:

October 23: Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation State”

Short paper #4 on Arneil, Ferguson, or Donaldson and Kymlicka due Oct 23

October 25: More Arendt.

[optional] Gündogdu, *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights*

Week 9:

October 30: Simpson, "The Ruse of Consent"

November 1: Catch-up/wrap-up/preview

Short paper #5 on Arendt or Simpson due Nov 1

Week 10: Sexuality and biopower

November 8: Foucault, selections from *History of Sexuality Volume 1*

November 10: More Foucault

FALL TERM BREAK. No class November 13 or 15

Week 11:

November 20: Puar, "Terrorist Assemblages"

November 22: More Puar

Week 12:

November 27: Morgensen, "Settler Homonationalism"

Blogpost #1 on Foucault or Puar due Nov 27

November 29: Rifkin, "Making Peoples into Populations"

NB: November 30 is the last day for withdrawal from Fall term courses

Week 13:

December 4: Povinelli, "Transgender Creeks"

December 6: Wrap-up

Blogpost #2 on Morgensen, Rifkin, or Povinelli due Wednesday December 12 0930 (OK to email this one)

NB: There is no sit-down final exam in this course.