

# POSC 250: Contemporary Political Theory, Spring 2016

## Commonplace Book Course

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Office hours:  
Wednesdays 3:30 to 4:30;  
Thursdays 2:45 to 3:45;  
and by appointment.

Books for sale at the Moravian College Bookstore:  
Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (Verso, 2009)  
Stephen E. Bronner (editor), *Twentieth Century Political Theory: A Reader* (Routledge, 2006)

### Course goals:

- 1) To trace the history of political ideas in the 20th century
- 2) To gain comfort and skill in argumentative discussion
- 3) To deepen textual interpretation skills
- 4) To practice disciplined note-taking (commonplace book)
- 5) To develop scholarly writing practices

Calendar	Assignments and Activities
Tuesday, January 19	Introduction
	Syllabus
Thursday, January 21	<i>Twentieth Century Political Theory: A Reader</i> , edited By Stephen E. Bronner We will spend most of the class reconstructing the history of political ideas in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century with the help of this reader. Titles below refer to this text.
	<b>Chapter 1: “The Liberal Idea”</b>  Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere” Benedetto Croce, “Liberty and Revolution” John Rawls, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”
	Write commonplace book entry #1 on John Rawls

Tuesday, January 26	<p><b>Chapter 2: “Communitarianism and Culture”</b></p> <p>John Dewey, “The Search for the Great Community” Hannah Arendt, “The Public and the Private Realm”</p> <p>Write commonplace book entry #2 on Hannah Arendt</p>
Thursday, January 28	<p>Movie: Hannah Arendt (2013), directed by Margarethe von Trotta, starring Barbara Sukowa This movie runs for one hour and 49 minutes. I will place it on reserve so you can finish watching it on your own time.</p> <p>No commonbook entry today</p>
Tuesday, February 2	<p>Michael J. Sandel, “The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self” Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital”</p> <p>Write commonplace book entry #3 on Michael J. Sandel</p>
Thursday, February 4	<p><b>Chapter 3: “The Conservative Disposition”</b></p> <p>Michael Oakeshott, “On Being Conservative” Carl Schmitt, “Defining the Political”</p> <p>Write commonplace book entry #4 on Carl Schmitt</p>
Tuesday, February 9	<p>Leo Strauss, “What is Liberal Education?” Norman Podhoretz, “The Adversary Culture and the New Class”</p> <p>Write commonplace book entry #5 on Leo Strauss</p>
<b>Thursday, February 11 and Tuesday, February 16</b>	<p><b>No classes</b> <b>Instructor presenting at American Political Science Association (APSA) Teaching and Learning Conference in Portland, OR</b></p>
Thursday, February 18	<p>Review</p> <p>Please bring questions and page numbers for the review. No commonplace book entry today</p>
<b>Tuesday, February 23</b>	<b>Examination 1 in class, submit commonplace book</b>
<b>Wednesday, February 24</b>	<b>Please pick up your commonplace book from Mrs. Deitch after 1 p.m.</b>
Thursday, February 25	<p><b>Chapter 4: “Anarchism and Freedom”</b></p> <p>Augustin Souchy, “Conclusion to Beware <i>Anarchist!</i> A Life for Freedom” Martin Buber, “In the Midst of Crisis” Robert Paul Wolff, “Beyond the Legitimate State”</p> <p>Write commonplace book entry #6 on Martin Buber</p>
Tuesday, March 1	<p><b>Chapter 5: “Nationalism and Beyond”</b></p> <p>Maurice Barrès, “Scenes and Doctrines of Nationalism” Theodor Herzl, “The Jewish Question”</p>

		Write commonplace book entry #7 on Theodor Herzl
Tuesday, March 3		Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence" Martha Nussbaum. "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism"
		Write commonplace book entry #8 on Frantz Fanon Submit commonplace book at the end of class
<b>Thursday, March 8 and Thursday, March 10</b>		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Tuesday, March 15		Documentary: Frantz Fanon: black skin/white mask (1996), directed by Isaac Julien, 52 minutes
		No commonplace book entry today Commonplace book returned in class
Thursday, March 17		Review
		No commonplace book entry due today Please bring questions and page numbers.
<b>Tuesday, March 22</b>		<b>Examination 2 in class, submit commonplace book</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 23</b>		<b>Please pick up your commonplace book from Mrs. Deitch after 1 p.m.</b>

Thursday, March 24		<b>Chapter 6: "Democratic Socialism"</b>  Eduard Bernstein, "The Socialist Conception of Democracy" Rosa Luxemburg, "Democracy and Dictatorship" Carlo Roselli, "Liberal Socialism" Henry M. Pachter, "Aphorisms on Socialism"  Write commonplace book entry #9 on Rosa Luxemburg
Tuesday, March 29		<b>Chapter 7: "Communism and Revolution"</b>  V.I. Lenin, "What is to be done" Antonio Gramsci, "The Revolution Against Capital" Josef Stalin, "The Dictatorship Against the Proletariat"  Write commonplace book entry #10 on Josef Stalin
Thursday, March 31		<b>Chapter 8: "The Fascist Worldview"</b>  Benito Mussolini, "Fundamental Ideas" Adolf Hitler, "Nation and Race" Andrew MacDonald, "Excerpts from the Turner Diaries"  Write commonplace book entry #11 on Benito Mussolini
Tuesday, April 5		<b>Chapter 11: "The African-American Heritage"</b>

	<p>Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail”</p> <p>Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”</p> <p>Cornel West, “Nihilism in Black America”</p>
	Write commonplace book entry #12 on Malcolm X
<b>Thursday, April 7</b>	<b>Examination 3 in class, submit commonplace book</b>
<b>Friday, April 8</b>	<b>Please pick up your commonplace book from Mrs. Deitch after 1 p.m.</b>
Tuesday, April 12	<p>Judith Butler, <i>Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?</i></p> <p>From here on, all readings are drawn from this text.</p>
	Introduction: “Precarious Life, Grievable Life”
	Commonplace book entry #13
Thursday, April 14	Chapter 1: “Survivability, Vulnerability, Affect”
	Commonplace book entry #14
Thursday, April 19	Chapter 2: “Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag”
	Commonplace book entry #15
Tuesday, April 21	Chapter 3: “Sexual Politics, Torture, and Secular Time”
	Commonplace book entry #16
Tuesday, April 26	Chapter 4: “Non-thinking in the Name of the Normative”
	Commonplace book entry #17
Thursday, April 28	Chapter 5: “The Claim of Non-Violence”
	<p><b>Commonplace book entry #18</b></p> <p><b>Submit completed and revised commonplace book, including all corrections and index</b></p>

## Evaluation

Assignment	% of final grade	Calendar	Details
Engagement	25%	ongoing	Please see below.
Commonplace book entries	30%	ongoing	Entries are due on the day of the assigned reading.
Exam 1	15%	2/23 in class	
Exam 2	15%	3/22 in class	
Exam 3	15%	4/7 in class	

### How is engagement evaluated?

**A:** Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; careful engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.

**B:** Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.

**C:** Incomplete or superficial readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.

**D:** Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.

**F:** Persistent, vegetative state; low-level trance; slightly elevated body temperature.

## Basics for POSC 250

**YOUR PHONE IS NEVER VISIBLE OR AUDIBLE IN THE CLASSROOM  
—BEFORE OR AFTER CLASS.**

**If you are a parent or a caretaker and must be reachable at all times, please let me know.**

Before class, you need to prepare your mind and review our material. After class, you need to give your mind a moment to consolidate memories. If you pick up your phone right away, it will be harder to remember and develop your thoughts from class. It is in your own best interest to develop good mental habits and to support your own learning process. Best activity after class: share thoughts with a classmate or sit somewhere quiet for fifteen minutes and take notes. Right after class, your mind is full of information. Capture or develop that information instead of erasing it by rushing on to the next thing. To learn more about how your intellectual habits shape your mind, consult Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (2010). Carr discusses neuroplasticity and other insights from neuroscience.

Expect to spend 140 minutes preparing for each 70-minute class meeting. Full preparation for class entails careful readings, possible multiple readings, taking notes and formulating questions for class discussions in writing, looking up all unknown words in a dictionary, reviewing earlier class notes and being prepared to show your knowledge of material covered in past class meetings. Come prepared to participate and be aware that I call on students who do not raise their hands. You are responsible for course material throughout the semester. As I said before, I welcome your questions in class.

Ask questions in class. This is your time to learn. Speak up. Don't worry about embarrassing yourself. When you are older, you will barely remember this class or the people in it. What will stay with you is your intellectual development and ability to speak up.

Value other students and their ideas. Learn names and engage others in discussion. Recognition is half of justice.

Come and talk. You are always welcome to come to office hours. No appointments needed. Bring your questions.

There are two unexcused absences for this course. Subsequent absences harm your engagement grade at the rate of 2% of your final grade per missed class.

Do not eat or chew gum. Drinking is permitted.

For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment.

Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment or the course. Please see Moravian College Student Handbook for an account of academic honesty. See <http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Laurie Roth or Ms. Dana Wilson, Assistant Director of Academic and Disability Support located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or call (610) 861-1401.

Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

*This syllabus is subject to change.*