



PHILOSOPHY 1120F (570)
Power, Social Politics & Culture
Fall 2026

Instructor: Antonio Calcagno
Email: acalcagn@uwo.ca

Course Information

Class Times:

Calendar Description: An introduction to the key social, political, and legal structures and ideas that shape our contemporary culture and worlds. Students explore complex, often-hidden social and political concepts and organizational practices that prescribe modes of behaviour, human interactions, and material modes of production.

Prerequisite(s):

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: PHILOSOP

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College at Western University
Department of Philosophy
PHIL 1120F—Power, Social Politics, and Culture
Fall Semester 2026

Instructor: Antonio Calcagno, Ph.D., FRSC

Contact Information:

acalcagn@uwo.ca (EMAIL IS BEST MEANS OF CONTACT)

Office Hours:

Posted on the Class OWL Brightspace site.

PREREQUISITES: None

ANTIREQUISITES: None

DESCRIPTION:

This course explores how contemporary power, culture, and social and political realities are deeply conditioned by explicit and/or tacit, unseen societal and political structures and ways of thinking. Students will be introduced to key models and thinkers that lay the groundwork for grasping and critically analyzing the abovementioned structures. Forces of power not only produce beneficial societal orders, they also are the source of violence, aggression and conflict. This course helps students develop a powerful and unique lens for understanding how concepts and imagined ends or goals of human power and desire come to shape and form the sense of ourselves, how we view others, and how we organise and build our social, political, and cultural worlds. The goal of the social and political thought investigated here is to make evident the fundamental assumptions and role that power plays in our daily life. This will give students the opportunity to think about, challenge, and imagine alternatives to what is already at work in our present society. A variety of methods and pedagogical techniques will be utilized to expose students to different disciplinary methods and approaches to relevant issues.

The learning objectives of the course are:

1. To familiarise students with the work and ideas of important modern social and political thinkers;
2. Recognize underlying structures of power at work in our world;
3. To develop tighter analytical and critical skills in thinking, reading and writing;
4. To hone the political and social imagination by exploring creative and innovative models of politics and social and political thought;
5. To assist students in developing their own philosophical responses to relevant questions and problems posed by the aforementioned thinkers and their ideas.

METHOD:

This course will proceed in a lecture-discussion format. Students are expected to read assigned texts and come prepared to discuss them in class.

EVALUATION:

2 in-class critical thinking and writing exercises (2 x 10 = 20%)— (In class: October 5 and November 23, 2026)

1 Midterm examination— (30%) (In Class: November 2, 2026)

Final examination— (40%) (Date tba by the Registrar's Office)

Class participation, including attendance—10%

TEXTS:

Readings can be found on the OWL Brightspace site for the course under the Resources tab. There are also relevant links for readings embedded in the syllabus.

COSTS:

No costs are indicated for course reading materials.

SYLLABUS:

14 September: Introduction and explanation of course content and objectives

21 September: Theme: What is power and what are its forms?

Antonio Gramsci: Hegemony and Caesarism: Excerpts from the *Prison Diaries*:

Read: “Observations on Certain Aspects of the Structure of Political Parties in Periods of Organic Crisis”, pp. 210–223

<https://archive.org/details/AntonioGramsciSelectionsFromThePrisonNotebooks/page/n303/mode/2up>

Read: “Analysis of Situations: Relations of Force”, pp. 200–209:

28 September: Michel Foucault – Selection from *Discipline and Punish*: “Docile Bodies”, pp. 135–145; 195–200: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

and

Michel Foucault: “The Subject and Power”: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

5 October: Hobbes and the modern form of power: competition and diffidence:

Read: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter X: “Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour and Worthiness” and chapter XIII: “Of The Naturall Condition of Mankind, as Concerning Their Felicity, and Misery”

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3207/pg3207-images.html#link2HCH0013>

[In-class reading and writing exercise]

12 October: Thanksgiving Day Holiday and Reading Week—No class

19 October: Powerlessness:

Read: Vclav Havel “The Power of the Powerless”, pp. 1–35: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

26 October: Theme: Structures of Race, Gender, Class

Iris Marion Young’s “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality”: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

and

Kimberle Crenshaw’s “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race & Sex”: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

2 November: Midterm Examination (In class)

9 November: Selections from Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 35–45: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

and

Sylvia Wynter’s “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument”, in *The New Centennial Review*, Volume 3, Number 3, Fall 2003, pp. 257–337: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform. Read pp. 257–280.

16 November: Theme: Issues Social Justice and Indigenous Rights

Excerpts from Burke A. Hendrix’s, *Ownership, Authority, and Self-Determination*, pp.1–34: Reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

23 November: Theme: How to Build a Global Cosmopolitan Culture?

Anthony Appiah’s *The Lies That Bind*, Chapter 1: reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

[In-class reading and writing exercise]

30 November: Theme: Artificial Intelligence, Technology and The Future: Cosmotechnics:

Yuk Hui, “Cosmotechnics and Cosmopolitics”: Reading on class OWL Brightspace platform.

December 7: FINAL REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Statement on AI Tools:

King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this assessment.
- If instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs. (For example, if students need to submit X of Y assignments, this flexibility already provides consideration.)
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

Western’s Mental Health Services site provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.