

University of Ottawa
School of Political Studies
POL 3102C Modern Political Thought II
Spring 2012

Second Essay (30%)

For this assignment, students will read an article or extract from a thinker who has not been covered in class, and discuss its implications for the major debates in nineteenth-century political thought that we have studied this semester. This requires you to: a) use your interpretative skills to decipher a new text in modern political theory and to identify and understand its main ideas, using additional research where necessary; and b) employ your understanding of the thinkers and concepts that we have studied to judge the significance of these ideas for the main themes of our course.

Articles

Choose *one* of the following readings:

Hannah Arendt, selections from "The Public and the Private Realm" in *The Human Condition* (1958)

Simone de Beauvoir, selections from *The Second Sex* (1949)

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1958)

Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti" (2000)

Frantz Fanon, selections from "On Violence" in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics" (1962)

Each selection is available as a .pdf file on Virtual Campus, where complete bibliographical information can also be found. Where possible, copies of the source texts and/or related materials have been placed on reserve in Morriset Library.

Analysis

Identify the main arguments or ideas in your chosen reading, discuss their relevance to the key concepts or questions in nineteenth-century political thought that we have studied this semester, and consider the implications of these main arguments or ideas for those key concepts or questions.

Your analysis must include detailed reference to *either* one or two thinkers that we have studied this semester. These thinkers should be chosen based on how well they can be used to illustrate and discuss the concepts or questions that you will focus on in your essay.

1. *Identify the main arguments or ideas in your chosen reading.* Briefly summarize the content of the reading, and describe the one or two main arguments or ideas that will be the focus of your essay. This discussion should be no more than 1-2 paragraphs in length.
2. *Discuss the relevance of these main arguments or ideas to the key concepts or questions in nineteenth-century political thought that we have studied this semester.* How are the main concerns of your chosen author similar to those of the thinkers that we have studied this semester? How are their views regarding these issues similar or different? Is there something new in their approach to these issues that is important to recognize?
3. *Consider the implications of these main arguments or ideas for the key concepts or questions in nineteenth-century political thought that you have examined.* What is the significance of the similarities and differences that you have identified? In your opinion, which of the thinkers that you have examined deals with the issues in question most persuasively, and why? Are there important considerations that all of the thinkers that you

have examined failed to address? What new insights into modern political thought have you gained as a result of your analysis?

Your analysis should be presented in a well-written, detailed short essay. You are encouraged to consult primary and secondary sources in addition to the assigned course materials. All sources that you consult must be included in your list of works cited. Your research should include only relevant, authoritative, up-to-date sources. This means that: 1) Wikipedia and other anonymous or non-peer-reviewed sources, both on- and offline, are not appropriate for an academic essay such as this; 2) elementary sources such as undergraduate textbooks may be used for background research, but should not be the source for any of the main points in your essay; 3) sources that are badly out-of-date or are otherwise of poor quality should not be used at all. If you are in doubt about the quality of a source, ask before using it.

The completed assignment should be **10-12 pages** in length, not including the title page (if used) and list of works cited. Essays must be typed double-spaced in 12-point font, and must include in-text citations and a list of works cited in **MLA style**. For more information on how to cite properly, see <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/writing/kit/reference-mla.php>.

*Essays are due at the beginning of class time on **Monday, June 11**. Late essays should be handed into the Political Studies main office at DMS 9101. If your essay is completed during the weekend or at a time when you cannot come to campus, you may submit an electronic copy of your paper via email, followed by a hard copy handed into DMS 9101 as soon as possible.*

Additional information regarding assignments can be found in the course syllabus.