

**POL 109S: MIGHT AND RIGHT**  
**Power and Justice in International Relations**

Winter 2026, Wednesdays 5-7 pm

**Instructor: Professor Nancy Bertoldi**

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You can also email me via Quercus.

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-4 on zoom by appointment only.

Book your appointment in advance on Quercus using the 'calendar' function.

Zoom link for office hours is available on Quercus under 'announcements.'

**Head Teaching Assistant: Rachel Wagner**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course explores the relationship between power and justice in the works of prominent ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary thinkers in Western political thought. It adopts a problem-driven approach and engages with current controversies in international relations by examining contemporary applications of insights from these foundational texts. Special attention is paid to the prospects of a just and peaceful world order, the causes and justification of war, the construction of images of citizens and enemies, and duties beyond borders.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe rival conceptions of power and justice in international relations.
2. Develop a familiarity with central thinkers from Western political thought and the application of their ideas to international relations.
3. Identify the complex interconnections between power and justice in international relations in the works of prominent ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary thinkers.
4. Appreciate the limitations of the approaches of the selected thinkers.
5. Develop a critical awareness of the normative dimensions of current controversies in world affairs.
6. Improve oral and written communication skills.
7. Work cooperatively with peers in lectures and tutorials to address controversial topics in international relations with civility and mutual respect.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Lectures, Tutorials, and Readings:**

- The course will meet for 2 hours of lecture every week and 1 hour of tutorial on designated weeks.
- Tutorials are mandatory and are assessed at every scheduled tutorial on the basis of attendance and informed participation. Tutorials start in week 3 and meet on designated weeks. Missed tutorials receive a grade of 0 and can make a big difference to the final tutorial mark. Students who have acceptable and documented reasons for being absent from a tutorial should contact their TA no later than within one week of their absence to present their documentation and arrange for a make-up. Please follow instructions for make-ups and absences given below under 'course policies.'
- Lectures and assigned readings are complementary, but they do not overlap. Successful tutorial participation presupposes familiarity with the materials covered in both lectures and readings, so students should make sure to attend all lectures and to complete assigned readings before the start of each week's lecture.
- All required readings are available online, either as online resources from U of T libraries or in pdf form under the library reading list in Quercus.

## **Evaluation:**

- Performance in the course will be evaluated based on the following components:

Tutorials	20%	required on scheduled weeks, graded every tutorial
Term test	30%	in class time (11-1) on <u>February 11</u> , room TBA
Final exam	50%	date and room TBA
- Students are responsible for course materials covered in both the assigned readings and in lectures.
- The rooms for the term test and final exam will be announced on Quercus.
- The University of Toronto grading scale is used to mark all course requirements and should be used as a rubric of expectations. More information on the grading scale is provided below under ‘course policies.’
- Detailed instructions for each required course component are available on Quercus in modules under ‘evaluation instructions.’

## **LECTURE SCHEDULE**

There is no class on February 18 due to the winter reading week. Drop deadline is March 16.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Lectures</b>	<b>Part I: Might and Right in Ancient and Medieval Thought</b>
Jan 7	Lecture 1	Overview: power and justice in international relations
Jan 14	Lecture 2	Thinker: Thucydides
Jan 21	Lecture 3	Application: power transitions
Jan 28	Lecture 4	Thinkers: Augustine and Aquinas
Feb 4	Lecture 5	Application: just wars
Feb 11	Lecture 6	Term test: Room TBA
		<b>Part II: Might and Right in Modern and Contemporary Thought</b>
Feb 25	Lecture 7	Thinker: Kant
Mar 4	Lecture 8	Application: democratic peace
Mar 11	Lecture 9	Thinker: Mill
Mar 18	Lecture 10	Application: intervention
Mar 25	Lecture 11	Application: immigration
Apr 1	Lecture 12	Conclusion: cosmopolitanism and nationalism in international relations
Date TBA	Exam period	Final exam: Room TBA

## **TUTORIAL SCHEDULE**

Tutorials start in week 3 and meet on the following designated weeks:

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Tutorials</b>	<b>Tutorial topic</b>
Week 3	Tutorial 1	Lecture 1: Overview and expectations
Week 4	Tutorial 2	Lectures 2 and 3: Thucydides and power transitions
Week 5	Tutorial 3	Lecture 4 and 5: Augustine, Aquinas, and just wars
Week 8	Tutorial 4	Lecture 7: Kant
Week 9	Tutorial 5	Lecture 8: Democratic peace
Week 10	Tutorial 6	Lecture 9: Mill
Week 11	Tutorial 7	Lecture 10: Intervention
Week 12	Tutorial 8	Lectures 11 and 12: Immigration and conclusion

The exact time and place of your tutorial depend on your tutorial placement.

## READING ASSIGNMENTS

### Lecture 1: Overview

- David Baldwin, “Power and International Relations” in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations*, (Sage, 2013), ch. 11.
- Andrew Hurrell and Terry Macdonald, “Ethics and Norms in International Relations” in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations*, (Sage, 2013), ch. 3.

### Lecture 2: Thucydides

- Chris Brown, Terry Nardin, and Nicholas Rengger, *International Relations in Political Thought*, section on Thucydides, (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 34-60.
- Thucydides, “Debate at Sparta” and “Pentecontaetia” in Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, translated by Rex Warner, (Penguin, 1972), pp. 72-103.

### Lecture 3: Power transitions

- Graham Allison, *Destined for War*, (Houghton Mifflin Hatcourt, 2017), preface, introduction, and ch. 2.
- David Welch, “China, the United States, and “Thucydides’s Trap”” in Huiyun Feng and Kai He (eds.), *China’s Challenges and International Order Transition*, (Michigan, 2020), ch. 3.

### Lecture 4: Augustine and Aquinas

- Chris Brown, Terry Nardin, and Nicholas Rengger, *International Relations in Political Thought*, sections on Augustine and Aquinas, (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 119-135, 213-220.
- Augustine, *Political Writings*, translated by Michael Tkacz and Douglas Kries, (Hackett, 1994), pp. 159-162, 220-229.

### Lecture 5: Just wars

- George Bush, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Religious Broadcasters,” (January 28, 1991). Available at: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-annual-convention-the-national-religious-broadcasters-0>
- David Smock, *Religious Perspectives on War*, (United States Institute of Peace, 2002), preface to the revised edition and introduction, pp vii-xxxiii.
- Nicholas Rengger, “The Ethics of War: The Just War Tradition,” in Duncan Bell (ed.), *Ethics and World Politics*, (Cambridge, 2010), ch. 16.

### Lecture 6: Term test (Room TBA)

### Lecture 7: Kant

- Kant, “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” in Kant, *Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 93-130.

### Lecture 8: Democratic peace

- Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*, (W. W. Norton, 2001), ch. 3 and ch. 8.
- Fernando Teson, *A Philosophy of International Law*, (Routledge, 1998), ch. 1.

### Lecture 9: Mill

- Arnold Wolfers and Laurence Wright (eds.), *The Anglo-American Tradition in Foreign Affairs*, (Yale, 1956), ch. 16.
- Chris Brown, Terry Nardin, and Nicholas Rengger, *International Relations in Political Thought*, section on Mill, (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 486-93.

- Georgios Varouxakis, *Mill on Nationality*, (Routledge, 2002), ch. 7.

#### Lecture 10: Intervention

- Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, (Basic Books, 1977), ch. 6.
- Michael Doyle, “J. S. Mill on nonintervention and intervention,” in Stefano Recchia and Jennifer M. Welsh (eds.), *Just and Unjust Military Interventions: European Thinkers from Vitoria to Mill* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 263-287.
- Sean Richmond, “Why is Humanitarian Intervention So Divisive?,” *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law* Vol. 3 No. 2 (2016), pp. 234-259.

#### Lecture 11: Immigration

- Joseph Carens, “Immigration, Political Realities, and Philosophy” in Matthias Hoesch and Nadine Mooren (eds.), *Joseph Carens: Between Aliens and Citizens*, (Springer, 2020), ch. 2.
- Sarah Song, *Immigration and Democracy*, (Oxford, 2018), ch. 5, 6.

#### Lecture 12: Conclusion

- Kok-Chor Tan, “Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism”, *Politico* Vol. 77 (2012), pp.188-205.
- Ezekiel Emanuel, Allen Buchanan, Shuk Ying Chan, Cécile Fabre, Daniel Halliday, R. J. Leland, Florencia Luna, Matthew McCoy, Ole Norheim, G. Owen Schaefer, Kok-Chor Tan, Christopher Wellman, “On the Ethics of Vaccine Nationalism: The Case for the Fair Priority for Residents Framework” *Ethics & International Affairs* Vol. 35 No. 4 (2021), pp. 543-562.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Grading scale:** The University of Toronto grading scale is used to mark all course requirements. The Faculty of Arts and Science specification of the meaning of grades below should be used as a rubric of expectations.

- A range: 80-100. Excellent. Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
- B range: 70-79. Good. Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
- C range: 60-69. Adequate. Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
- D range: 50-59. Marginal. Some evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
- F: 0-49. Inadequate. Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.
- Credit/No Credit: CR/NCR is not in general use in the Faculty.

More information on the University of Toronto grading scale can be found at:

- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/grading-policy/>
- <https://registrar.utoronto.ca/transcripts/transcript-grading-scales-notations/>
- <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-1-2020>

**Grade appeals:** Students who have concerns about the mark they received can request that their work be remarked within two weeks after their marked assignments have been returned. Appeal requests must be submitted in writing to your TA and must include a statement of your substantive reasons for what you feel was overlooked in the marking of your work. After your TA responds in writing, any remaining concerns should be submitted in writing to the Head TA. After the Head TA responds, any remaining concerns should be submitted in writing to the

instructor. In accordance with the Faculty of Arts and Science policies, grades may go up, stay the same, or go down in the appeals process.

**Make-ups:** In general, no make-ups will be granted on any course requirement, unless students have acceptable reasons that are documented, such as illness or unexpected personal circumstances beyond the student's control that interfere with the completion of academic obligations. Appropriate documentation must be submitted within one week of missed work. Assignments and tests from other courses, work obligations, co-curricular commitments, or transportation problems do not generally constitute acceptable reasons, so students should plan accordingly in advance. Accommodations for special needs and disabilities must be arranged directly with Accessibility Services. Make-ups for the final exam due to scheduling conflicts (for two final exams scheduled on the same day at the same time or for three final exams in a row scheduled in consecutive timeslots) must be arranged directly with the Faculty of Arts and Science before their posted deadlines. Information on scheduling conflicts for final exams can be found at: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/faculty-registrar/final-exams/exam-conflicts>.

**Absences:** For absences caused by illness, disability, or other unexpected serious circumstances that interfere with the completion of their academic obligations, students must promptly contact the following: the Head TA for a missed test, their own tutorial TA for missed tutorials, and the Faculty of Arts and Science for a missed final exam. Appropriate documentation must be submitted within one week of the absence to support accommodation. For illness, this documentation can be an absence declaration (via ACORN) or the University's verification of student illness or injury (VOI) form. Students can also submit a letter from a doctor in lieu of a VOI, as long as it is an original medical document that contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). More information on the VOI is available at <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. More information on absence declarations is available at <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. Students who suffer from concussions, fractures, or other injuries or conditions with ongoing impact should also register with Accessibility Services. Disability-related absences require a letter from Accessibility Services and serious personal circumstances require a registrar's letter to support accommodation.

**Academic integrity:** The University of Toronto takes academic integrity very seriously. The code of behavior on academic matters states that "It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

- a. to forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required by the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether in print or electronic form;
- b. to use or possess an unauthorized aid or aids or obtain or provide unauthorized assistance in connection with any form of academic work;
- c. to impersonate another person, or to have another person impersonate, in connection with any form of academic work;
- d. to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in connection with any form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism (for a more detailed account of plagiarism, see section 2.n));
- e. to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work that has previously been submitted or is currently in the submission process in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere;
- f. to submit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted."

The use of AI tools or any other outside assistance on course requirements is not permitted and will be considered an "unauthorized aid". The code of behavior on academic matters can be found at:

<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2025> More information on examples of common academic integrity risks is also available at: <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/perils-and-pitfalls/>

**Code of conduct:** The University of Toronto expects all its members to treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and voice different views. Students should make sure to read the University's Student Code of Conduct <<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-student-conduct-december-13-2019>> and the University's policy on the Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology <<https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/planning-policy/information-communication-technology-appropriate-use/>>.

## RESOURCES

**Accessibility services:** Students with special needs or disabilities should register with Accessibility Services to arrange appropriate accommodations for their needs.

**Registrar support:** Students should contact their registrar as soon as they are able if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodation.

### **Academic support:**

- Recognized Study Groups (RSG) are student-led study groups of up to 8 students enrolled in the same A&S course: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/recognized-study-groups/>
- The Meet to Complete (MTC) program helps students stay focused by working alongside a small group of students: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/meet-to-complete/>
- Students can visit [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca) for information on all aspects of academic writing. Advice files are available at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/student-pdfs>. The advice files on how not to plagiarize and on standard documentation formats are particularly important and are listed at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources>.
- For group instruction on writing and study skills, students can take advantage of the “Writing Plus” workshop series. More information is available at <https://uoft.me/writingplus>.
- Writing centers offer individualized consultations on written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments early, as they fill up fast. More information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>.
- International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) at <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning>. For more information, contact the ELL coordinator Leora Freedman at [ell.newcollege@utoronto.ca](mailto:ell.newcollege@utoronto.ca).

**Health and wellness:** The University's mental health portal <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/> lists a wide range of available resources that support student wellbeing. Students can also consult the programs that are listed at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

**Crisis support:** If you're experiencing distress, you are not alone! Please reach out for help!

Many free crisis lines and support services are available at U of T and the City of Toronto including:

- U of T Telus Health Student Support (formerly My SSP) available 24/7. Call 1-844-451-9700. Outside of North America, call **001-416-380-6578**. Online information: <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/>
- University of Toronto: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>
- Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454
- Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200
- City of Toronto crisis services: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/311-toronto-at-your-service/find-service-information/?ctx=homepage&keywords=crisis>
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357), <https://www.dcoqt.com>
- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)