MEETINGS: Wednesdays 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (Virtual: synchronous and asynchronous components)

Instructor: Antonio Calcagno, PhD

Contact Information: King’s University College, Faculty Building, Rm 213 [Please note that this semester, all meetings will be virtual: The faculty office is too small to ensure adequate social distancing.]

acalcagn@uwo.ca

Office Hours:

By appointment: Please feel free to send me an email message so that we can arrange a time to meet.

Technical Requirements:

Stable internet connection

Laptop or computer

Working microphone

Working webcam
**DESCRIPTION:**

This course will cover the major texts of Hannah Arendt's philosophical corpus, starting from her earlier work on Augustine of Hippo to her later works, *The Human Condition* and *The Life of the Mind*. We shall read Arendt’s texts closely in order to trace the development of her views of human nature, humanity, the political life, the social world, love and forgiveness, the public and the private spheres, and community. We shall also examine her famous claim concerning the “banality of evil” by reading parts of her famous and provocative text, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Students will not only be introduced to the works of Hannah Arendt but also to her claim that there is a profound difference between philosophy and political theory. In particular, this course will analyse whether or not the Arendtian argument for a new human social order postulated in conjunction with her concept of the political is tenable.

The objectives of the course are:

1. To familiarise students with the work and ideas of Hannah Arendt, especially her social and political philosophy;
2. To develop tighter analytical and critical skills in thinking, reading and writing.
3. To assist students in developing their own philosophical responses to the questions and problems posed by Arendt’s thought in light of their own scholarly interests and/or disciplines.

**METHOD:**

We will have synchronous virtual meetings in which students will be able to present their own brief webinar as well as lead discussion and entertain questions from other class participants. There will be some lecture-discussion components during the class’ synchronous meetings. The professor will also post various materials on the class OWL site that will assist students understand readings and major concepts. Students are expected to consult these materials as part of the asynchronous part of the course.

**EVALUATION:**

1 webinar presentation— (20%) : Students choose a reading from the syllabus to present. Your presentation should focus on an aspect or argument of the text that
you find intriguing and/or important. In addition to presenting the key elements of Arendt’s position, you should also offer a critique of the position. Presentations should be about 20-30 minutes in length. Students will lead question and discussion period. Students not presenting are expected to come prepared to participate in the discussion on the assigned text.

1 short paper—(15%) A brief written critical response paper (3–5 pp.) to a reading other than the one chosen for your seminar presentation. Due October 21, 2020.

1 large research paper—18–25 pp. (50%). Due December 9, 2020.

Class participation—15%

TEXTS:

These texts can be easily obtained at all major online booksellers. Excerpts of texts can also be found on the class OWL site under the Resources tab.

Eichmann in Jerusalem (New York: Penguin, 1994)
On Violence (New York: Mariner Books, 2001)

Useful Secondary Resources:


SYLLABUS:

9 September: Introduction and explanation of course; a philosophical biography of Hannah Arendt; organization of seminar presentations.

16 September: Love and Saint Augustine, part II, pp. 45–97

23 September: The Origins of Totalitarianism, chapters 9 and 10
30 September: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, chapters 11–13

7 October: *The Human Condition*, Parts I and II:

14 October: *The Human Condition*, Parts III and IV

21 October: *The Human Condition*, Parts V and VI: small paper due

28 October: *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, chapters 1 and 2, Epilogue and Postscript

4 November: Reading Week: **NO CLASS**

11 November: *The Life of the Mind*, first 50 pages

18 November: *The Life of the Mind*, read next 50 pages

25 November: *The Life of the Mind*, read first 50 pages from *Willing*

2 December: *On Violence* (whole text)