

16 March 2020

Dear Students of ARTSSCI 2A06 / Social and Political Thought,

The university community takes the health and wellness of our members seriously and we are interested in slowing the potential for spread of COVID-19. We are committed to ensuring the successful completion of the current academic term by all of our students. While the University has taken many measures to prepare and keep our community informed as the pandemic has unfolded, the university has made a decision to suspend classes at McMaster.

McMaster in-person classes and tests for undergraduate and graduate students will end as of Friday 13 March 2020 and no in-person exams will be held at the end of this term.

Before I put this university-issued form letter to use, let me add a personal note: there are bound to be unanticipated glitches and unplanned-for challenges going forward, given the extraordinary circumstances in which we all find ourselves. But my objective, as always, is to help you thrive in this course, and to help you complete it in good standing and to the very best of your abilities. Whatever difficulty arises in the implementation of this revised version of SPT, I am here to assist!

The following describes what you can expect for ARTSSCI 2A06 / Social and Political Thought between now and the end of the term:

Between now and Tues. 7 April 2020, you can expect the following changes with respect to course instruction for this course:

- Assigned course material now concludes with Jacques Derrida's *Of Hospitality* and with the extensive Study Notes for this text posted on Avenue.
- We will therefore not be taking up Coates or Simpson, the last authors assigned on this course. You are therefore not responsible for these two authors for the final examination.
- Even though Coates and Simpson are no longer formally assigned on the course, you may still engage these materials in your essays and on your final examination.

- In-person office hours are cancelled. Instead, students in SPT may reach either Danielle or myself via email for essay consultation and questions about the course content. But under the circumstances, the very best way in which we can offer you help is if you contact us with well formulated questions and points. For example, if you are working on developing a thesis for your essay, take time to draft out a cogent, highly focussed, and specific draft thesis first before discussing that thesis with us. The essay tips memorandum already posted on Avenue can help you in this process. Danielle and I are here too to help you with any questions regarding the course content—for example, if you need clarification of terms, concepts, or arguments, or if you are wrestling with the similarity or differences between the thinkers we have explored.

In addition, you can expect the following changes to the assessments used for this course:

- The essay due date has been moved to 8:30 am, Friday 3 April 2020, i.e.. two weeks later than the first due date indicated on the course outline.
- Please submit essays to the coursepage on Avenue, preferably as a Word document. Instructions on how to submit your essay using Avenue will be sent to the class in the coming days. Grades for your essays will subsequently be posted on a secure location on Avenue for you to access. Commentary on your essays will be very limited. As you know, you have extensive material already posted on Avenue to help you craft a persuasive, thesis-driven essay that avoids large generalizations and is instead rooted in analyses of specific passages and examples drawn from the texts at hand. And in addition to the essay memorandum, you all have the pointed suggestions and criticisms that I provided on your previous essay to help you craft the best possible essay.

- The final examination will be a take-home examination. The examination will be posted on Avenue on Monday 13 April at 4:00 pm (i.e., the regularly scheduled date and time of your examination). You will have until 8:00 pm the same day to complete your examination and upload it on Avenue. *Your examination answer cannot be longer than 2000 words in length.* I will provide instructions on how to submit your examination answer on Avenue in the coming days. The examination will be posted as a Word document and as a pdf.
- Please also note that there can be no collaboration amongst classmates about the examination question or your respective answers. Write your final examination trusting entirely in your own considerable strengths, just as you would in a normally scheduled and proctored examination.
- In the coming weeks I will circulate a memorandum describing the format of the examination and provide tips for preparing for and writing the examination—exactly as I have done for your midterm examinations.

If you have a need for accommodations, please continue to communicate with Student Accessibility Services and keep me informed.

In the event of significant changes to the COVID-19 situation, further changes may need to be made to this course. Please visit <https://covid19.mcmaster.ca/> for up-to-date university information.

With very best wishes,



Dr. David L. Clark
Council of Instructors, Arts & Science Program
Professor, Department of English and Cultural Studies
Associate Member, Department of Health, Aging, and Society
dclark@mcmaster.ca

Dr. Jean Wilson
Director, Arts & Science Program
wilsonj@mcmaster.ca