

**INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY:
THE MORAL BASIS OF POLITICS**

Poli 231
Winter 2016
MWF 12:35 PM-1:25 PM
MCMED 522

Instructor: Arash Abizadeh
Office: Ferrier 472
Tel: 514-398-4400 x094754
Contact by phone, not email please
Office Hours: Monday 4-5pm

****Please note:** This is a manual note-taking lecture course. The use or display of any mobile computing or communications devices (including computers, recording devices, phones, iPads, or iPods) is strictly banned during class, except with the explicit permission of the instructor in exceptional cases. See “Course Objectives” and “Mobile Computing or Communications Devices” below.

Subject Matter:

This course is an introduction to the study of politics that is oriented to the problems of political action. What makes these problems distinctive is the fact that politics is at once the creation of a legitimate public authority and a system of power, and the requirements of legitimate authority and the imperatives of power are often in tension with each other. This tension shows up in the questions we will address in the first unit of the course. As a citizen, it seems that I am obligated to obey the laws, but as a moral being, it seems that I must obey my conscience. But what should I do if the dictates of law conflict with the prompting of conscience? How can I be obligated to obey laws I have not made? When – if ever – may I justifiably disobey?

In the second part of the course we will consider the character of the political order that claims our obedience. Some kinds of governments may be legitimate, and I may be obligated to obey their laws. But there are certainly some regimes that are illegitimate, and so can make no moral claim against me. We will examine two kinds of answer to the question of what confers legitimacy upon a political order that establishes an authority obligating us to obey its rules. The first is Locke’s liberal idea that political authority is legitimate only insofar as it respects the individual rights of those who live under it. The second is Rousseau’s democratic idea that legitimate authority can only exist when the laws stem from the collective will of the people who lives under them.

In the third part of the course, we will discuss what is often called the problem of ends and means: even if we have an account of what a legitimate and (relatively) just political order looks like, what kinds of action can we legitimately undertake to bring it about? For the imperatives of power often seem to dictate that one be prepared to dirty one's hands if one wishes to advance the good in political life. Thus we must ask, what kind of person must one be, if one is to engage in political activity? Must one, as Machiavelli argued, learn how not to be good, or is there a way, as Gandhi argued, in which the demands of politics and ethics can be reconciled?

Course Objectives:

This course has three main pedagogical objectives:

1. to become acquainted with basic concepts, problems, and questions in political theory, with a focus on political obligation, political legitimacy and authority, and the ethics of political action;
2. to develop the capacity to think critically in an analytically rigorous way, to give articulate oral expression to that thinking, and to give articulate written expression to that thinking in a thesis-driven, analytical essay format; and
3. to develop the capacity to focus on and listen to lectures, digest the main points on the spot, and effectively to take hand-written notes that *synthesize* (rather than transcribe) lecture content.

Books: The following books have been ordered at the Paragraphe Bookstore and are on reserve. Please note that, in some cases, we will not be reading an entire book, so you may wish to use the reserve room rather than purchase every book.

Sophocles. Antigone. Hackett Publishing. 0-87220-571-1
 Plato, The Trial and Death of Socrates. 3rd edition. Hackett Publishing. 0-87220-554-1
 Wolff, Robert Paul. In Defense of Anarchism. University of California Press.
 also available at: <http://www.ditext.com/wolff/anarchy.html>
 Locke, John. Second Treatise of Government. Hackett Publishing. 978-0-915144-86-0
 *Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. On the Social Contract. Hackett Publishing. 0-87220-068-X
 *Sieyès, Emmanuel. Political Writings of Sieyes. Hackett Publishing. 0-87220-430-8
 Machiavelli, Nicolo. The Prince. Hackett Publishing. 0-87220-316-6
 *Sartre, Jean Paul. No Exit and Three Other Plays. Vintage.
 *Camus, Albert. Caligula and Three Other Plays. Vintage.
 *Fanon, Franz. The Wretched of the Earth. Grove.
 Gandhi, Mahatma. Selected Political Writings. Hackett Publishing. 0-87220-330-1

Items marked by asterisk (*) are translations from the original French. If you are able to read French, you are strongly encouraged to read these works in their original language. To facilitate this, copies of the asterisked texts are also available in French at the bookstore and on reserve:

Rousseau. Du Contrat Social. Éditions Flammarion
 Sieyès. Qu'est-ce que le tiers état? Presses Universitaires de France.
 Sartre. Les mains sales. Éditions Gallimard (Folio).
 Camus. Les Justes. Éditions Gallimard (Folio).
 Fanon. Les damnés de la terre. Éditions Gallimard (Folio).

Class Schedule: Readings should be done by dates shown, before class, since lectures will assume that the associated readings have already been done.

Please heed the following warning about the readings for this course: if you do not keep up with

the readings, you will not be able in this course to cram everything at the end for the final exam. This for two reasons. First, the materials in this course are cumulative. If you fall behind in one part, you will likely be lost in the next parts. Second, there is just too much material to digest: the readings are meant to be digested over three months, not a few weeks.

****NOTE:** There will be no class on Thursday, January 7 (which follows a Monday schedule), or on Friday January 8.**

1. Introduction: Ethics & Politics (M Jan 11)

I. Political Obligation, Conscience, and the Claims of Authority

2. Sophocles, Antigone (W Jan 13)

3. Plato, "Apology" and "Crito" (in The Trial and Death of Socrates) (F Jan 15)

4. Thoreau, "An Essay on Civil Disobedience" (M Jan 18)

II. Political Authority and Legitimacy: The Moral Foundations of Political Life

A. The Illegitimacy of the State as an Organization of Force: Anarchism

5. Wolff, In Defense of Anarchism, Parts I and II (but skip appendix of part II). (W Jan 20)

B. Legitimacy via the Protection of Individual Rights: Liberalism

6. Locke, Second Treatise of Government, chapters 1-5, 7, 8(par 95-99, 119-122), 9 (F Jan 22)

Conferences begin M Jan 25

7. Locke, chapters 10-12, 13 (par 149-155) (M Jan 25)

8. Locke, chapters 17, 18 (par 199-204), 19 (par 211-229, 240-243) (W Jan 27)

First paper due 9:29am Monday Feb 1 (Place of submission will be announced on MyCourses)

9. continued (M Feb 1)

C. Legitimacy via the Collective Exercise of Popular Sovereignty: Democracy

10. Rousseau, Social Contract, Book I (all) and Book II (chapters 1-6) (W Feb 3)

11. Sieyès, "What is the Third Estate?", selections (Political Writings, pp. 93-111, 115-116, 127-130, 133-144, 148-158). (M Feb 8)

[For those reading Sieyès in French: assigned pages correspond to the entire text (Intro to

ch. 6), except: in Ch. 3, Sec. 2, you are only responsible for first two parts of Sec. 2, plus the entirety of the other sections; in Ch. 6 you are only responsible for text between paragraph that begins “Il n’est pas, dit une maxime de droit universel, de plus grand défaut...” and paragraph that begins “Résumons: il est de principe que tout ce qui sort de la qualité commune...”]

12. Sieyès continued (W Feb 10)

III. Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands

A. Ends and Means: The Craft of Politics

13. Machiavelli, The Prince (M Feb 15)

14. Machiavelli, The Prince (W Feb 17)

Second paper due at the beginning of your conference which falls in week of Feb 22-26

15. Screening of Breaker Morant (M Feb 22)

16. continued (W Feb 24)

Reading period Feb 29 through March 4

17. Kagan, Normative Ethics, chapter 2 (M March 7)

18. Kagan, Normative Ethics, chapter 3 (W March 9)

19. Sartre, “Dirty Hands” (in No Exit and Three Other Plays) (M March 14)

20. Albert Camus, “The Just Assassins” (in Caligula and Three Other Plays) (W March 16)

21. continued (M March 21)

B. Violence, Conflict and Political Power

22. F. Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth: preface by Sartre, plus chapter “Concerning Violence” (including “Violence in the International Context”) (W March 23)

Third paper due at the beginning of your conference which falls in week of March 28-Apr 1

23. continued (M March 28)

24. Gandhi, Selected Political Writings (W March 30)

25. Gandhi continued, plus Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

(M Apr 4)

26. Sayyid Qutb, no readings (W Apr 6)

27. Review session (M Apr 11)

No class W Apr 13

REQUIREMENTS AND COURSE POLICIES

DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS:

Conference Participation	10%
Conference Attendance	10%
2 Papers (1000-1250 words)	50%
Final	30%

You must pass each of the five portions of the class to receive a grade higher than D in this course.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

REQUIREMENTS

Paper Assignments

You have the opportunity to write three 1000-1250 word papers. However, I will drop the lowest mark from the three papers, so in effect you are required to write two 1000-1250 word papers (but have the opportunity to write a third "bonus" paper).

You are not expected to consult secondary sources beyond what you read from the syllabus. Your papers should focus on the primary materials from the syllabus. (However, if you do consult external sources, you should of course acknowledge your references.)

All papers must be in hardcopy, double-spaced, at least 11-point font, proper reference citation, with no separate title page but your title, name, TA name, and final word count (including footnotes) placed at the top of your first page. If you are using notes, use numbered footnotes (not endnotes, and Arabic not Roman numerals). I do not care which reference citation system you use, as long as you are consistent and complete. (You may wish to use the Modern Language Association (MLA) system.) Papers that fail to meet these criteria will be penalized by dropping to the next possible letter grade (e.g., from A to A-).

Your paper must fall exactly between 1000-1250 words (including footnotes); anything below this length will be deemed insufficient; anything beyond this length will not be read past 1250 words.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Late Work

Since you have three opportunities to write two papers that count, no late papers will be accepted for any reason whatsoever. If circumstances arise that prevent you from handing in your paper on time, you will receive an F on that paper.

Please note that (except for the first paper) your papers are due at the beginning of the conference that you normally attend, and not at a conference that you are attending to make up for an absence.

I strongly recommend that you not frivolously use up your bonus paper opportunity in the first two rounds, since no exceptions will be made for late papers under any circumstances. If circumstances in the first two rounds have led you already to miss a paper assignment or to write a paper whose mark you were not happy about, I strongly suggest that you plan on handing in your next paper(s) the week before it is due, so that you do not run into problems of the printer, illness, or my-grandmother-died variety when the due date arrives. To repeat: since no exceptions will be made, if you have already missed a paper, you should plan to hand in your next paper one week in advance in order to avoid any unforeseeable circumstances, such as an illness, that may prevent you from being able to hand in your paper on its due date.

Mobile Computing or Communications Devices

To facilitate the realization of course objectives, this course is organized as a manual note-taking lecture course. Mobile computing or communications devices (including computers, recording devices, phones, iPads, or iPods) are not permitted to be used or displayed in class (unless a student has received explicit permission from the instructor). If you bring such devices to class, they must be off and out of view.

There are three basic reasons for why this course is structured as a manual noted-taking course:¹

¹ For evidence of the first two points, see, for example, C.B. Fried, "In-class Laptop Use and Its Effects on Student Learning," *Computers & Education* 50.3 (2008): 906-914, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2006.09.006> ; F. Sana, T. Weston, and N. J. Cepeda, "Laptop Multitasking Hinders Classroom Learning for Both Users and Nearby Peers," *Computers & Education* 62 (2013): 24-31, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003>. For further discussion, see also Josh Fischman, "Students Stop Surfing After Being Shown How In-Class Laptop Use Lowers Test Scores," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 16, 2009), available at <http://chronicle.com/blogPost/Students-Stop-Surfing-After/4576> . For a more general discussion of the issue of computers in the classroom, see the interesting article by Laura Mortkowitz, "More colleges, professors shutting down laptops and other digital distractions," *The Washington Post* (April 25, 2010), available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/24/AR2010042402830.html>)

1. There is increasing evidence that mobile computing and other devices pose a significant distraction for both users and fellow students during class, inhibiting the ability to focus on and digest classroom material.
2. There is increasing evidence linking the use of such devices in class to poorer overall course performance.
3. Taking notes by hand is generally slower than typing into a computer. While it may be possible to transcribe a lecture almost verbatim when typing, this is impossible by hand. To take effective notes manually, one must simultaneously digest and synthesize the main points of a lecture. Not only is digesting and synthesizing on the spot an important skill in its own right (the development of which is an objective of this course), the process can itself play a crucial role in learning the material.

To facilitate manual note-taking, an outline of the lecture will normally be posted to MyCourses, available for printout, prior to the class. You may wish to take notes directly onto your printout.

Exceptions: Explicit permission for the use of a computer may be granted by the professor in particular circumstances for students for whom its use is justified to facilitate in-class note-taking or learning. You must receive explicit permission from the professor in such a case.

Conference Participation: Readings & Talking Points

Conferences will be structured to permit a high level of discussion and the close analysis of texts. It is essential that readings be done before your conference in order to make an effective discussion possible. You are expected to come to conferences prepared to discuss each assigned text; you may wish to prepare talking points for yourself.

Conference Attendance

You get one free conference absence, no questions asked. Use it wisely.

(Please note that if you are absent from the first conference, you are absent from the first conference.)

For each conference that you miss after the first, your absence will be reflected in the attendance component of your conference mark, unless you have made up for your absence in one of two ways. Either you can make up for the absence by attending, with the permission of your TA, another conference *the same week by the same TA*. Or, if not, then you must write a brief **reflection essay** of 500-750 words, *due at the beginning of the next conference*, on the material from the missed conference. This all your responsibility; do not expect your TA to chase you down for make-up reflection papers.

Bilingual Conference

If possible, there will be a designated bilingual (French-English) conference for this course. The conference will be conducted in French by the TA, but students are welcome to participate in

either French or English.

MyCourses

You are responsible for checking class announcements made via this course's MyCourses page, and for any course content made available to you via MyCourses.

Academic Integrity

McGill university values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures. (See www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information.)

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PROFESSOR AND TAs

Please come and see me, your TA, or the Head TA during office hours to discuss any matter of an intellectual nature concerning the materials in this course. I am also usually very happy to talk with you immediately after lecture if you wish to walk back with me to my office. We can be peripatetics together.

Questions of an administrative kind concerning the course should initially be addressed to your own TA. Questions of this kind to which you do not receive a satisfactory answer from your own TA should be addressed to the designated Head TA. If the Head TA is unable to help you, or if you are not satisfied with the response, please come and see me. If there is a personal matter about which you are uncomfortable speaking to your TA, you should of course always feel free to speak with me directly about it during my office hours.

MARKING CRITERIA

Papers will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. analytical rigour (logic, precision, clarity of argument, consideration of counterarguments, etc.)
2. originality / creativity
3. essay mechanics (structure of essay clear and logical, clear thesis, etc)
4. sentence mechanics (quality of prose, grammar, spelling, etc.)
5. scholarship (accurate representation of authors cited, other works engaged with when appropriate, quality of research if a research paper, etc)
6. miscellaneous (proper citation of sources, meets purposes of assignment, etc)

Each paper will be returned with a grade corresponding to each of these 5 or 6 items, in addition to your overall paper grade. Please note that these 5 or 6 itemized grades are purely meant to provide you with feedback, so that you have an idea of what areas require improvement in future work. Your final grade is NOT an average of these itemized grades.

Explanation of Grades

Grades for papers will range from F to A+. To help you interpret your performance in the course, here is a very rough idea of what grades in the C to A ranges mean. A grade in the **C** range indicates some basic problems that require immediate attention and perhaps some pedagogic help. A **B-** is a below average grade which suggests some problem that needs attention. A **B** reflects average work; it is a respectable though perhaps unhappy grade. It indicates a need for improvement in future work. Usually there are no major errors, and there is a good, above-average comprehension of the material – though there may be problems of written expression, or of precision, or the work amounts to a regurgitation of texts or class discussion, etc. A **B+** is a very good grade reflecting above-average and promising work. General qualities usually include an excellent comprehension of the material, excellent organization of paper, excellent written expression, no major errors, meeting all basic requirements of assignment, attaining a basic level of analytical rigour, and going beyond a mere regurgitation of texts and class work. Moving into the A-range requires not just comprehending the material and presenting it well, but a critical engagement with the material that captures its subtleties and displays some spark of creative originality and/or superior analytical rigour. (All of this means that an excellent paper that is also excellent because it was a “safe” paper to write will probably end up with a B+. And, in fact, sometimes, depending on where are you are at with the material, that is exactly the kind of paper you need to write.) An **A-** is an excellent grade reflecting a paper that is almost flawless in the basic requirements (excellent comprehension of material, organization of paper, written expression, etc.); there is also a critical engagement that captures the complexities and subtleties of the material, and that displays some combination of superior analytical rigour and/or creative original insight. A grade of **A** reflects a top-notch work that is flawless in the basic requirements and that reflects an outstanding comprehension of the material in all its complexities and subtleties and displays a combination of superior analytical rigour and creative original insight. The writer had likely set themselves up with an intellectually challenging project (which of course sometimes carries with it some risk) and was able to pull it off. The very rare **A+** is similar; the plus comes from the fact that one is saying “wow!” while reading your paper.

Tips for Writing an Essay for your Intro Political Theory Class with Arash Abizadeh

1. **Know the difference between a thesis, an argument, and the premises of an argument.** A thesis is a claim that you wish to defend in your essay. An argument is what you say in order to defend the thesis; it provides reasons in support of your thesis. Premises are claims that are used in your argument.

For example, one of the key theses in Wolff's book is that there can exist no legitimate authority (except for unanimous direct democracy). An argument he gives for this thesis is the following:

- 1 (premise). Authority is legitimate only if it is compatible with the autonomy of those over whom it is exercised.
- 2 (premise). Autonomy is incompatible with being subject to authority.
- Therefore:
- 3 (conclusion). No authority can be legitimate.

Steps 1 through 3 all together comprise the argument for the conclusion 3. The conclusion 3 is the thesis Wolff wishes to defend. 1 and 2 are premises in the argument for his thesis.

2. **State your thesis clearly at the beginning of your paper.** The claim that you are going to defend in your paper should be clear to your reader at the very outset. You don't need to say, "I will defend the claim that XYZ". But you do need to state XYZ clearly. Your thesis is your view, the claim you want to defend. You need to take a position on the question you are addressing and state it clearly. "This paper explores issues related to..." is not a thesis.

3. **Provide arguments for your thesis.** Once you have decided on your thesis, you must defend it with arguments. How many arguments you provide will depend on how much space you have. But once you state your thesis, the next thing your reader expects is an argument for it.

4. **Know what it means to critically evaluate an argument.** Sometimes your thesis is about other persons' claims or arguments. For example, your thesis might be that Creon's arguments for the thesis that an individual has a duty to obey the law are better or stronger than Socrates's arguments for the thesis that an individual has a duty to obey the law. If that's your thesis, then you need to state clearly your thesis, state Creon's thesis and argument(s) for it, state Socrates's thesis and argument(s) for it, and then critically evaluate the arguments.

To critically evaluate an argument is to (a) determine whether the premises of the argument are true and (b) determine whether the conclusion follows logically from the premises.

Consider the following argument for the thesis that Socrates is a man.

1. Socrates is a philosopher.
2. All philosophers are monkeys.
- Therefore:
3. Socrates is a man.

This is an invalid argument: the conclusion does not follow logically from the premises. If 1 and 2 were true, then Socrates would be a monkey, not a man. Even if the conclusion 3 is true, this is not a good argument for it. Someone who was critically evaluating the argument could say "The argument is illogical."

Now consider a different argument for the thesis that Socrates is a man.

1. Socrates is a philosopher.
 2. All philosophers are men.
- Therefore:
3. Socrates is a man.

This is a logically valid argument. If 1 and 2 are true, then 3 must be true too. But someone critically evaluating this argument could now dispute the truth of its premises. Someone might say, for example, that premise 2 is false, because some philosophers are women. If premise 2 is false, then the argument for the conclusion/thesis is not a good one. The thesis may still be true, but it has not been adequately defended.

In general, then, if you want to critically evaluate an argument for a thesis, you must state the thesis, state the argument, and then ask two questions: (a) does the conclusion follow logically from the premises? and (b) are the premises true?

5. Make sure the arguments for your thesis are good or strong arguments. This means that someone who critically evaluates your argument would not find obvious problems with it. (See 4 above).

6. Make sure your thesis is an interesting thesis. Let's say you read the *Apology* and came up with the thesis "Socrates is a man." I am very certain you will be able to provide very good arguments for this thesis, but it is a rather uninteresting thesis. The reason why it is uninteresting is that it is difficult to see what the counterarguments to your thesis would be. If you can't think of any good, strong counterarguments to your thesis or any objections to your own argument, *then it's not a thesis worth writing a paper about.*

7. In your paper, you must seriously consider (a) counterarguments to your thesis or (b) objections to your argument. This is what makes the difference between an ok paper and a good paper. The stronger the counterarguments or objections that you consider and refute, the stronger your own position. A weak counterargument or objection against your own thesis or argument will leave your reader wondering why you even bothered considering it. If you cannot think of any counterarguments or objections, pick a different thesis.

8. Use your limited space wisely. Any argument for a thesis relies on premises. In political theory (or political philosophy), some premises will be normative and some empirical/descriptive. Now, let's say that there is a claim that you want to defend in your essay – in other words, your paper's thesis. For a political theory paper, you must defend your thesis by providing an argument. The problem with providing an argument for your thesis is that the premises you use in your argument are *themselves* claims with which someone may or may not agree. A premise in one argument can always become the thesis of another argument. So, for example, recall Wolff's argument:

- 1 (premise). Authority is legitimate only if it is compatible with the autonomy of those over whom it is exercised.
 - 2 (premise). Autonomy is incompatible with being subject to authority.
- Therefore:
- 3 (conclusion). No authority can be legitimate.

If someone disagreed with premise 1, and provided a good argument for why it is false, Wolff would be forced to provide an argument for premise 1. But then the premise of the argument above would become the thesis of another argument.

This means that the potential length of your paper is infinity. Since you have word limits, you need to make some choices. For example, you may wish to provide an argument with premises that are relatively uncontroversial. Or if you employ a controversial premise, then you may want to briefly defend the premise too (i.e., provide an argument for it). But at some point you have to stop defending yourself and hope that the premises you use will carry your reader. There is no formula here; you have to exercise your own judgement.

9. Again, use your limited space wisely. Since you only have limited space to state your thesis, provide your arguments, and consider counterarguments or objections, you can't waste any words. Don't say anything that is not necessary to clarify or defend your thesis. Don't start off your essay, for example, with grandiose pronouncements about how important the question is or how many great thinkers have for centuries and millennia thought about it. This is not a history class, so it's very unlikely that such claims would matter one way or the other to your thesis. Every sentence counts: with each paragraph, and with each sentence in each paragraph, ask yourself: why am I telling my reader this? If you can honestly say "because saying this is necessary for defending my thesis," leave it in. If not, think again.

10. Use the key concepts in your essay in a clear, precise, and consistent fashion. Key concepts in this course, for example, might be obligation, right, authority, etc. When you use a fancy word, make sure its meaning is clear to you and to your reader. For every word you use in your essay, be sure that you can define it. If you can't, either figure out what it means, or don't use it. If the meaning of the word is clear to you, but it's a word used in different ways by different people, then define it for your reader so that it's clear what you mean by it. (Words like "objective," for example.)

11. Spelling, grammar, and style count. For grammar, pay special attention to a common pitfall. You already know that nouns and verbs must agree with each other (so that if it's a plural noun, then you need a plural verb: not "they talks"). But don't forget that pronouns must also agree. This is ungrammatical: "One must always retain the right to make his own judgements." This is also ungrammatical: "One must always retain the right to make their own judgements." If your pronoun is "one" in the first part, it should be "one" in the next part. Thus: "One must always retain the right to make one's own judgements." On the one hand, for a similar reason, this is considered by many to be ungrammatical: "A person must never give up their own freedom." "Person" is singular, "their" is plural. The pronoun that goes with "person" should be third-person singular, i.e., either "she" or "he." On the other hand, it is good to avoid gender-specific language when gender is irrelevant to the point. To do this, you can often substitute the plural throughout: "Persons must never give up their own freedom."

For style, try your best to avoid the passive voice ("It has been argued that..."), in favour of the active voice ("Socrates argued that" or "I argue that..."). (It is perfectly OK to use the word "I" or "my" in your essays, especially since you will often need to assert *your* thesis ; you just don't want to distract your reader's attention from the matter at hand by unnecessarily and gratuitously inserting yourself into your essay.)

12. Take a look at the marking criteria outlined on the syllabus.