Hannah Arendt was one of the most influential philosophers, social theorists and public intellectuals of the twentieth century. Having experienced first-hand many the most traumatic and perplexing political experiences of that era—including totalitarianism, economic collapse, genocide, world war and the nuclear age—she sought to come to terms with those experiences at a level of philosophical depth and ambition that has arguably been unmatched by any other philosopher since. This semester we will read Arendt’s most significant texts, and work to come to terms with her conclusions about the meaning of that unique period of time.

Taught in a seminar format, the course places a premium on student participation, and grading will emphasize individual initiative, group teamwork and critical thought. By the end of semester, students will have developed a framework for thinking about politics in Arendt’s unique manner, and have gained experience in presentation, research and academic writing.

Course Requirements

- The course assignments are made up of two presentations, two eight page papers, and class participation:
  - In class participation (20%)
  - Two presentations (15% each)
  - Two 8 page papers (25% each)

- This course will be taught in seminar format, and as such, it will emphasize individual intellectual initiative. One of primary goals of the seminar is to give students concrete professional experience in public speaking, research methods, and other scholarly practices.

- 20% of your grade will be based on your participation each week. Because participation will be such a significant factor in your grade, both the amount and the quality of your participation will be graded. It will therefore be important to keep up with the weekly readings, to engage them critically, and to discuss them with your classmates.
• Each week there will be a group presentation on the reading for that week. The group presenting will effectively be responsible for helping lead the discussion in that week's class. Each student should prepare questions and comments for the class discussion.

• Twice during the semester, each student will work with a group to prepare a presentation for the week’s reading. The group will decide how to organize the week’s presentation, but each student should have a chance to share their ideas about the week’s text, and respond to the other presenters.

• Each student is responsible for turning in two eight page papers that engage Arendt’s ideas. The topic of these papers will be developed by the student, but I am happy to help each of you formulate paper ideas.

• Any late final papers will be marked down by a third of a grade (from an A to an A-, for example). For every 24 hours the paper is late, an additional third of a grade will be deducted. For example, papers handed in a day late will lose two thirds of a grade (from an A to B+).

• Plagiarism is absolutely forbidden. Any act of plagiarism will be reported as a violation of academic integrity.

Course Texts

• The following books are required. You will need to have a copy of The Portable Hannah Arendt by the second week of class.


• Suggested secondary literature:


### Class Schedule

**Jan. 19:** Introduction


**Feb. 2:** *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (selections), in: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*

**Feb. 9:** *The Human Condition* (Prologue, Chs. I and II)

**Feb. 16:** *The Human Condition* (Chs. III and IV)

**Feb. 23:** *The Human Condition* (Ch. V)

**Mar. 2:** *The Human Condition* (Ch. VI)

**Mar. 9:** “What is Freedom?” in: *Between Past and Future*

**Mar. 16:** “What is Authority?” in: *Between Past and Future*

**Mar. 23:** No class (spring break)

**Mar. 30:** *On Revolution* (selections)

**Apr. 6:** *On Revolution* (selections)
**Apr. 13:** *On Violence*

**Apr. 20:** *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (selections), in: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*

**Apr. 27:** “Truth and Politics,” in: *Between Past and Future*; “Thinking” (selections), in: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*


------------------------Final papers will be due at noon of the final exam day------------------------