

POL 395: ILLUMINATIONS: POLITICS IN DARK TIMES

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Office hours: Th, 3-5pm, plus; [Sign-up sheet](#).

Class: M/W, 2:40-4pm; E416

[Course Moodle](#)

QUESTIONS and FIELD OF INQUIRY

“Even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination, and that such illumination may come less from theories and concepts than from the uncertain, flickering, and often weak light that some men and women, in their lives and works, will kindle under almost all circumstances and shed over the time-span that was given them on earth” (*Men in Dark Times*, 1970, ix). Hannah Arendt took as her subject the darkest moments of the 20th century. Yet, she never lost faith in political action as a way to express and renew what she called “love of the world.” She wrote luminously about the darkness that comes when terror extinguishes politics and the shining, almost miraculous events of freedom through which politics is sometimes renewed. In this course, we first investigate what Arendt’s vision of politics offers efforts to comprehend and transform our political world. We turn to her as an interlocutor, not a guide, as we seek to “think what we are doing” (*The Human Condition*, 1998, 5). At her suggestion, we, second, engage the lives and works of others - thinkers, artists, organizers - diving for pearls, illuminations or themselves, assertions of freedom in action that might disrupt even seemingly inexorable political tragedies.

GOALS, PROMISES, PRACTICES and EXPECTATIONS¹

My big goal with this course is to feed, train, and empower your inner political theorist, and to help you learn how to do the art and science of political theorizing well, that is with care, creativity, curiosity, enthusiasm, and skill – on your own and with others.

A second related goal is that your participation in this course energizes, replenishes, and fills you – rather than leaving you depleted and exhausted. To this end, a third goal is that we join in the inquiry together, with imagination, creativity, honesty, respect, and openness through earnest inquiry and adventuresome speculation.

I aim to support these goals by supplying the scaffolding, the container – most of the materials, the discussion formats, and writing prompts – but each of you will need to bring your energy, attention,

¹ I have been much aided in articulating these goals, promises, practices, and expectations by looking at the syllabuses of my colleague, [Joel Schlosser](#).

playfulness, curiosity, and a willingness to try things that I hope will take you to new visions of individual and collective possibility.

A bit more concretely, in this course students will:

1. Fulfill all three [learning outcomes](#) for Group II of the Distribution Requirement;
2. Contribute as a learned, thoughtful participant in a political theoretical conversation that, by some lights, extends from Socrates to Steinberger and us;
3. Read and interpret Hannah Arendt's texts with care, imagination, and precision;
4. Identify, reconstruct, and critically analyze key concepts, arguments, values, and assumptions in these texts;
5. Develop a comfortable but critical grasp of various scholarly approaches to understanding and extending Hannah Arendt's political theory;
6. Engaging in the "exercise of thinking," i.e. develop and deploy the ideas, insights, and tools of this conversation to formulate compelling questions and analyses about politics;
7. Share your thinking and illuminations with other scholars, both your peers and professionals;
8. Recognize perspectives and experiences that Arendt misses, and consider what is gained or lost by attending to those exclusions;
9. Engage with care and generosity arguments that challenge your settled assumptions and even considered judgements;
10. Apply theoretical ideas to concrete political issues – to gain insight into the issue and the conceptual framework itself.
11. Enrich your skill in the art and science of political theory research;
12. Communicate ideas clearly and persuasively in discussion and writing.

Everyone has a place in this classroom; everyone has something valuable and unique to contribute. It is up to all of us, as a group, to cultivate the kind of trust within the classroom that open, rigorous, creative, thoughtful inquiry and playful speculation require. Perhaps above all else, our classroom should be a place where "error" and confusion are valued as starting points for real understanding.

Furthermore, we are aided by the fact that we come to this material with different experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds; different vantage points often reveal different data. I ask you to bring to class a willingness to engage with the material and one another with respect, integrity, sincerity, and generosity. To support these goals, we will develop a statement of **shared commitments** at the start of the semester. To get us started, I've developed a [first draft](#).

Some of our discussions in class will involve sensitive issues and you may find some of the material upsetting. I hope that together we can foster an environment of respect, generosity and openness conducive to everyone's full and honest participation. In situations where I foresee a particularly sensitive issue, I will do my best to let everyone know ahead of time. However, it is impossible to predict person to person what might be upsetting. Therefore, I ask you to review the syllabus and speak with me if you see something that seems potentially concerning. If something arises during class, I encourage you to leave if needed, contact support resources, and come speak to me afterward about what happened. If

you do not feel comfortable sharing details about your reaction to the content, that is fine; just let me know you are okay.

I treat this course as something of a **research seminar**. That means a few things. First, I expect you to participate as much as possible as an independent scholar, e.g. read as if this were your thesis, with an eye to what we need to explore in order to deepen our grasp of Arendt's analysis of dark times, sources of illumination, and the possibilities of political freedom within and beyond them. Second, I expect us to be thinking as we go. So, don't be surprised if the readings and assignments change mid-course. If we discover that we need to think more carefully about X, well, then we'll have to think more carefully about X. And if doing so requires cutting Y, well, so be it. Third, the course is structured to put you and your interests in a guiding role. In addition to serving in the formal role of discussant for one class session – which involves the opportunity to introduce material and themes related to your final project – much of the second half of the course will focus on topics and materials of your choosing, again with an eye to final projects. In the last few weeks of the course, you will present and workshop your final project as a work in progress. Fourth, the course is structured to enhance your skill in the art and science of political theory research. We pay attention to *how* Arendt and other scholars we encounter approach the matter. And the formal exercises of the course are structured to help you develop knowledge and skills necessary to conduct independent research. As always, responsibility for making this course work rests largely with you. Based on my experience, the great thing about all of this is that you will be engaged in and rewarded by this course in unusual ways.

ACTIVITIES and ASSESSMENT

The course is structured to promote thoughtful intellectual engagement with texts, ideas and each other. In addition to facilitating productive in-class discussion, the following activities and exercises are designed to help you develop your skills as a reader, researcher, writer and broad, critical and reflective thinker. They also will serve as the basis for my assessment of your performance in this class.

1. Reading and Contributions to Discussion

Consistent and careful preparation for class activities and thoughtful, engaged contributions to class discussions are essential steps to realizing the promises of this course.

a. Reading

Disciplined but imaginative reading. This is a reading- and discussion-intensive course. Readings include texts listed on this syllabus as well as one another's work. This course seeks to develop your skill as thoughtful, patient, imaginative, and critical readers capable of identifying multiple possible interpretations, examining assumptions, and ready to engage perspectives that challenge yours. Your first task is to **read** the materials with care. Many of our texts are dense and multi-layered. You will need to read them more than once. I limit the amount of reading (and listening or watching) accordingly.

b. Class discussion

Engaged discussion. This course will be conducted as a seminar. Among other things, this means that I expect you to fuel our discussions. We will hone our practice as political theorists by doing, which is to say, discussing and thinking about politics, theoretically. To learn the tools of the tradition or long conversation we engage in this course, its approaches to questions, concepts and claims, you need to practice putting them into your own words, explaining them to others, and listening to others' explanations. My aim is to ensure that we are all able to participate in multiple ways in a serious (but playful) discussion.

In any case, excellent discussion -- oral or written -- requires preparation: reviewing previous class discussions, taking notes in advance of class meetings, and being present and alert as much as possible during every class meeting. Your [Commonplace Book](#) will help with all of this. Productive discussion also depends on shared commitment to norms of exchange. We will spend some time developing a statement of our [shared norms](#) in the first week of class. Contributing to the oral discussion is particularly important as it provides an opportunity to *practice* (and not to perform perfected) thinking in concert -- not always in agreement -- with others, which is to say, of course, listening to and developing the arguments and analyses of your peers. Hearing all voices benefits both speakers and listeners. If speaking in class is a challenge for you, please let me know. We can work together to address the matter.

c. Discussant Exercise

Each of you, typically in pairs, will play a formal role in **facilitating class discussion** once during the semester. The goal of this exercise is to provide each of you with a formal opportunity to contribute sources to our inquiry and to guide discussion. It has three components: (1) selecting a class, (2) an annotated bibliography containing three scholarly sources that could deepen or extend our engagement with the assigned materials, and (3) oral comments and questions aimed at deepening and extending the class's engagement with the texts and wider themes of the course. The annotated bibliography is the only formal written component of this exercise.

Before you sign up for a class, please review [detailed instructions](#) for this assignment. Discussant Exercise classes are tagged with (*) on the syllabus.

[Sign up here](#) by 5p, Friday, February 6.

2. Writing and Oral Presentation Exercises

Frequent and varied writing. This course begins from the premise that [reading, writing](#) (and potentially other modes of disciplined expression), and thinking are deeply intertwined; because writing cements understanding, this course asks that you write in response to most of the assigned readings, listenings, and watchings. Writing exercises are often iterative and linked to oral presentations. These assignments are designed to enable you to:

- Build your writing and analytical skills one step at a time;
- Share your close reading and understanding of assigned texts;
- Engage in the “exercise of thinking” in the form of the essay;
- Practice the arts of rational reconstruction, critical analysis, and sustained argument;
- Improve your own writing and thinking through giving and receiving feedback and revising drafts;
- Develop and practice skills in scholarly presentation and discussion.

Writing and oral presentation assignments include:

- [Annotated Syllabus](#). Upload to the Moodle as a .docx file by 5p, Saturday, January 31.
- [Commonplace Book](#). Daily, weekly, and other deadlines. Turn in for review by 5p on Thursday, March 19 and Friday, May 8.
- [Class Discussant and Mini-Annotated Bibliography](#). Dates vary. [Sign up here](#) by 5p, Friday, February 6.
- [Concept Portfolio](#) (500 words), in-class, peer work, and revision. Upload to the Moodle as a .docx file by 5p, Thursday, February 19.
- [Politics and Post-Kantian Thought](#) symposium, preparation and participation. In-class, peer work. Upload group questions to the Moodle as a .docx file by 5p, Friday, March 13.
- [Final project](#), including proposal, oral presentation, and final essay (1500-2000 words), due in various forms and formats, starting at 5p on Friday, April 3.

Many of these assignments involve at least two steps, some peer-work, and a personal reflection. We will discuss each in detail at least a week before the first step is due.

I provide substantial written and oral feedback on all aspects of your participation in this course (outlined above). I have built this feedback and your ongoing engagement with it into the assignments. I strongly encourage you to visit me IRL, in my office. No better way to deepen our collaboration in thinking about how to live well together.

POLICIES and RESOURCES

[Academic Support](#): I strongly encourage all students to take advantage of the resources available through the Office of Academic Support, and especially if you need extra help with study habits, note-taking, or time and stress management strategies that are essential to success in this course and college life. You may also want to take advantage of the weekly free hour of tutoring available upon request.

Access and Accommodations: I aim to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities may also wish to work with [Disability and Accessibility Resources](#) to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in this

course, including official accommodations. If you have already been approved for accommodations through Disability & Accessibility Resources for the current semester, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

AI in Class. See here for [my evolving guidelines and expectations](#) on use of this emerging technology. I welcome feedback.

Attendance. Class is where most of our work as a community of learners happens, so it's important that you attend regularly and arrive on time. **Bluntly, attendance is an essential, mandatory, required component of this course.** That said, I understand that on occasion it is necessary to miss a conference due to illness, family emergency, or other obligations. Everyone gets three "free" misses to use as you wish. If you miss more than three classes over the course of the semester, you risk failing the course.

Communication: I will use email (often via Moodle) to post important announcements about the course. **Please be sure to check your Reed email at least once a day** so that you will see these messages. You can reach me via email for all sorts of questions, but I also *strongly* encourage you to come talk with me during office hours to discuss your work in progress. Doing political theory well can be hard. If you find yourself frustrated or struggling, please don't despair, and *please* don't keep your struggles to yourself. A quick (or long) conversation can often be the best way out of a research quagmire, so please keep me informed of what you're up to. (You are also welcome to drop by if you have made a particularly exciting discovery or lit upon an especially interesting idea that you just have to share with someone.)

Comportment. A productive learning community, like -- I venture -- democratic politics, depends on shared norms. We will spend some time in class developing a statement of those norms, or, if you prefer, the terms of our social contract. You can see [here](#) what I've drafted to get us started. I ask you to be generous with yourself, your classmates, and me as we work through challenging material together; productive conversations are always based in language that is imperfect and wander through ideas that are not yet refined. The best conference is one in which we listen to and support each other as we together seek to articulate our ideas, uncover new questions, and try out new thoughts. If you have any concerns or questions about conference conversations, please talk to me.

Electronic Devices. To help us stay present and "think what we are doing" together, **this is a device-free classroom.** Please keep phones and other electronics turned off and stored in our designated classroom spot. **Exceptions:** If you use an electronic device for accessibility or to support your learning needs, you are welcome to use it. I am committed to your full inclusion. Just come talk to me outside of class about your accommodation.

English Language Statement: Reed welcomes students from around the country and the world, and their unique perspectives enrich our learning community. To support students whose primary language is not English, the College offers an array of support services. For more information, check out this [webpage](#) or contact Dustin Simpson (dsimpson@reed.edu) directly.

Deadlines. Deadlines are a practical tool for both students and faculty: they help you plan your semester and manage your time, and they help me ensure timely feedback across all assignments for all students. They also help with a kind of parity: everyone has the same amount of time to complete assignments. Most importantly, perhaps, they comport with a core fact about writing: it is about practicing the art of the possible, not about perfection or comprehensiveness. Writing is a matter of putting together your best attempt to state your claims and back them up, in the context of finite amounts of time, limited information, constraints on length, and imperfect understanding. This is a crucial skill that you will practice in Pol 395. Finally, the writing exercises for this course are carefully sequenced and often involve peer exchange. For these reasons, meeting deadlines – though arbitrary in some sense – is an important part of succeeding in this class. I expect that you use this syllabus, which you have been provided ahead of time, to plan effectively so that you can complete all assignments and turn them in on time.

That said, I know that life sometimes gets in the way. To accommodate this, **each of you has one 48-hour or two 24 hour-extensions** on any writing assignment *that is not due in class on a particular day* during the term, no questions asked. *To use an extension simply send me an email **before** the assignment is due* and let me know how much of your extension allotment you are using.

Beyond this standard extension, if you are unable to turn in an assignment on time, I'd like to meet with you to understand what's going on and how I can best support you. Because every exercise is an important aspect of your learning in this class, we will discuss when you will turn in the assignment as well as decide upon an acceptable consequence for your turning it in late.

Library: Ann Matsushima Chiu (chiua@reed.edu) the Social Science Librarian, can help with questions about research and technology. She is extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Do not hesitate to turn to her!

Honor and Integrity. I expect all of us to adhere to **standards regarding academic honesty contained in the honor principle and the values of mutual trust, concern, and respect for oneself and for others upon which the Reed community depends.** In class, give your undivided attention to others. If you don't agree with what someone else has to say, you are encouraged to express your point of view, but do so respectfully, and support your claims with textual evidence. In your written work, follow the conventions of appropriate citation for the humanities/social sciences. For this class, I ask that you use the *Chicago Manual of Style* "author-date" style.

Recording. Unless you have spoken to me and obtained permission to do so, recording of class discussion is not permitted.

Social Media. Ah, social media. There appears to be an increasing tendency at Reed, and surely other colleges and universities, toward "meta-conference"—that is, commentary, often critical in tone, about class discussion or class members via social media platforms—particularly in courses that deal explicitly with politics and race, gender, sexuality, or other social identity issues. This can have a chilling effect on class discussion. After numerous conversations with students, colleagues and staff at Reed and beyond, I

have decided against imposing any policy per se, but my hope is that we keep our discussion off of social media. Our goal is a classroom environment where we are able to talk to, listen to, respond to, and learn from each other face-to-face and with a spirit of generosity, especially when honestly, if at times clumsily, engaging difficult topics.

[Writing Center](#). The Writing Center offers free appointments and experienced peer tutors who are there to help you at any stage of the writing process. I strongly encourage even experienced writers to take advantage of these services.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In line with the themes of this course, I wish to acknowledge that Reed College sits on the traditional homelands of the Clackamas and Cowlitz peoples. The history of this present is, of course, littered with unmitigated injustice and brutality.

TEXTS and OTHER COURSE MATERIALS

The following texts are required in hard copy. I *strongly* recommend that you purchase them. They are available for purchase at the Reed College Bookstore and, of course, online. If money is the matter, come talk to me. We'll figure something out. The library has copies available for short-term reserve.

- Arendt, Hannah. 1970. *Men in Dark Times*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- Arendt, Hannah and Jerome Kohn. 2006. *Between Past and Future : Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. Penguin Books.

I strongly recommend that you get your hands on your own hard copy of the following:

- Arendt, Hannah, and Margaret Canovan. 1998. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. University of Chicago Press.

However, given that we are currently scheduled to read fewer than 30 pages of the text, I will not require it. I will provide hardcopy print outs of those pages. Please let me know at the end of class on Monday, January 31 if you need them.

We will occasionally read secondary literature. These texts will be linked to the syllabus. You are not required to bring this material to class. If you wish to, you must print them out.

We will frequently rely on secondary scholarship in the form of podcasts – especially, “[Reading Hannah Arendt with Roger Berkowitz](#)” [RHA] – and lectures. As with the other secondary literature, we will rely on good notes to incorporate this material into our discussions.

For every class, you should bring the primary text(s), your [Commonplace Book](#), and a writing utensil.

SCHEDULE OF READING, LISTENING and OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

Part One **Introduction to Our Questions and Field of Inquiry**

M, 1/26 **Introduction to the Course**

Readings, listenings, watchings (to complete before class):

- Read: Preface, *Men in Dark Times* [MDT]
- Listen: <https://www.ursulaklequin.com/nbf-medal>
 - Optional: Le Guin, Ursula K., [*Solitude*](#), *The Birthday of the World and Other Stories*, HarperCollins, 2002

Concepts and questions (to consider as you read):

- MDT: dark times, essay, illumination, freedom.
- What does Le Guin see as the connections between art, artists, and freedom?

Activities (before class):

- Review and annotate your personal syllabus ([instructions](#))

W, 1/28 **Introduction to Arendt**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- Read: "Prologue," *The Human Condition* [HC]
- Read: Canovan, [Introduction](#), *The Human Condition* [HC]
- Read: "Preface," *Between Past and Future* [BPF]
- Listen: Reading Hannah Arendt with Roger Berkowitz [RHA] ([9/13/2024](#))

Concepts and questions:

- BPF: public realm, the lost treasure, freedom, the world, tradition, modern, the gap, "the beginning of a beginning" (10), exercises in political thought (14); essay as a literary form (14).
- HC: the human condition, the earth, the world, "men in the plural" (4), "to think what we are doing" (5), modern world alienation (6).

Activities:

- Review, amend, revise our [statement of shared commitments](#).

S, 1/31 Upload [annotated syllabus](#) to the Moodle as a .docx file by 5p.

Part Two **Politics and Dark Times: Thinking with Hannah Arendt**

M, 2/2 **Freedom of Politics**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, “What is Freedom?” Parts I-II
- Kohn, “[Freedom: The Priority of the Political](#),” *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*
- RHA, “What is Freedom?” ([11/8/2024](#))

Concepts and questions:

- Freedom as related to politics vs will; action; common public space; body politic; the realm of the political; freedom as a worldly reality; words, deeds; courage; sovereignty; Greek vs Roman conceptions of freedom; the faculty of beginning; ‘miracles.’
- How does Arendt’s understanding of freedom sit with yours?

Activities:

- Discuss and affirm our [statement of shared commitments](#).

W, 2/4

Freedom of Politics

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- Re-read: MDT, Preface
- BPF, “What is Freedom?” Parts III-IV.
 - Optional: Kateb, “[Political Action: Its Nature and Advantages](#),” *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*
- RHA, “What is Freedom?” ([11/15/2024](#))

Concepts and questions:

- “Dark times.” In light of what we’ve learned about Arendt’s understanding of politics and freedom, how do you understand her account of “dark times”?
- Arendt calls the essays in BPF “exercises in political thought” and claims that “the essay as a literary form has a natural affinity to the exercises I have in mind” (14). What do you take her to mean with each of these claims? With “What is Freedom?” as a concrete example, what are the features of an exercise in political thought? And why might “the essay” be particularly suited to this activity?

F, 2/6

[Sign up](#) for Discussant Exercise by 5pm.

M, 2/9

The Gap: Tradition and the Modern Age

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, “Tradition and the Modern Age”
- RHA, “Tradition and the Modern Age,” ([9/20/2024](#))

- Optional: Tömmel, Tatjana and Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves, "Hannah Arendt", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2025 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2025/entries/arendt/>>.

Concepts and questions:

W, 2/11 **The Gap: Concept of History**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," Parts I-II.
- RHA, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," Parts I-II, ([9/27/2024](#)).

Concepts and questions:

- "Concept of history," nature in ancient and modern thought; "modern man;" process; "act into nature," earthly immortality.
- Fill out your understanding of what Arendt means by "modern age." What are its characteristic features?
- How does she connect modern science and modern history, and contrast both with ancient versions?
- Choose one of the thinkers she writes about here – Herodotus, Augustine, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Homer, Hobbes – and see if you can anchor a reading of the first two parts of this essay (and/or "Tradition and the Modern Age") to what she has to say about them.

M, 2/16* **The Gap and Dark Times: Concept of History**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," Parts III-IV.
- RHA, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," Parts III-IV ([10/11/2024](#)).
- (reread) MDT, "Preface"

Concepts and questions:

W, 2/18 **Digest and Write: Concept Portfolio**

- In-class writing exercise, exchange, and discussion ([details](#))

Th, 2/19 **Revised [Concept Portfolio](#) due at 5pm.**

M, 2/23* **Exercises in Thinking: What is Authority?**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, “What is Authority?” Parts I-II.
- RHA, “What is Authority?” Parts I-II ([10/18/2024](#)).

Claims, concepts, and questions:

- “If authority is to be defined at all, then, it must be in contradistinction to both coercion by force and persuasion through arguments” (93).
- “Authority,.. Gave the world the permanence and durability which human beings need precisely because they are mortals – the most unstable and futile beings we know of” (95).
- “... these reflections and descriptions are based on the conviction of the importance of making distinctions” (95).
- Totalitarian regimes, authoritarian regimes, and tyrannies and dictatorships
- functionalism
- “Authority implies an obedience in which men retain their freedom” (105).

W, 2/25* **Exercises in Thinking: What is Authority?**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, “What is Authority?” Parts III-VI.
- RHA, “What is Authority?” Parts III-VI ([11/1/2024](#))

Concepts and questions:

M, 3/2 **Exercises in Thinking: Truth and Politics**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, “Truth and Politics” Parts I-III.
- RHA, “Truth and Politics,” Parts I-III, ([2/7/2025](#))

Concepts and questions:

W, 3/5* **Exercises in Thinking: Truth and Politics**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, “Truth and Politics” Parts IV-V.
- RHA, “Truth and Politics,” Parts IV-V, ([2/14/2025](#))
- [Linda Zerilli: The Problem of Democratic Persuasion \(De Gruyter Lecture\)](#)

Concepts and questions:

Part Three **Politics and Post-Kantian Thought**

M, 3/9 **Digest and Write: What would Arendt think?**

- Groups of three will read and develop Arendt-informed questions for one of three papers (to be supplied) being presented at the weekend symposium, [Politics and Post-Kantian Thought](#). We will discuss and workshop in class.

W, 3/11 **Class canceled**

- In lieu of our regularly scheduled class, you will attend at least one of the panels of weekend symposium, [Politics and Post-Kantian Thought](#). Ideally, the panel includes the paper for which you prepared questions.

Part Four **Illuminations!**

M, 3/16* **On Humanity in Dark Times**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- MDT, Chapter 1, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts About Lessing”
- Hannah Arendt Center Virtual Reading Group, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts About Lessing” ([4/17/2020](#))

Concepts and questions:

- What does Lessing illuminate? How?

W, 3/18 **Artist as Illuminator**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- We will visit the [Cooley Gallery](#) to see the current exhibit, “IF,” as a way to ground our thinking about artists as illuminators in dark times.

Concepts and questions:

- How/do the “IF” artists illuminate in Arendtian terms?

S, 3/21 - S, 3/29 **SPRING BREAK**

F, 3/28 **[TBD alternatives proposals](#) due by 5p (optional assignment)**

M, 3/30* **Activist as Illuminator**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- MDT, Chapter 2, “Rosa Luxembourg”
- Hannah Arendt Center Virtual Reading Group, ([4/24/2020](#))

Concepts and questions:

W, 4/1* **TBD: (more) On political freedom (HC)**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- Selections from *The Human Condition*
- Havel, "The Power of the Powerless"

F, 4/3 **Final project proposal due at 5pm.**

M, 4/6* **TBD: On education (BPF)**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, "Crisis in Education"
- RHA, "Crisis in Education" ([11/22/2025](#))

W, 4/8* **TBD: On the conquest of space (BPF)**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- BPF, "The Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man"
- RHA, "The Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man," ([2/28/2025](#))

M, 4/13* **TBD: On revolution and storytelling (OR)**

Readings, listenings, watchings:

- Selections from *On Revolution*

W, 4/15 **Digest and Write (details to come)**

M, 4/20 **Class Symposium (details to come)**

W, 4/22 **Class Symposium (details to come)**

M, 4/27 **Class Symposium (details to come)**

W, 4/29 **Class Symposium (details to come)**

F, 5/8 **Final projects due at 5p (details to come)**