Purpose
This course is designed as an exploration of the philosophical work of Hannah Arendt. The objective of the course is to familiarize students with Arendt’s philosophical work and contributions to post-WWII Continental philosophy, as well as to assess the continued relevance of her contributions to political philosophy. Arendt said that politics was “the art of making distinctions,” so we will pay a good deal of attention to some of the key distinctions in her work, for example, those between power, authority and violence, between the social and the political, and between thinking and acting.

Description
The course will focus on primary texts, and involves a heavy reading load, generally over 100 pages each week. Graduate students are required to do extensive secondary readings in addition to this reading load. I use a variety of teaching methods, including small group work, peer-teaching, in class writing and seminar style readings of particular passages.

Course Requirements
Because of the heavy reading load, I have tried to keep other requirements to a minimum.

Undergrads: Vigorous class participation that shows evidence of careful preparation: 25%; mid-term take home exam 25%; final paper proposal 20%; final paper 30%.

Grads: Vigorous class participation that shows evidence of careful preparation; a formal seminar presentation on an aspect of Arendt’s work; final paper proposal; final paper.

Texts
Texts are: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*; we will read the complete text of *The Human Condition* and *On Violence*. These are available in the University book store. We will only have time to read a small part of *The Life of the Mind*, so you are free to either purchase the text, which is available with the others in the University bookstore, or avail yourself of the necessary selections in other ways. The course packet for graduate students (undergrads are strongly encouraged but not required to do this extra reading) is on reserve at the copyshop on 13th. Week 7 reading, “Introduction into Politics,” will be made available in PDF to undergrads, for grads it is in your course packet.
## Hannah Arendt
### Reading Schedule

#### Week 1
| T 4/3 | Portable Hannah Arendt (PHA), pp. vii-xlv (recommended)  
“Language Remains” pp. 3-21 (required) |
| TH 4/5 | PHA, “Stateless Persons” pp. 31-71 |

Grads Add:  
Ranciere, “Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?”  
Benhabib, “The Right to Have Rights: Hannah Arendt on the Contradictions of the Nation-State,” from The Rights of Others  
Balibar, (De)Constructing the Human as Human Institution: A Reflection on the Coherence of Arendt’s Practical Philosophy

#### Week 2
| T 4/10 | PHA, “Totalitarianism” pp. 75-140 |

Grads add: Conovan, “Arendt’s Theory of Totalitarianism: A Reassessment”  
Benhabib, “Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative”  
Halberstam, “Hannah Arendt on the Totalitarian Sublime…”  
Villa, “Totalitarianism, Modernity and the Tradition”

#### Week 3
| T 4/17 | The Human Condition (HC), pp. vii-xx (recommended)  
“Human Condition” “Public and Private” pp. 1-78 (required) |
| TH 4/19 | HC “Labor” pp. 79-135 (required)  
PHA pp. 167-181 (recommended) [14] |

Grads Add: O’Byrne, “Philosophy and Action: Arendt”  
Benhabib, “The Art of Making and Subverting Distinctions”

#### Week 4
| TH 4/26 | HC, “Action” pp. 175-247 |

Bakan, “HA’s Concepts of Labor and Work”

#### Week 5
| T 5/1 | HC, “Vita Activa” pp. 248-325 |
| TH 5/3 | HC, pp. 248-325 (continued)  
Mid-term take-home exam assigned. |

Grads add: Conovan, “Hannah Arendt as a Conservative Thinker”  
Heller, “Hannah Arendt on Tradition and New Beginnings”  
Honig, “Toward an Agonistic Feminism”  
Dietz, “Feminist Receptions of Hannah Arendt”
### Week 6

**T 5/8**  
PHA, “Eichmann” pp. 313-388  
*Mid-term take-home exam due.*

**TH 5/10**  
PHA, pp. 313-388 (continued)

**Grads add:**  
PHA, “Letter to Gershom Scholem” pp. 391-396  
Gershom Scholem’s letter from *HA: The Jew as Pariah*  
Cohen, “A generations Response”  
Bernstein “‘The Banality of Evil’ Reconsidered”  
Benhabib, “Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem*”  
Butler, “Hannah Arendt’s Death Sentences”  
Marso: “Simone de Beauvoir and Hannah Arendt: Judgments in Dark Times”

### Week 7

**T 5/15**  

**TH 5/17**  
“Introduction into Politics” 93-99; 191-200 (PDF Provided for Undergrads; in graduate course reader)

*Jay Bernstein Lectures this Week!*

May 16th: J. Bernstein Public Lecture (Required) "Hannah Arendt Occupies Wall Street: Civil Disobedience and American Democracy Today". Time & Place TBA

May 17th: J. Bernstein Philosophy lecture (optional for undergrads)”Democratic Bodies: The Abolition of Torture and the Uprising of the Rule of Law.” 4:00 p.m./Place TBA

**Grads:**  
J. Bernstein, “Promising and Civil Disobedience: Arendt’s Political Modernism”  
Butler, “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street”

### Week 8

**T 5/22**  
PHA, “Truth” pp. 545-574; On Violence (OV) 3-31

**TH 5/24**  
OV, pp. 35-87

**Final Paper Proposal Due**

**Grads:** Birmingham, “Arendt and Hobbes: Glory, Sacrificial Violence and the Political Imagination”

**Final Paper Proposal (Grads)**

### Week 9

**T 5/29**  
*Life of the Mind (LM), “Introduction” pp. 3-16*

**TH 5/31**  
LM, “Appearance” pp. 19-65

**Grads add:** Bernstein, “Arendt on Thinking”

### Week 10

**T 6/5**  
LM, “Mental Activities” pp. 69-125

**TH 6/7**  
LM, (continued)

**Grads add:** D’Entrèves “Arendt’s Theory of Judgment”