



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Sociology and Legal Studies
SOC 355J 001 Winter 2023
POWER AND PARENTING
Class Time: Tuesday 11.30 – 1.30 pm SJ2 2003

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Kieran Bonner.

Office: SJU SH 2005

Phone: 519-884-8111, ext. 28242

Office Hours: I will (on request) hold office hours on Tuesdays 1.45 - 2.15pm; Wednesdays 1.00 – 1.30pm. I can also arrange individual meetings outside of those times. **I strongly encourage individual meetings.**

Email: kmbonner@uwaterloo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we are going to locate the topic of power and parenting within a broader concern of **the problem of the human condition**. The course will begin developing this problem by using Hannah Arendt's work in this area. The focus throughout the course will be on the problem of the tension between human finiteness and the requirements of acting in the world. Acting well (e.g., teaching, learning, governing, but especially parenting) requires both knowledge and power but, as finite beings, humans are neither all-knowing nor omnipotent. There is a fundamental and ineradicable tension between the condition of being human (finiteness) and the requirements of action (knowledge and power). The course will spend the first few weeks developing Arendt's understanding of the human condition in relation to fundamental limitations, particularly with regard to our human capacities for labor, work, action and the problem of individuality. Then we will show that in light of this analysis of the human condition, we need to rethink the meaning of power, action and parenting.

We will then proceed to address the case of parenting in order to understand what the problem of human finiteness means for modern times. We will address different versions of parenting and different relations to parenting in terms of an interest in developing a strong relation to the tension between action and its requirements. In the process, the Socratic position of the interrelation of action, theory and ethics, will be developed. Because we are dealing with a problem of the human condition, we will also use examples of the rise of the bourgeoisie, the

rise of technique and method, colonialism, expertise, technology, cultural change, and so on; along the way we will draw on the theories of Hobbes, Parsons, Giddens, Foucault, Blum and McHugh, and Gadamer. For the most part, parenting will be the case to which we will continue to return as we seek to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the solutions to the problem of the human condition. It will be argued that action (e.g., parenting) and self-reflection on action are best understood as ethical enterprises.

Overall, the class will proceed through a lecture/discussion format that seeks to develop the problem and various responses to this problem as addressed in the texts. The reflexive analysis procedure of moving from the specific (e.g., an example of a parenting practice) to the universal (e.g., historical and contemporary conceptions of power), back to the specific and back again to the universal, will be experienced throughout the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Because, in principle, pedagogy is privileged over contractual relations, this outline is as much a proposal as a contract. As with my other courses, the fundamental intellectual interest concerns the issue of how we collectively understand and change ourselves. In particular, we will be concerned with the problem of speaking well and acting well, both with regard to the question of parenting and with our own talk and action in class. Be prepared to have your own assumptions disturbed, to be required to question what you take for granted, and fundamentally, to think about and take responsibility for your own talk. **Because of this reflexive character, there will be times when the issues seem convoluted and the questions difficult and challenging. Thus, as with all my courses, perplexity (aporia) will be a necessary experience in this class. As a nurtured Socratic perplexity (aporia) is part of the experience of learning, you will need to be able to sustain your spirit despite at times feeling you do not know what is going on nor where the course is headed. In short, perplexity/confusion is a course objective.**

The Course will develop critical thinking on our contemporary era in the following ways.

- A. With the aid of Hannah Arendt, develop a new perspective on the human condition.
- B. Develop a new way to understand power, society, social life and the world.
- C. Understand the differences between the human capacities for labour, work, action and the kind of social organizations each capacity makes possible.
- D. Understand the past and current socio-historical situation of parenting and its implications for exercising power
- E. Understand the importance of coming to terms with the limits of human power through an analysis of the paradigmatic case of modern parenting.

- F. Understand an interconnection between parenting, power, wisdom and ethics
- G. Learn to be reasonably comfortable with the experience of confusion

REQUIRED TEXTS [AND OTHER REQUIRED/SUGGESTED READINGS]

Readings Available on Course Reserves except Arendt's *The Human Condition*

Other Readings made available on Course Reserves. Hannah Arendt. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (for sale through Campus Bookstore, Amazon, Kindle, etc. A portion of the book (pp. 1 – 34 will be made available on Course Reserves under 'fair dealing.' The book is on Reserve at SJU Library). Kieran Bonner. 1998. *Power and Parenting: A Hermeneutic of the Human Condition*. London/St. Martin Press, Inc., New York: Macmillan Press. (an e-book available through SJU library on Course Reserves)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Short Essay (Online)	Jan. 24/5	10%
Mid-term assignment	Feb. 15	30%
Take-Home Paper/Exam	April 13. (Distributed on April 5)	40%
Online Assignment (10 Responses to Readings@ 1% each = 10%,	Ongoing	10%
10 Replies to Responses@ 0.5% each = 5%)		5%
Participation (10/12 class attendance and participation@ 0.5% per class = 5%)		5%
<hr/>		
Total		100%

The 4-Stage Learning Process

Online Assignments: 1. Reading

The purpose of the online discussion assignments, as part of the 4-stage learning process, is to generate dialogue among the students as well as to prepare students for the lecture/class. As the main point is to encourage attempts at responding to questions on difficult readings (1), they are not graded for accuracy nor are they responded to by the instructor. Rather, any issues and questions they raise are addressed in the class. They are completion assignments; the attempt earns the grade.

2. Discussion: Response to Question on Readings

Over the course of the term, each student will respond to 10 of 12 or so questions on the readings. These responses should be **in the range of 180 - 200 words in length**. (Note, anything less than this length is in risk of not counting.) The questions will be based on the theories, readings, concepts, as they apply to power, the human condition, parenting, the rise of the middle class, parenting and expertise, and so on; **each response is worth 1% with all 10 being worth a total of 10%**. This is a completion exercise. The questions will be posted on Tuesday/Weds after the class and **the Responses to the Reading is due on the following Monday by 1pm**.

3. Replies to Student Posts on Readings

Students are also required to reply to one other students' post once a week. You must do 10 replies over the course of 12 weeks and they need to be a paragraph in length, 80 - 100 words approximately. (Note, anything less than this length is in risk of not counting.) These **Replies to Posts are due on the following Monday by 3 pm**. These are completion assignments are worth 0.5% each **and you will get 5% for completing all 10 responses**.

4. Participation

Students should attend at least 10 of 12 or so classes. During class I will often call on students to read a slide, or interpret a slide, respond to a question or to further discuss class content. This is a completion assignment, and each attendance is worth 0.5% each. **You will get 5% for attending 10 of 12 classes**. Class attendance at the class is expected.

Self-Declared Absences: Since you can earn full grades completing/attending 10 out of 12 activities/classes, a short-term self-declared absence would not be relevant until you've used your two "freebies." If you require accommodations from a self-declared absence after that, you must contact me to arrange an accommodation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Class 1. Jan. 10	Introduction/Outline/Focus Knowledge Creation and Hermeneutics.	Reading: <i>Power and Parenting</i> (pp. 1- 3, 151–154)
2	Class 2. Jan. 17	Parenting: Action Vs. Role. Review of Short Online Quiz	Hermeneutic Analysis of Role/Action
3	Class 3. Jan 24 Short Quiz 1 Jan. 24/5	Human Activity: Labour, Work, Action	<i>The Human Condition</i> 1 –21 (Recommended vii – xx)
4	Class 4. Jan 31	The Public and the Private Realm	' <i>The Human Condition</i> ': 22 – 38
5	Class 5. Feb. 7	The Public and the Private – Rise of the Social. Midterm Review	' <i>The Human Condition</i> ': 38 – 58 Mid-term
6	Class 6. Feb. 14	Midterm Exam	
7	Feb. 18 - 26.	Reading Week - NO CLASS	
8	Class 7. Feb. 28	The Problem of Contemporary Parenting as a Problem of Power in the Modern Age.	' <i>Power and Parenting</i> ': 1 – 23. (We will cover as much of this as possible.)
9	Class 8. Mar. 7	Parental Power and the human condition: learning to live with irreversible and unpredictable consequences.	' <i>Power and Parenting</i> ': 24- 47
10	Class 9. Mar. 14	Tragedy, Comedy and Wisdom in Parenting and Power: The challenge and choice	' <i>Power and Parenting</i> ': 47 – 57
11	Class 10. Mar. 21	Hobbes and Modern Power: Becoming a Super Parent	' <i>Power and Parenting</i> ': 58 – 82
12	Class 11. Mar. 28	Foucault and Bourgeois Power: The rise of method in society and in parenting	<i>Power and Parenting</i> ': 83 – 100
13	Class 12 April 4 Take Home Exam Distributed	Practical reasoning, Parenting Effectiveness Training and the Ethics of Authority Overview of Course. Discussion of Take-Home	<i>Power and Parenting</i> ': 101 – 117

This is a tentative course outline in the sense that student interest and the emerging course conversation may require the introduction of new material, spending more time with existing material or even returning to material covered earlier. The outline, therefore, is not so much a contract as a proposal.

Notes:

Email is not conducive to discussion and not an alternative way to receive class material. Discussion of assignments, class material or questions is welcome at class, during office hours or by appointment. Appointments should be made by email and include your student id. **This course is registered on UW LEARN.**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Co-op work term duration</i>	<i>Mon, Jan 9 - Fri, Apr 28</i>
<i>Classes begin</i>	<i>Mon, Jan 9</i>
<i>Last day to add a class</i>	<i>Fri, Jan 20</i>
<i>Last day to drop a class, no penalty</i>	<i>Fri, Jan 27</i>
<i>Reading Week (no course activity or course work due)</i>	<i>Sat, Feb 18 - Sun, Feb 26</i>
<i>Family Day - Holiday</i>	<i>Mon, Feb 28</i>
<i>Last day to drop, receive a WD grade</i>	<i>Fri, Mar 24</i>
<i>Good Friday - Holiday, no classes</i>	<i>Fri Apr 7</i>
<i>Lectures end</i>	<i>Mon, Apr 10</i>
<i>Make-up day: Friday schedule for April 7</i>	
<i>Pre-exam study days</i>	<i>Tues, Apr 11 - Wed, Apr 12</i>
<i>Last day to drop, receive WF grade</i>	<i>Wed, Apr 12</i>
<i>Final exam/assessment period</i>	<i>Thurs, Apr 13 - Fri, Apr 28</i>
<i>Grade submissions open in Quest</i>	<i>Tues, Apr 11 - Wed, May 3</i>
<i>Grades due - all courses (on-campus or online) without a scheduled exam or without a major assignment during the Final Exam Period</i>	<i>Wed, Apr 26</i>
<i>Grades due for all courses with a scheduled exam during the Final Exam Period (on-campus or online/remote)</i>	<i>Seven days from the date of the final exam</i>
<i>Grades due for all online courses</i>	<i>Wed, May 3</i>
<i>Grades begin to appear in Quest</i>	<i>Sat, Apr 29</i>

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS

Late Penalty on graded assessments - 2% (out of 100%) per day including weekends

RULES FOR GROUP WORK IN ASSIGNMENTS

When working on a group assignment, a Group Assignment Checklist must be completed and submitted with the assignment:

https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/sites/ca.arts/files/uploads/files/group_assignment_disclosure.pdf

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students should attend at least 10 of 12 or so classes. During class I may call on you to read a slide, or interpret a slide, or to further discuss class content. This is a completion assignment; each attendance is worth 0.5% each. **You will get a maximum of 5% for attending 10 of 12 classes.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

Uses of electronic devices should not interfere with student learning.

CORRESPONDENCE

My preference for contact is by email to the email address above. Please include the nature of the issue and your student ID in the email.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor.

Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides on LEARN);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. **However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository). Permission from an instructor** is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION [REQUIRED LANGUAGE APPROVED BY SJU SENATE COUNCIL]

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

