

TRUTH IN POLITICS

Dr. Alma Itzhaky

Spring Semester

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Office Hours: by appointment

Short description:

We are living, it is said, in an age of “post-truth”, where the distinction between truths and lies, facts and opinions becomes blurry and can no longer guide public discourse. These issues are widely debated in the media and in academic circles following the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections and the Brexit campaign, and raise numerous questions: can we presume to hold objective facts in matters of politics? How to distinguish between facts and opinions in these matters? Can truth be maintained apart from political interests and power? Is a persuasive lie necessarily worse than an ineffectual truth? And who is best equipped to judge in these conflicts?

The course will address these current issues from a wide philosophical perspective, bringing into view a range of philosophical positions. We will read and discuss texts by Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas.

Assessment:

Midterm:

A short response paper comprising 15% of the final grade.

Final requirement:

A take-home exam: 75% of the final grade

Participation:

Active participation in class: 10% of the final grade

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.