

The Graduate program in Social and Political Thought welcomes applications from students who are interested in the analysis of social and political ideas with the aim of integrating intellectual interests common to the Humanities and Social Sciences. The program represents a wide range of intellectual approaches to the study of social and political thought in its larger historical and cultural contexts. Applicants should have a direction in mind for their research project prior to entering the program and are encouraged to identify specific faculty members they may wish to work with. Applicants should also identify their interest in one or more of the following three fields within the SPTH program:

1. History of Social and Political Thought,
2. Black Studies and Theories of Race and Racism
3. Economy, Consciousness, Aesthetics and Society.

Applications are available online through the Admissions office from mid-October for admission the following September. Admission to both the MA and the PhD in Social and Political Thought is for the Fall term (September). The program does not admit students for Winter or Summer term start dates.

Program admission requirements, including links to general guidelines for assessing international degrees and qualifications, can be found [here](#). (More detailed information about program requirements for students can be found under the 'Current Students' tab above.)

Information about the financial support offered to both domestic and international graduate students at York can be found [here](#).

If you have any difficulties with your SPTH application, please contact the Admissions office at 416 736-5000. Questions specific to the SPTH program, may be directed to Judith Hawley, the Graduate Program Assistant, (sptprog@yorku.ca).

Some tips for Applicants:

You will be asked to provide the name and emails for each of your referees so Admission can send the email reference form. You may want to let your referees know the request will be coming and that they can draft their statement in word and then cut and paste it into the form when the form is received.

Transcripts can be uploaded. Please upload them as one pdf form. If you have several transcripts or numerous pages of transcript documents, you may want to scan and save the file as a black & white document rather than in full colour (as colour files take more memory). It is also advisable to scan and save all the transcripts into one file, check the pages to make sure none were missed or blurred and then upload the file.

If the transcript upload does not work, you will need to contact Admissions (416 736-5000) and ask them to re-set your application settings so you can upload the file again. They will need your reference number or "myfile" number in order to re-set the upload.

If you have applied and attended York in the past, your student number will remain the same as your application file will be assigned the student number automatically.

If you have extenuating circumstances, you may wish to include a letter explaining the circumstances, impact on grades, etc. in a separate letter. It can be submitted to either admissions or the program office to be uploaded to your application file.

Written Work Sample

The written work sample - we suggest an essay that you have submitted recently that exhibits your work in an interdisciplinary nature. Where possible the paper should be pertinent to the interests the student wishes to pursue in the program. Most essays submitted are between 15 and 50 pages. If you are not sure which sample of your work would be best suited for the program, you may want to discuss your work samples with your references. Be sure to also provide the referees with information on the Social and Political Thought program, so that they may be able to have a point of reference for your discussion. Applicants are asked to note that the submission of the written work is not only essential, but that the written work sample is often a decisive factor for the Admissions committee in selecting the candidates for the program.

Tips about your written work sample:

- Longer is not better. The committee members are reading all the files in addition to doing their teaching and other duties, so the committee members will not read documents longer than 50 pages max.
- The committee would rather see a shorter, better quality written sample than a longer sample document. Quality is more important to the readers.
- You may choose two written samples as long as the two combined do not exceed 50 pages. When you upload them, please do it as one document. You may wish to indicate on the cover page that you have submitted 2 samples, and the titles of both samples.

Statement of interest

The statement of interest should outline information about your academic background and the nature of your studies that will support your application, the future direction of your research, (and if there are SPTH faculty members you would like to study with, or specific courses that are of interest to you), as well as any information you feel would support and strengthen your application. The Statement of interest should provide evidence of a mature academic outlook, displaying a strong sense of where the applicant wants to go. The statement may be as brief as one page, or as long as 4 pages. The committee is not focused on the length of the statement as much as the content of the statement.

Tips for the Statement of Interest:

- If your research will require you to read in a secondary language, and you already know that language, please indicate that in your statement. If you do not yet have a needed

language skills but are planning it during your studies, please also include that information for the committee.

- Some students come to their research interest through work experiences, personal experiences, or other avenues that have impacted on the student. If this experience has also given you linkages into the community you want to research, or have brought you to research centers, organizations that will provide research resources for your future research that may be important to the SPTH Admissions committee to know. You are encouraged to include relevant information of this nature in your statement.
- Some students have or are planning to arrange connections with one or more of the York Research units. These research units can provide relevant research opportunities for students, and sometimes even scholarships. If you are – or are planning to become – affiliated with a research center, you may want to include that information in your statement.

Additional information requested by SPTH

SPTH recommends that students submit a resume or curriculum vitae. Although the Admissions committee does not require this information, the program office finds it invaluable when we begin working with the files of the applicants we have admitted. The CV or resume can help the program match you with areas for either your Graduate Assistantship or Teaching Assistantships (for PHD students). The early information can be invaluable when trying to place students with unique skills.

References

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the program and your academic goals with references as early as possible. Please let your referees know that York University now uses an on-line format for all graduate references and that an email will come to them directly from the Admissions office requesting the reference. The reference will then be returned directly to the Admissions office by the referee.

If a referee needs to use an alternative format, Admissions or the program office can arrange for the referee to be sent a PDF form by email. Applicants do not handle the references, they go from referee to Admissions directly.

Ways to help your referee build a stronger letter for you:

- Not all referees will be familiar with SPTH, so you may want to include some information about both the program and your interest in SPTH for your referee. Giving your referee the link to the SPTH website. Also include your CV, maybe even your written work sample if your referee has only read your work from one of your courses.
- Give your referee enough time to do a good letter. They are usually working full time, and are doing the letter in addition to their regular teaching load. It should also be noted that some referees have to write a lot of letters – possibly as many as 40 letters over the admissions process and each letter usually takes anywhere from 1 – 4 hours to create.

Giving them additional time – and a reminder a week or two before the deadline – makes it easier for them.

- The program does not contact referees to remind them to submit their references.
- It is preferable to have all three references from academics, however if the applicant has been away from studies, sometimes the applicant submit a reference from someone other than an academic. Things the reference may be able to comment on: your research skills, language abilities, depth of knowledge, long term commitment to learning, etc. Ask yourself why this person would be able to say you are a good candidate for the academic direction you are seeking.

When I fill in my application, where do I list the referees names and contact information?

Once your *MyFile* is set up, you go into MyFile and add the names and email addresses of your referees. An automatically generated letter will then go to each of the referees requesting the reference and with the relevant details (your full name, identifying number, etc. to when the faculty members submit the reference, it will be automatically linked to your file.

Please note: If you apply over a weekend, or during the december holidays, your application will be held in cue but can only be processed and generate the *Myfile* once the offices re-open.

What if I accidentally put in an incorrect email address for my referee?

Contact Admissions and they will arrange to have an email reference letter request go out to your referee as soon as possible.

One of my referees is ill, I need to change to another referee. What do I do?

Contact Admissions and they will arrange to have an email reference letter request go out to your referee as soon as possible.

When are the supporting documents due?

The admissions office forwards the documents to the program as soon as they have completed their work with any of the documents. The program's admissions committees will start reading files once there is a number of complete file. Reading all the applicant files takes a couple of weeks. The committees will not wait to make a decision on an incomplete file, nor will they re-read a file if documents come in late, therefore missing documents may result in a lower ranking by the committee. We recommend all documents be submitted at the deadline or as soon after the deadline as possible. Documents submitted electronically are matched to applicant files sooner generally.

Where do I send the supporting documents if I am mailing in information?

Please upload documents wherever possible as hard copy documents—especially during Covid-19—will take longer to process.

The CV, Writing sample and personal statement - if submitted by hard copy – would be sent to Admissions (Office of Graduate Admissions, Bennett Centre for Student Services, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario CANADA, M3J 1P3).

Please note: During Covid-19, it is in the best interests of the applicant to submit everything electronically as that is the fastest way to complete your file.

Can I resubmit an old application?

Applications from previous years cannot be submitted for current application submission, although letters of references, statements of interest and writing samples are generally held for one year, and if the information is on file, it can be used. If you have applied last year, and you wish to re-use some of the documents, please send an email to the Program Administrator, sptprog@yorku.ca and specify which documents you would like to have used for the new application and she will follow up with Admissions.

I am applying for more than one program at York. Do I need to submit work samples for each program?

Yes. The writing sample which you may select for one program may be different from the one you want to go to SPTH. Even if it is the same writing sample, Admissions will need to give access to SPTH committee members for the SPTH writing sample, so please upload relevant written work for each program you are applying to. Please make sure to indicate your name, and the title of the sample for SPTH application.

When do offers start going out to applicants?

Students start getting offers in late February or early March. In addition, the program will also maintain a wait list, and will continue to make offers if spots open up until as late as June.

How will I find out if I am accepted?

Once you have submitted your application, you can check on documents submitted, the status of your application and for any correspondence from Admissions through your “Myfile” on-line.

What if I am already enrolled in another graduate program and wish to switch to SPTH?

Students currently in other graduate programs and considering attending the Social and Political Thought program should be aware that they must seek entry into the program through the admissions process. Advanced standing - if applicable - would be accessed only after student is admitted and registered in the program through a petition process to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Once I have submitted my application, what happens then?

Applications are uploaded and the Admissions office checks the transcripts to ensure the transcripts are from accredited institutions, and Admissions calculates the grade point average to ensure it meets the program's requirements. Then files are electronically sent over to the program office, prepared for the SPTH Admissions committee. Each file is read and ranked by each committee member, and then there is one admissions meeting for MA and one meeting for PHD by the committee. Every completed file is discussed,

and the committee established a ranked list of candidates who will be given offers of admissions, and a wait list by the end of the meeting.

When does the meetings take place?

Usually in late February, with offers going out as soon as possible once the letters are generated.

Why March when the deadline is January?

The Admissions office needs time to assess the transcripts (and there are many programs all with deadlines in a small amount of time). Then the documents need to get sent to the program, set up into files, documentation checked and organized, and the committee then can have access to the files. We must also remember that the committee members are teaching, writing, and continuing with all their other obligations on top of reading about 70 files. The files often take more than an hour each to read. In addition, there are at least 5 people that need to read and rank the files. All of this takes time.

Transfers

Students currently in other graduate programs who are considering transferring to the Social and Political Thought program should be aware that they must seek entry into the program through the admissions process. Advanced standing—if applicable—would be adjudicated only after the student is admitted and registered in the program through a petition to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. However, please note that advanced standing cannot be guaranteed and courses cannot count towards more than one degree.

Re-submission

Applications from previous years cannot be resubmitted. Letters of reference, statements of interest and writing samples are generally held for one year, and if the information is on file, it can be re-accessed. If you wish to use the previous year's supporting documents, please contact the SPTH office by email so that the Admissions office may be notified.

Final notes:

Due to the limited number of places in the program, applicants are advised that a strong application package is essential. Incomplete applications may be reviewed by the Admissions committee, but naturally, will be at a disadvantage because incomplete applications will not be

able to provide as much information to the Admissions committee as needed to compete with other, complete applications. In addition, the Admissions committee has the right to decline reading incomplete files if they wish.