

Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association

Guiding Document

Fall 2015

Preface: This document should be considered a living document. Its content should address and represent the needs and desires of the Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association membership for whom it applies, and as such, is open to any and all revisions, provided that the amendment criteria that follow are respected.

The purpose of this guiding document is:

1. To provide a general philosophy and rationale for the Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association.
2. To provide a general orientation for the membership of the Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association.
3. To lend stability and continuity to the Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association.
4. To provide an understanding of the operations, practices, and procedures carried on within the various parts of the Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association.

ARTICLE 1: Name and Compliance

I.I Name: This organization shall be known as Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association, the name under which it is officially registered with York University Graduate Students Association. The Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association will be hereafter referred to as any of: the SPT GSA, the Graduate Students' Association, and the GSA. The York University Graduate Students Association will hereafter be referred to as YUGSA.

I.II Compliance: The SPT GSA operates at York University, subject to York University and YUGSA policies and procedures.

Article 2: Preamble

The Graduate Student Association represents and advocates for the collective interests of The Graduate Programme in Social and Political Thought - hereafter SPT - graduate students in all matters of departmental policy and action at York University. The GSA seeks to build community among the graduate students, affiliated faculty, and larger university, with consideration for diverse experiences and interests. Above all, the GSA works to optimize the environment within which graduate students develop, both professionally and personally.

Article 3: Membership

The members of the GSA are all currently enrolled SPT graduate students. Current enrollment in the graduate program is sufficient for membership. No general membership dues will be collected from members, although members may be expected to pay nominal fees for specific events.

Article 4: Meetings

GSA meetings will be moderated by one or both SPT GSA co-chairs and held a minimum of two times per semester during the academic year, with a preference for a monthly meeting. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Normally, any voting will take place in the meeting, and members who are not in attendance at the meeting forfeit their right to vote, unless a proxy vote has been arranged in advance with written consent from the SPT GSA member. The GSA does reserve the right to decide, by a majority vote or the decision of the co-chair(s), to put any vote to the entire GSA. In these cases, the issue will be presented via written or electronic memo to all members, and members will be given a pre-specified period of time in which to cast their ballots. Before any official action is taken by the GSA, a majority vote must be obtained for those votes taken outside of meetings (as per the stipulations outlined above). In all cases, the votes of all members will be weighed equally.

Article 5: Elections and Eligibility

Elections for GSA positions must be held in the September of every year. Only GSA members may hold official positions. All nominations positions will be sent to an appointed and democratically approved election officer and/or the outgoing co-chairs. No individual may hold, or run for, more than one GSA executive - hereafter GSA Exec - office at the same time. After the nomination period, ballots will be electronically distributed to all graduate students in SPT for any contested positions, and persons will have a one week period from the end of the nomination period in which to cast their ballots. For each contested position, the person receiving the plurality of votes will be elected (no absolute majority is necessary). Ballots will be submitted to and tabulated by the election officer. Any uncontested nominees will be acclaimed to the positions.

Article 6: Elected Positions

6.1 Social and Political Thought Graduate Students Association Executive

The SPT GSA Exec has a minimum of three (3) officers: two (2) co-chairs, and one (1) treasurer. It is in keeping with the convention of the history of the SPT GSA to have the co-chairs be gender representative (i.e., one self-identified female chair and one self-identified male chair, though this practice is somewhat out of date with current discourses and practices of gender-identity, including, e.g., agender persons). An SPT GSA Exec may function with one chair; however it is in keeping with good practices of transparency and responsibility that the treasurer be a different person from the chair(s).

6.1.i Co-Chair

Requirements: The president is responsible for organizing and overseeing meetings [and elections], communicating with other officers, calling special meetings, coordinating officers in special tasks

6.1.ii Treasurer

Requirements: The treasurer is responsible for drafting the GSA's budget and presenting it to the executive, membership and YUGSA, keeping the membership informed of the GSA's current budget, reporting the amount of expenditures by the GSA at each meeting.

6.2 Social and Political Thought Graduate Students Association Equity Committee

The SPT GSA has historically had an open committee of GSA members designated to the task of ensuring that SPT remains a programme and GSA that considers issues of equity for the important work of recognizing and respecting difference within the programme. Members of the executive may sit on the equity committee.

6.3 Additional Social and Political Thought Graduate Students' Association, Social and Political Thought, York University, CUPE 3903, and York University Graduate Students' Association Positions

In addition to these three SPT GSA seats, the GSA may nominate members to the following GSA, SPT, York University, CUPE 3903 and YUGSA positions:

- 6.3.i. SPT GSA Events/Social Chair/Committee (open committee)*
- 6.3.ii. SPT Executive (2 voting, 2 non-voting positions)*
- 6.3.iii. SPT Curriculum Committee (1 position)*
- 6.3.iv. SPT MA Admissions Committee (2 positions)*
- 6.3.v. SPT PhD Admissions Committee (2 positions)*
- 6.3.vi. SPT Proposal Advisory Committee (2 positions)*
- 6.3.vii. Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Representative (1 position)*
- 6.3.viii. CUPE 3903 Steward (??? positions)*
- 6.3.ix. YUGSA Councillor (2 positions)*
- 6.3.x. Strategies of Critique Organizing Committee (open committee, 2 positions minimum)*

Members of the SPT GSA Exec may serve on any of these additional positions.

Article 7: Replacing Officers and Representatives

If a member serving in an elected position other than the co-chair(s) resigns or is otherwise unable to fill his or her position, the co-chairs will mobilise toward the nomination of a replacement to fill the remainder of the term. If a co-chair resigns or is otherwise unable to fill her or his term, a nomination and any required election will be held following all the guidelines and stipulations for a regular election. Replacement members for any position, including those elected, will serve only until the end of the original term of that position (i.e., until the annual election in September).

Article 8: Finances

The GSA's money will be primarily acquired through funds allocated to the GSA by YUGSA and the department. Any expenditures of the GSA must be in accordance to the GSA's annual budget, approved by the membership. Only if the GSA exceeds its budget or needs money for a special event may dues be collected. This must be approved by a majority (50% +1) of the membership. All monies belonging to the GSA shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for the GSA. All funds must be deposited within one week of collection.

Article 9: Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees may be created at any time by the decision of the co-chair(s) or a majority vote at a GSA meeting. Nominations to the ad hoc committee will be the responsibility of the executive committee and/or the GSA members present at the time of the formation of the committee. Each ad

hoc committee must select a contact person so that GSA members and others can communicate efficiently with that committee. All ad hoc committees are responsible for maintaining records of their activities and for reporting pertinent information to members at the GSA meetings.

Additional ad hoc or special committees (e.g., the Graduate Programme Director [GPD] Search Committee that forms only when a new GPD is required) formed in SPT by the SPT Executive, the SPT Graduate Program Director, or any SPT faculty that permit or require the presence of students will likewise hold a one week nomination period, and in the event of a contest, an election will follow. In the case of an uncontested position, the nominee(s) will be acclaimed to the positions.

Article 10: Amendments and Revisions

In keeping with the democratic history of the SPT GSA, an amendment can be made to this constitution with a simple majority vote (50%+1) of all members present at a meeting at a time of at least thirty (30) days after the amendment is proposed and disseminated to the SPT GSA membership.

The amended constitution must be presented to the YUGSA office in the beginning of every academic year (i.e., every September).