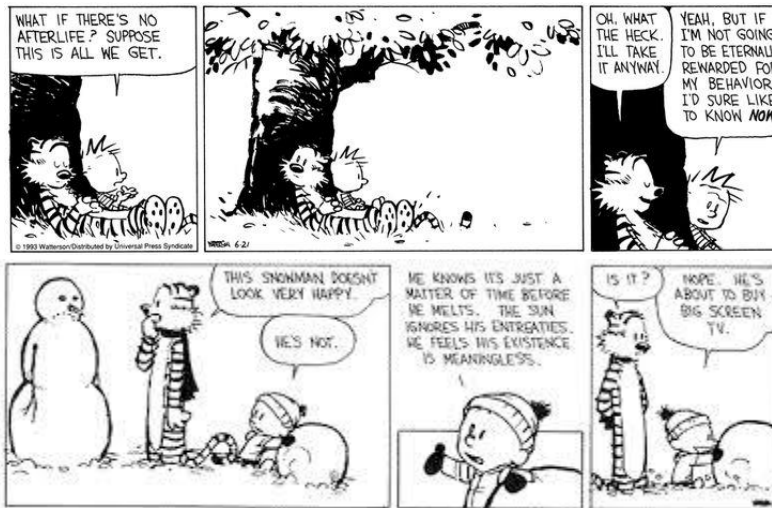


POLS 4930/5930
20th Century Political Thought
Spring 2024
W 4:15-7:00

Instructor: Professor Christopher M. Duncan, Ph.D.
Office: McGannon Hall 149
Email: chris.duncan@slu.edu
Office Hours: Please use the following link to make an appointment. Click [here](#)
Class Meets: Wednesdays from 4:15-7:00 in McGannon 121



Course Description

You gentlemen perhaps think I am mad? Allow me to defend myself. I agree that man is preeminently a creative animal, predestined to consciously strive toward a goal, and to engage in engineering, that is eternally and incessantly, to build new roads, wherever they may lead... Man loves to create roads, that is beyond dispute. But... may it not be... that he is instinctively afraid of attaining his goal and completing that edifice he is constructing? How do you know, perhaps he only likes that edifice from a distance and not at all at close range, perhaps he only likes to build it, and does not want to live in it.

- Fyodor Dostoevsky

All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life...

- Karl Marx

The two quotations above represent descriptions of what many take to be the modern age and the people who occupy it. It is an age of great creativity and liberation, but it is also an age of great destruction and bureaucratization. It is an age of progress and self-fulfillment, but it is also an age of barbarism and

insecurity. It is an age of vast material wealth and happiness, but it is also an age of great spiritual impoverishment and despair. In other words, it is an age marked by paradox and ambiguity, an age in which finding stable and useful foundations upon which to base our lives or our politics is elusive at best and absurd at worst. And yet despite all of this we are still forced to live in it and make our lives within its sometimes-inhospitable boundaries or lack thereof. In this course, we will briefly explore how this age came to be, what its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings are, and what the dangers and issues of such an age for political scientists and theorists seeking to legitimate certain institutions, laws, authorities, and generate certain moral imperatives and obligations might be. The guiding assumption of the course is that all contemporary political theory and political activity exists in a context dominated by democratic liberalism. As such, each of the thinkers we will explore will be juxtaposed to and placed in dialogue with what emerged as **the** political language of modernity.

The student should note that the readings for the course are abundant and difficult. It is not expected that the student master every page or idea, but rather that the student understand the general thrusts and major contentions and arguments of the writers and texts under examination. It should also be noted that this course is not intended to be comprehensive, nor does it claim to provide the only viable line of inquiry with regard to the past hundred years of political thought. Rather, it only seeks to delineate **a** particular line of inquiry that the instructor finds both telling and important.

Course Objectives

1. To introduce the student to a wide variety of Western political theorists whose work made prominent contributions to political thought and activism in the 20th Century.
2. To expose students to the debates and arguments that mark the transition and contention from modernity to postmodernity in the realm of the political.
3. To engage students in the philosophical underpinnings of both right-wing and left-wing political movements that marked the early part of the 20th Century and place the political thought that followed those movements into robust theoretical and philosophical conversation with them.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to identify and articulate the theoretical underpinnings of postmodern political theory.
2. Students will be able to articulate the multiplicity of theoretical responses to the rise of the postmodern and to explain the often-implied relationship between such thought and the rise of revolutionary, illiberal, antidemocratic, and authoritarian political ideologies and theories.
3. Students will be able to explain and articulate the appropriation of postmodern or antifoundational theorizations on behalf of late 20th Century radical projects of political liberation and pluralism.

Required Texts*

The Person and the Common Good by Jacques Maritain
The Portable Nietzsche by Walter Kaufmann

Political Theology by Carl Schmitt
The Plague by Albert Camus
Justice and the Politics of Difference by Iris Marion Young
Achieving Our Country by Richard Rorty

*Other readings will be provided electronically during the semester. They are marked by an * in the syllabus.

Requirements

Students will be expected to attend each class session with the required readings done and be prepared and willing to participate thoughtfully in the discussions of them. Grades for the course will be determined based on the following:

(3) Exams 100 points (each)
300 points (total)*

Grade Scale in Points

300-276= A
275-270= A-
269-264= B+
263-246= B
245-240= B-
239-234= C+
233-216= C
215-210= C-
209-177= D
Below 176= F

*Participation is worth between -10 and +10 points which will be “added” to the total number of points.

Examinations

The three exams for the course will be take-home exams consisting of ten short answer questions and one 3-5 page essay.

Civility

A course like this can give rise to strong opinions and even vigorous arguments. That is perfectly acceptable. However, each person and their opinions will be treated with respect and dignity.

The use of cell phones, computers or other electronic devices during class is prohibited except as approved for notetaking. Receiving calls, texting or other behavior that detracts from course material will not be tolerated. Anyone engaging in such behavior will be asked to leave the class and the day will be counted as an absence for the first offense. For the second offense, the person engaging in the behavior will be asked to leave and not return to class for the rest of the semester.

Important Dates

March 5-7	Spring Break (no classes)
March 28-29	Easter holiday (no classes)

Course Outline

Dates

Topic

January 17 Introduction to the Course and Nietzsche Part I

Readings:

- George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle* (Optional)
- Fukuyama "The End of History" <http://www.wesjones.com/eoh.htm>
- Nietzsche pp.29-50
- Nietzsche *Human, All-Too-Human* pp.51-64

January 24 Nietzsche and The Will to Power

Readings:

- Nietzsche *The Gay Science* pp.93-102
- Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* pp.103-259
- Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil* pp.443-47
- Nietzsche *Toward a Genealogy of Morals* pp.450-54

January 31 Carl Schmidt and Political Theology

Readings:

- Schmidt *Political Theology* (all)

February 7 Lenin and Revolution

**Readings:*

- Lenin "The Party"
- Lenin "Revolution"
- Lenin "Imperialism"
- Lenin "The State"
- Lenin "The National Question"
- Lenin "Philosophy"

Examination One Handed out on February 7th

Examination One Due in Class on February 14th

February 14 Arendt and Totalitarianism

**Readings:*

- Arendt "The Perplexities of the Rights of Man" pp. 31-45
- Arendt "Expansion" pp. 104-118
- Arendt "Total Domination" pp. 119-145
- Arendt "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility" pp. 146-156

February 21 Arendt and The Human Condition

**Readings:*

- Arendt "Labor, Work, Action" pp. 167-181
- Arendt "The Public and the Private Realm" pp. 182-230

February 28 Camus and Existentialism

Readings:

- Camus *The Plague* (all)
- Camus "Neither Victims nor Executioners" (all)

March 13 Leo Strauss and Political Philosophy

**Readings:*

- Strauss "What is Political Philosophy?" pp. 3-57

March 20 Leo Strauss and Natural Right

**Readings:*

- Strauss "Natural Right and the Historical Approach" pp. 99-124
- Strauss "An Epilogue" pp. 125-155

March 27 Jacques Maritain and Natural Law

Readings:

- Maritain *The Person and the Common Good* (all)

Examination Two Handed out in Class on March 27

Examination Two Due in Class on April 3rd

April 3 Gramsci and Marcuse: Hegemony and Domination

**Readings:*

- Gramsci "The Prison Notebooks"
 - "The Intellectuals"
 - "Hegemony"
 - "The State, Civil Society, and Revolution"
- Marcuse *One Dimensional Man*
 - "One Dimensional Society"

April 10 de Beauvoir, Fanon, Malcom X, and MLK on Liberation

**Readings:*

- de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*
- Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth*
- Malcolm X "The Ballot or the Bullet"
- MLK "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"

April 17 **Rorty on Solidarity and Pragmatism**

Readings:

- Rorty *Achieving Our Country* (all)

April 24 **Iris Marion Young and the Politics of Difference**

Readings:

- Young *Justice and the Politics of Difference* chs. 1-4

May 1 **McIntyre and Tradition**

**Readings:*

-MacIntyre “Notes from the Moral Wilderness” pp. 31-49

-MacIntyre “The Claims of *After Virtue*” pp. 69-72

-MacIntyre “*After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (extracts) pp. 73-101

Examination Three Handed out in Class on May 1st

Examination Three Due via Email on or before May 10th

Additional Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at:

<https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/academic-integrity-policy.pdf>.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student’s eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and within the instructor’s official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to CADR. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to disability accommodations. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator that you shared an experience relating to Title IX.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>.

Note: due to accreditation requirements, regulatory differences, and/or location-specific resources, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and SLU Madrid have their own standard language for syllabus statements related to Title IX. Faculty in those units should seek guidance for syllabus requirements from their dean's office.

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center (SSC) supports students in reaching their goals in and out of the classroom. Providing a variety of resources, the Student Success Center houses both the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) and Academic Support, which includes Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, University Writing Services, and Student Success Coaching. The Student Success Center is located in the Busch Student Center, Suite 331, and students can make an appointment with any SSC resource via EAB Navigate. To learn more about the Student Success Center and its resources, please visit: <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php>.

University Writing Services

University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations with trained writing consultants who help with everything from brainstorming, outlining, and proposing research questions to documenting sources, revising, and implementing feedback. These consultations can take place in-person, asynchronously, or via Zoom and can be scheduled through EAB Navigate – Student. Getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels on different writing projects (including but not limited to class assignments, conference papers, cover letters, dissertations, group projects, multimedia assignments, personal statements, senior capstone projects, short answer questions on applications, speeches, and theses). For additional information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/university-writing-services/index.php> or send an email to writing@slu.edu.

University Counseling Center Syllabus Statement

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers free, short-term, solution-focused counseling to Saint Louis University undergraduate and graduate students. UCC counselors are highly trained clinicians who can assist with a variety of issues, such as adjustment to college life, troubling changes in mood, and chronic psychological conditions. To make an appointment, call 314-977-8255 (TALK), or visit the clinic on the second floor of Wuller Hall. For afterhours needs, please press #9 after dialing the clinic number.

