

**REVISED AS OF JANUARY 11, 2006**  
*(Please disregard previous course outline)*  
**PSCI 4309A: Contemporary Approaches to Political Enquiry**

Wednesdays, 11:35-2:25, Loeb A620

Professor Keith Haysom

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**The Point of the Class**

The main objective of this course is to explore how specific conceptions of politics and the political are intimately connected with different approaches to the study of politics and society, and vice versa. Questions of method in the social sciences generally, and in political science specifically, are not merely technical, for choice of method dictates in very serious and important ways the nature of political inquiry: the questions that are deemed appropriate to ask, the sort of answers that are considered valid, the borders between politics and non-politics, and indeed the substance and significance of political life itself. Likewise, different substantive conceptualizations of politics and the political suggest and require certain modes of inquiry rather than others. Moreover, the relationship, as projected by different political theories and research methods, between the object of inquiry and the subjects who inquire into it, itself contains a political content that positions theories and theorists in different relations to power and political engagement. Thus, we will examine the material surveyed in this class with an eye to understanding how it would respond to these three fundamental and interrelated questions:

- 1) how is political knowledge, wisdom or insight properly generated within the practice of political inquiry? (the question of epistemology);
- 2) what is the material of political life that political inquiry seeks to understand, or, wherein and in what does the substance and significance of political life lie? (the question of ontology)
- 3) what is the relationship between the political inquirer and political life itself, or, what role does the construction of knowledge, wisdom or insight about political life play in the process of political life itself? (the question of praxis)

The material surveyed in this course, however, is deliberately designed to provoke the student to question accepted conventions as to what politics is, what constitutes political *science* as such, whether such an endeavour is possible, and whether it is always desirable, at least in exclusion from other approaches. *Other* approaches will be our focus, from hermeneutics and phenomenology to critical theory, to the various approaches generally lumped together as postmodernism (post-structuralism, neo-pragmatism, social constructivism). Each and all will be contrasted with the positivist or behaviouralist norms of research and science currently prevalent in the field of political science. However, while this is a class of political theory, it is by no means limited to the textual or normative lines of inquiry that are generally reserved for theory as sub-field of political science. That is, this course concerns itself with political *inquiry*, with the generation of knowledge and insight about political life, where political theory is understood not simply as a tradition of inherited thought, or as an exercise in abstract normative reasoning, but as an active investigation of the material world of politics, that generates empirical insights, even while resisting a narrowly empiricist research agenda.

**The Plan of Attack**

Part I: Positivism and the Crisis of Subjectivism

January 4th – Introduction to the Class / A Brief History of Political Inquiry / The Current State of the Discipline

January 11th – Positivism and Politics

January 18th – Political Theory in a Positivist Age

Part II: Routes Beyond Subjectivism

January 25 – Hermeneutics and the Linguistic Turn

February 1st – The Lifeworld and the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity

February 8th – What Lies Beneath – Psychoanalytical Theory

Part III: Critical Theory

February 15th – The Original “Frankfurt School”: Adorno and Horkheimer

March 1st – Habermas I: A New Critical Theory of Society  
March 8th – Habermas II: Beyond Critical Theory?

Part IV: Post-modernism and After

March 15th – The Death of Whose Subject? French Post-Structuralism  
March 22nd – Postmodern Bourgeois Liberalism: Richard Rorty’s neo-pragmatism  
March 29th – Historical Constructivism: Bourdieu and Castoriadis

Epilogue: The Fate of Reality, Political/Social/Historical and Otherwise  
April 5th – **Optional Class:** Critical Realism and Contemporary Theories of Hegemony

### **Marks, etc.**

There will be three different components to your grade. First, attendance and class participation will be worth 30% (10% for attendance and 20% for participation). Second, you will be responsible for at least one class presentation, to be worth a total 30% of your final mark (15% each if you present twice). Third, you will be responsible for either two short papers (7-10 pgs each), or one long paper (15-20 pgs). If you choose to write two papers, each will be worth 20% of your final mark, whereas one long paper will be worth 40%. The marking scheme is represented below:

Attendance	10%
Class Participation	20%
Class Presentation	30% (or 2 x 15%)
Papers	40%
	(either 1 x 40% or 2 x 20%)

### **Presentations**

Presentations are to be 10-15 minutes in length. Presentation topics are listed along with the reading schedule below, and will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. There will be 1 or 2 presentations a class, depending in part on final attendance numbers. Presentations will concern non-required or additional readings, so presenters should endeavour to relate the additional material to their classmates in a clear and concise manner, pointing out how the additional reading either complements the required reading or takes a different approach to the same question.

### **Papers**

As indicated above, you have a choice between writing one long paper or two short papers. You do not need to declare your preference, per se. However, if you choose to write two short papers, the first of these papers will be due by March 1st at the latest. The second will be due by April 7th. If you decide to write only one, longer, paper, this will also be due on April 7th.

Short papers should be analytical summaries and critiques of specific articles from the reading list. The best kind of article to choose for a paper of this sort is an argumentative, rather than explanatory, piece, and I have thus indicated on the reading schedule below which pieces (either required or presentation readings) are best suited for these purposes – look for an [SP] next to the reading. Students who wish to write on any other pieces that are not so indicated should seek my permission first.

#### **Important Note: There are two crucial rules regarding short papers:**

- 1) you cannot write a short paper on the same topic as your presentation;
- 2) ~~short papers are due the day of the class in which we are to discuss the piece in question, at the beginning of class.~~ For example, a student wishing to write a short paper on the Charles Taylor piece “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man”, due to be presented on January 25th, would have to hand it in to me at the beginning of class on January 25th and no later.

Long papers are to be argumentative pieces in themselves, concerned with advancing an argument for and/or against one or more approaches to political inquiry as we have studied in the course. Students wishing to write long papers should consult with me during my office hours first as to suitability of the topic.

### **Penalties**

Late papers will be penalized at a rate of -10% a day, weekend days included. Papers that are late within the same day will be penalized at -5%. Class presentations cannot be made up, and thus absence for a scheduled presentation will be penalized at -100%, except where inability to attend is professionally documented and the professor is alerted at least one day in advance.

### **Required Texts**

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*

Nick Crossley, *Intersubjectivity: The Fabric of Social Becoming*

Stephen Frosh, *The Politics of Psychoanalysis*

Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory*

Jurgen Habermas, *On Society and Politics: A Reader*

Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Truth and Subjectivity*

All of these books will also be placed on library reserve. There will also be a short photocopy package for purchase, consisting of the 5 or 6 articles and/or chapters of required reading not found in the required texts. This too will be made available on library reserve. Finally, books required for presentations will also be placed on library reserve.

### **Schedule of Readings**

#### **January 4th**

##### **Recommended Readings:**

Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, Part 1 (Overview)

Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics"

#### **January 11th**

##### **Required Reading**

Leszek Kowlakowski, *The Alienation of Reason*, chapters 1, 2, 3 and 8

Presentation 1: Max Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy" [SP]

Presentation 2: Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, chapters 2&3 [SP]

#### **January 18th**

##### **Required Reading**

David M. Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science*, "The Mid-Century Liberal Matrix"

Presentation 1: Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, chapters 11 and 12 [SP]

Presentation 2: Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation" [SP]

#### **January 25th**

##### **Required Reading**

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, selections

Presentation 1: Paul Ricoeur, "The Creativity of Language" in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*

Presentation 2: Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" in *Philosophical Papers*, v.2 [SP]

#### **February 1**

##### **Required Reading**

Nick Crossley, *Intersubjectivity: The Fabric of Social Becoming*, chapters 1-3

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Introduction [SP]

Presentation 1: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Dialogue and the Perception of the Other" in *The Prose of the World* / Romand Coles, *Self/Power/Other*, chapter on Merleau-Ponty [SP]

Presentation 2: George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, volume 1, selections / Jurgen Habermas, "Individuation through Socialization: On George Herbert Mead's Theory of Subjectivity", in *Postmetaphysical Thinking* [SP]

## February 8th

### Required Reading

Stephen Frosh, *The Politics of Psychoanalysis*, selections

Presentation 1: T.W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*, chapter 17

Presentation 2: Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love*, selections [SP]

## February 15th

### Required Reading

Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia*, selections

Presentation 1: Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, selections [SP]

Presentation 2: T.W. Adorno, "On Subject and Object" in *Critical Models* / excerpts from *Minima Moralia*

## March 1st

### Required Reading

Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia*, selections

Jurgen Habermas, *On Society and Politics*, selections

Presentation 1: Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, afterword [SP]

Presentation 2: Jurgen Habermas, *On Society and Politics*, further selections

## March 8th

### Required Reading

Jurgen Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, chapter 11 and 12 [SP]

Presentation 1: Jurgen Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?" in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*

Presentation 2: Jurgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, selections

Presentation 3: Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, chapter 7 and 8 [SP]

## March 15th

### Required Reading

Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, selections [SP]

Presentation 1: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1, selections

Presentation 2: Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a time of Terror*, Part Two (on Derrida) [SP]

## March 22nd

### Required Reading

Richard Rorty, "Is 'Postmodernism' Relevant to Politics" [SP]

Keith Topper, "The Politics of Redescription"

Presentation 1: Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, selections [SP]

Presentation 2: Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, Part 4

## March 29th

### Required Readings

Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, "The Historicity of Reason" [SP]

Keith Topper, "Sciences that Disturb"

Presentation 1: Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power" in *In Other Words: Essays Towards Reflexive Sociology*

Presentation 2: Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, chapter 3 and 4 [SP]

**April 5th – Please note: This is an optional class**

**Readings**

Roy Bhaskar, “On the Possibility of Social Scientific Knowledge and the Limits of Naturalism” [SP]  
Keith Topper, “Reclaiming the Language of Emancipation”

Presentation 1: Jonathan Joseph, *Hegemony: A Realist Analysis*, chapter 1 and 7 (“Realism and Hegemony” and “Objectivity and Intersubjectivity”) [SP]

Presentation 2: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, chapters 2 and 3 [SP]

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**Academic Accommodations**

**For Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Paul Menton Centre (PMC) for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) to complete the necessary forms. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first in-class test or CUTV midterm exam**. This will allow for sufficient time to process your request. Please note the following deadlines for submitting completed forms to the PMC for formally scheduled exam accommodations: **November 7th, 2005** for fall and fall/winter term courses, and **March 10, 2006** for winter term courses.

**For Religious Observance:** Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance ([www.carleton.ca/equity](http://www.carleton.ca/equity)).

**For Pregnancy:** Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

**Plagiarism:** The Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as: “to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product, work of another without expressly giving credit to another.” The Graduate Calendar states that plagiarism has occurred when a student either: (a) directly copies another’s work without acknowledgment; or (b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgment; or (c) borrows, without acknowledgment, any ideas in a clear and recognizable form in such a way as to present them as the student’s own thought, where such ideas, if they were the student’s own would contribute to the merit of his or her own work. Instructors who suspect plagiarism are required to submit the paper and supporting documentation to the Departmental Chair who will refer the case to the Dean. It is not permitted to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses. The Department’s Style Guide is available at: [www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/styleguide.pdf](http://www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/styleguide.pdf)

**Oral Examination:** At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

**Submission and Return of Term Work:** Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, *subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean*.

**Course Requirements:** Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure – No Deferred) is assigned when a student’s performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

**Connect Email Accounts:** The Department of Political Science strongly encourages students to sign up for a campus email account. Important course and University information will be distributed via the Connect email system. See <http://connect.carleton.ca> for instructions on how to set up your account.