

Carleton University
Department of Political Science

Fall 2023

FYSM / PSCI 1611 A
Politics on Netflix
Mondays 11:35-2:25 Eastern (by Zoom)

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Office Hours: I will send around an office-hours sign-up sheet each week with specific days/times. If those times don't work for you, email me and we can find another time.

Course Description: In this course, we will examine various offerings on Netflix through a political lens. We will ask three main questions: how are political topics dealt with in these works of art and entertainment? What kinds of political messages seep through even when the subject of the work isn't obviously political? How do we ascertain whether a work of film/TV is serving to subvert structures of power and inequality or to maintain them? We are using politics broadly here: we are trying to think about power dynamics and social structures related to issues like race, class, gender, social capital, and sexuality, as well as domestic and foreign policy issues around themes such as diamonds & colonialism, the opioid crisis, Indigenous policy & reconciliation, the Catholic church sexual abuse scandal, and the politics of Israel-Palestine.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Learn how to watch film and TV critically, through a political lens
2. Improve your critical reading and analytical writing skills
3. Learn how to identify political and social themes and policy questions suggested by works of art and entertainment
4. Hone your seminar-speaking skills
5. Learn how to source scholarly literature from everyday topics
6. Learn how to write an op-ed

Evaluation:

Participation: 20%
Weekly Discussion-Forum Posts: 50%
Op-Ed: 30%

Participation: Your participation grade will be derived in two ways: The “front row” method (10%) and the weekly google doc sheets (10%) I will use in-class.

Front Row method: You will sign up for FIVE class sessions in which you will sit in the “virtual” front row, meaning having your camera on and actively participating in the kind of guided discussion I normally run. I will send around the front-row sign-up sheet at the beginning of the term.

Google Doc sheets (in-class): each week, usually towards the end of the class, I will conduct some sort of live discussion/activity on a google doc. I will use these google docs each week as evidence that you were present and actively participating.

Discussion Forum Posts:

The weekly discussion-forum posts grade will consist of the following:

Film/Shows/Readings Reflections (& a Question) (25%), and ***Responses to Others’ Questions*** (25%). Each week, half of you will upload a short forum post (appx. 350 words). The first half of your post should briefly summarize the readings/films/shows for that week; the second half should include your analyses and critiques. **Conclude your post by referencing a single scene (with the hour/minute marker indicated) and posing an analytical question about that scene in the context of the show/film, and in the context of the broader themes discussed above.**

Critiques/Questions are due on *Fridays (at 11 pm), starting Sept. 15. (You will start with the films/shows/readings from Class 2.)*

The other half of the class will respond to your classmates’ scene question. (Each of you should choose one classmate to whom to respond on any given week.) *The responses are due on Mondays, starting Sept. 18 – by 11 pm.* Offer some answers of your own to the questions your classmates have proposed, and embed those answers within a broader political and scholarly context. To do so, mention news events, data and information from articles we’ve read for class, or those you uncover on your own via a library or google search. Make sure to cite your sources. Responses should be roughly 250 words, plus citations.

Responses to a classmate’s question are due on *Mondays (at 11 pm), starting Sept 18.*

Students whose last names begin with A-L should upload a *Reflections/Question post* for week 2 (the deadline is Friday, Sept. 15 at 11 pm). Students whose last names begin with M-Z should upload a *response* (to one classmate) by Monday (Sept. 18) at 11 pm. The following week, do the reverse. And so on, throughout the term.

Week	Group A (Surnames A-L)	Group B (Surnames M-Z)
2	Reading Summary and Questions	Response
3	Response	Reading Summary and Questions
4	Reading Summary and Questions	Response
5	Response	Reading Summary and Questions
6	Reading Summary and Questions	Response
7	Response	Reading Summary and Questions
8	Reading Summary and Questions	Response
9	Response	Reading Summary and Questions
10	Reading Summary and Questions	Response
11	Response	Reading Summary and Questions
12	Reading Summary and Questions	Response

Op-Ed:

You will write a 750-word op-ed (which stands for opposite the editorial page, and which is also known as an opinion piece). *Choose a film or show (either something we've viewed in the course or something else)*. Formulate the following title/headline:

Topic: "what X (film or show) teaches us about Y." Or: "what X (film or show) doesn't teach us about Y."

In addition to tackling either of these topic formats, you should include some prescriptive element stemming from your overall argument. By prescriptive, I mean "who should do what and why." We will discuss this more in class.

This is a hybrid assignment. The argument of the actual op-ed text needs to stand on its own. But you must also provide extended footnote citations and commentary (including additional data, context and evidence) in the footnotes. In your footnotes, draw on both scholarly and news-style sources that you uncover on your own. Each op-ed must have a clear question identified and a clear argument (which is your answer to the question). Draw on at least 8 sources, at least half of which should be scholarly ones. This will be considered a *take-home exam*, meaning it's due on Dec. 22.

Due: Friday, Dec. 22 by 11 pm (upload through Brightspace).

Late Penalties: one percentage point deduction per day late.

Books, Readings, Articles:

You will need a Netflix subscription for the duration of the semester. Readings are available through the Carleton library ARES website (course reserves).

Optional book (especially to prepare for your op-ed):

Mira Sucharov, *Public Influence: A Guide to Op-Ed Writing and Social Media Engagement* (University of Toronto Press, 2019)

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1 (Sept. 11): Intro

Class 2 (Sept. 18): Social Media / Social Capital

Series: *Black Mirror* (S3 e1: "Nosedive")

Documentary Film: *Fyre: The Greatest Party that Never Happened*

Academic Article: Michèle Lamont, "From 'having' to 'being': self-worth and the current crisis of American society," *The British Journal of Sociology* 70, 3 (June 2019): 660-707/

Op-Ed: Sheila Marikar, You Won't Find Your Self-Worth on Instagram," *The New York Times* (2 November 2019)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/02/opinion/sunday/instagram-social-media.html>

Class 3 (Sept. 25): The Opioid Crisis

Series: *Painkiller* (episodes 1 and 2).

Academic Article: Keith Humphreys et al., “Responding to the opioid crisis in North America and beyond: recommendations of the Stanford–Lancet Commission,” *The Lancet* Volume 399, Issue 10324, 5–11 February 2022
Read the “Executive Summary” section (up until, and including, the sentence, “The gains of such policies will be long lasting if they curtail the power of health-care systems to cause addiction and maximise their ability to treat it.”)

Op-Ed: Lincoln Anthony Blades, “The Opioid Crisis Only Became a Crisis When It Affected White People,” *Teen Vogue* (30 October 2017)
<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/the-opioid-crisis-only-became-a-crisis-when-it-affected-white-people>

Op-Ed: Vincent Lam, “As a doctor, I was taught ‘first do no harm.’ That’s why I have concerns with the so-called ‘safe supply’ of drugs,” *The Globe and Mail* (20 November 2021) <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-as-a-doctor-i-was-taught-first-do-no-harm-thats-why-i-have-a-problem/>

Class 4 (Oct. 2): Teen Sexuality & Education

Show: *Sex Education* (S1: e1 and e2).

Article: Debra Dudek, Giselle Woodley, and Lelia Green, “‘Own your narrative’: teenagers as producers and consumers of porn in Netflix’s *Sex Education*,” *Information, Communication & Society* 25, 4 (2022): 502-515.

Op-Ed: Andrea Barrica, “How to Make Sex More Dangerous,” *New York Times* (11 March 2019) <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/11/opinion/sex-ed-children-danger.html>

Op-Ed: Michelle Goldberg, “Why Sex-Positive Feminism Is Falling Out of Fashion,” *New York Times* (24 September 2021)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/24/opinion/sex-positivity-feminism.html>

*****No class: Thanksgiving (Oct. 9)*****

Class 5 (Oct. 16): Race, Class & Society

Show: *Dear White People* (S1, e1).

Film: *Dirty Dancing*

Academic Article: Dunagan, Colleen, and Roxane L. Fenton, 'Dirty Dancing: Dance, Class, and Race in the Pursuit of Womanhood', in Melissa Blanco Borelli (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen* (2014; online edn, Oxford Academic, 2 Oct. 2014).

Popular Article/Book Review: Katy Waldman, "A Sociologist Examines the "White Fragility" That Prevents White Americans from Confronting Racism," *The New Yorker* (23 July 2018) <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/a-sociologist-examines-the-white-fragility-that-prevents-white-americans-from-confronting-racism>

*****No class: Reading Week (Oct. 23)*****

Class 6 (Oct. 30): Stand-Up Comedy and Social Change

WATCH THEM IN THIS ORDER:

Special: Dave Chappelle, *The Closer*

Special: Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette*

Academic Article: Balkin, S. (2023). On Quitting: Dave Chappelle's *The Closer* and Hannah Gadsby's *Nanette*. *TDR: Drama Review*, 67(1), 149-166.

Op-Ed: Roxane Gay, "Dave Chappelle's Brittle Ego," *The New York Times* (13 October 2021) <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/13/opinion/dave-chappelle-netflix-trans.html>

Op-Ed: Marci L. Bowers, "What Decades of Providing Trans Health Care Have Taught Me," *New York Times* (1 April 2023) <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/01/opinion/trans-healthcare-law.html>

Class 7 (Nov. 6): Indigenous Identity & Politics

Film: *Indian Horse*

Academic Article: Hall, Anthony J. "A National or International Crime? Canada's Indian Residential Schools and the Genocide Convention." *Genocide studies international* 12.1 (2018): 72–91.

Op-Ed: Melissa Mbarki, "Trudeau, Canada, fail to understand depth of First Nations fresh water problems," *Toronto Star* (14 September 2021)
<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2021/09/14/trudeau-canada-fail-to-understand-depth-of-first-nations-fresh-water-problems.html>

Op-Ed: Alicia Elliott, "The racist legacy of Canada's residential schools is still reflected in current policies," *Washington Post* (2 June 2021)
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/06/02/canada-residential-schools-indigenous-racist-policies/>

Class 8 (Nov. 13): Workplace Politics: Race & Gender

Show: *The Office* (S2, e2, "Sexual Harassment")

Show: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (S4, e16, "Moo Moo")

Academic Article: Jessica Birthisel and Jason A. Martin, "That's What She Said: Gender, Satire, and the American Workplace on the Sitcom *The Office*," *The Journal of communication inquiry*, 2013-01, Vol.37 (1), p.64-80

Op-Ed: Pamela Jeffery, "Decades of progress on gender equality in the workplace at risk of vanishing," *The Globe and Mail* (2 August 2020)
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-decades-of-progress-on-gender-equality-in-the-workplace-at-risk-of/>

Op-Ed: Nicole Taylor, "Black Employees, Don't Sign Away Your Right to Speak Out," *The New York Times* (23 June 2020)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/opinion/nda-racism-separation-agreements.html?>

Op-Ed: Daniel A. Yudkin and Jay Van Bavel, "The Roots of Implicit Bias," *The New York Times* (9 December 2016)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/opinion/sunday/the-roots-of-implicit-bias.html>

Class 9 (Nov. 20): Journalism & Justice: Catholic Church Sexual Abuse

Film: *Spotlight*

Academic Article: Christina Mancini and Ryan T. Shields, "Notes on a (sex crime) scandal: The impact of media coverage of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church on public opinion," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 42, 2 (2014): 221-232.

Op-Ed: Alice McDermott, "Why the Priesthood Needs Women," *New York Times* (23 February 2019)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/23/opinion/sunday/women-catholic-priests.html>

Class 10 (Nov. 27): Diamonds & Colonialism

Film: *Uncut Gems*

Article: Clayton Carlyle Tarr, "This Is How I Win: Uncut Gems, Colonial Violence, and the Victorian Adventure Story," *Journal of Popular Culture* 55, 2 (2022): 392-410.

News article: Dionne Searcey, Russia Fights Efforts to Declare It an Exporter of 'Blood Diamonds,'" *New York Times* (16 August 2022)

Press Release: "General Assembly Adopts Resolution Encouraging Strengthening of Kimberley Process, Recognizing Diamond Certification Scheme's Key Role in Peacebuilding, Development," United Nations (3 March 2020)
<https://press.un.org/en/2020/ga12242.doc.htm>

Class 11 (Dec. 4): Israel-Palestine Politics

Show: *Fauda* (episodes 1 and 2; watch more if you like)

Web explainer: Vox, "Everything You Need to Know About Israel-Palestine,"
<https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18079996/israel-palestine-conflict-guide-explainer>

Op-Ed: Marwan Barghouti, "Want Security? End the Occupation," *Washington Post*, January 16, 2002. <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article1986.shtml>

Op-Ed: Sayed Kashua, "Fauda Creators Think Arabs are Stupid," *Haaretz* (12 January 2018) <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2018-01-12/ty->

[article/.premium/fauda-creators-think-arabs-are-stupid/0000017f-e48f-d9aa-aff-fddf180a0000](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-11-06/israel-human-rights-palestine-groups-designation-terrorism)

Op-Ed: Rana and Milena, “Israel Just Declared Our Human Rights Work ‘Terrorism.’ But it Won’t Silence Us,” *Los Angeles Times* (6 November 2021)
<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-11-06/israel-human-rights-palestine-groups-designation-terrorism>

Op-Ed: Gil Troy, “Israel Has as Much Right to Defend Itself as Everyone Else,” *The Jerusalem Post* (23 November 2021)
<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/israel-has-as-much-right-to-defend-itself-as-everyone-else-opinion-686796>

Class 12 (*Friday* Dec. 8): Workshopping Final Op-Ed Ideas

For this week, your discussion forum should be devoted to writing about your op-ed research and writing process. Those who are initial posters should conclude with a question about your op-ed you are seeking help with, and responders can respond.

Appendix

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- **Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation, or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more information, please [click here](#).

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper

citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

Carleton Political Science Society

The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.