

Carleton University  
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Winter 2022

FYSM / PSCI 1611A  
Politics on Netflix  
Thursdays 1:00-2:30 pm ET (by Zoom)

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**Office Hours:** Thursdays 3-5 pm ET (by Zoom)

I will send a sign-up sheet to you all the day before. If those times don't work for you, let me know 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: thinking about power dynamics and social structures and dynamics related to race, class, gender, social capital, sexuality and respectability politics; as well as policy around issue-areas including climate change, inequality, multinational corporations, terrorism and counter-terrorism, occupation, and disease.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Learn how to watch film and TV critically, through a political lens
2. Improve your reading and writing writing skills
3. Learn how to identify broader political and social themes emanating from works of art and entertainment
4. Hone your seminar-speaking skills
5. Learn how to source scholarly literature from everyday themes
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 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.

***Critiques/Questions*** are due on *Tuesdays (at 11 pm), starting Jan. 18.* (You will start with the 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 Thursdays, starting Jan. 20 — 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 *Thursdays (at 11 pm), starting Jan. 20.*

Students whose last names begin with A-L should upload a *Reflections/Question post* for week 2 (the deadline is Tuesday, Jan. 19 at 11 pm). Students whose last names begin with M-Z should upload a *response* (to one classmate) by Thursday

(Jan. 20) 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.

Due: April 11 by 11 pm (upload through Brightspace).

**Late Penalties:** one percentage point deduction per day late.

### **Books and Media:**

You will need a Netflix subscription for the duration of the semester.

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 (Jan. 13): Intro**

#### **Class 2 (Jan. 20): Social Media / Social Capital**

**Show:** *Black Mirror* (S3 e1: "Nosedive"; and S3, e6: "Hated in the Nation")

**Film (documentary):** *Coded Bias*

**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>

**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 3 (Jan. 27): Campus Politics**

**Show:** *The Chair* (watch as much as you can; especially eps. 1-3).

**Academic Article:** Mark Carl Rom and Kristina Mitchell, "Teaching Politics in a Call-Out and Cancel Culture," *PS: Political Science & Politics* (24 June 2021)

**Popular Article:** Anne Applebaum, "The New Puritans," *The Atlantic* (31 August 2021) <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/10/new-puritans-mob-justice-canceled/619818/>

**Op-Ed:** Michelle Goldberg, "The Middle-Aged Sadness Behind the Cancel Culture Panic," *The New York Times* (20 September 2021) <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/20/opinion/generation-cancel-culture.html>

### **Class 4 (Feb. 3): Sexuality & Respectability Politics**

**Film:** *Grease*

**Show:** *Sex Education* (S1, e1). Watch more if you like.

**Academic Article:** Michael Borgstrom, "Suburban Queer: Reading *Grease*," *Journal of Homosexuality* 58, no. 2 (January 31, 2011): 149–63.

**Popular Essay:** Rich Juzwiak, "A Theory of *Grease*: What If Sandy and Danny Actually Fucked?" *Jezebel* (29 May 2020) <https://themuse.jezebel.com/a-theory-of-grease-what-if-sandy-and-danny-actually-fu-1843756498>

**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>

### **Class 5 (Feb. 10): Race & Society**

**Show:** *Dear White People* (S1, e1). Watch more if you like.

**Show:** *How to Get Away with Murder* (S1, e1 & S4, e13).

**Academic Article:** Rose M. Brewer and Nancy A. Heitzeg, “The Racialization of Crime and Punishment: Criminal Justice, Color-Blind Racism, and the Political Economy of the Prison Industrial Complex,” *American Behavioral Scientist* (1 January 2008).

**Popular Essay:** Adia Harvey Wingfield, “Color-Blindness Is Counterproductive,” *The Atlantic* (13 September 2015)

**Popular Essay:** How Insightful is Dear White People? *The Atlantic* (17 May 2017) <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/05/dear-white-people-season-one-roundtable/526920/>

**Op-Ed:** Charles Blow, “Library Visit, Then Held at Gunpoint,” *The New York Times* (24 November 2017) <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/26/opinion/charles-blow-at-yale-the-police-detained-my-son.html>

### **Class 6 (Feb. 17 ): Stand-Up Comedy and Social Change**

WATCH THEM IN THIS ORDER:

**Special:** Dave Chappelle, *The Closer*

**Special:** Hannah Gadsby, *Nanette*

**Academic Article:** Linders Green, “The Impact of Comedy on Racial and Ethnic Discourse,” *Sociological inquiry* 86.2 (2016): 241–269.

**Popular Article:** Wired staff, “Seriously, We Really Need to Talk About Nanette,” *Wired* (31 July 2018) <https://www.wired.com/story/hannah-gadsby-nanette-discussion/>

**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>

\*\*\***Feb. 24 -- No class (Reading Week)**\*\*\*

### **Class 7 (March 3): Indigenous Identity & Politics**

**Film:** *Indian Horse*

**Film (documentary):** *There's Something in the Water*

**Academic Article:** Augustine S. J. Park, “Settler Colonialism and the Politics of Grief: (22 July 2015): Theorising a Decolonising Transitional Justice for Indian Residential Schools,” *Human Rights Review* 16: 273-293.

**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>

### **Class 8 (March 10): Workplace Politics**

**Show:** *The Office* (S1, e2, “Diversity Day”; 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?>

### **Class 9 (March 17): Class Inequality**

**Show:** *Squid Game* (watch as much as you can; especially episodes 1 & 6)

**Show:** *Maid* (watch as much as you can)

**Academic Article:** Christine Walley, “Trump’s Election and the ‘white Working Class’: What We Missed,” *American ethnologist* 44.2 (2017): 231–236

**Popular article:** Roxana Hadadi, “A Game of Marbles Turns *Squid Game*’s Anti-Capitalist Critique Inside Out,” *Vulture* (7 October 2021)  
<https://www.vulture.com/article/squid-game-gganbu-marbles-episode-capitalism-analysis.html>

**Op-Ed:** Samuel Scheffler, "Is Economic Inequality Really a Problem?" *The New York Times* (1 July 2020)  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/opinion/economic-inequality-moral-philosophy.html>

### **Class 10 (March 24): Counter-Terrorism and Occupation**

**Show:** *Fauda* (watch as much as you can; especially episodes 1 and 2)

**Academic Article:** Natan B. Sachs, "What Hamas Wants, What Israel Needs," [brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu) (11 July 2014)  
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/07/11-hamas-wants-israel-needs-sachs>

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

**Op-Ed:** Mira Sucharov, "Fauda is Binge-Worthy, But Can Be Painful," *Canadian Jewish Record* (21 May 2020)  
<https://canadianjewishrecord.ca/2020/05/21/sucharov-fauda-is-binge-worthy-but-can-be-painful/>

### **Class 11 (March 31): Civil War**

**Film:** *Incendies*

**Academic Article:** Craig Larkin, "Beyond the War? The Lebanese Postmemory Experience," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, 4 (November 2010): 615-635.

**Op-Ed:** Mohamad Bazzi, "The Blast in Beirut a Year Ago Revealed the Dysfunctional Legacy of War," *Los Angeles Times* (3 August 2021)  
<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-08-03/port-explosion-in-beirut-revealed-the-dysfunctional-legacy-of-war>

### **Class 12 (April 7): Korean Peninsula; Korean Diaspora**

**Show:** *Crash Landing on You* (Watch as much as you can)

**Show:** *Kim's Convenience* (Watch as much as you can)

**Academic Article:** Sherry S. You, "Cultural Diversity in Canadian Television: The Case of CBC's *Kim's Convenience*," *Television & New Media* (2 June 2021)

**Op-Ed:** Victor Cha, “There’s a simple option for defusing the coming crisis with North Korea,” *The Washington Post* (15 September 2021)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/15/victor-cha-defusing-coming-crisis-with-north-korea/>

## Appendix

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### **Covid-19 Information**

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) When accessing campus you must fill in the [COVID-19 Screening Self-Assessment in cuScreen](#) each day before coming to campus. You must also check-in to your final destination (where you plan on being longer than 15 minutes) within a building using the [QR location code](#).

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory [symptom reporting tool](#). For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be recorded in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton’s COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University’s COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact [covidinfo@carleton.ca](mailto:covidinfo@carleton.ca)

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton’s COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

## **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 more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).

***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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).

***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](mailto: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 information, please visit [carleton.ca/pmc](http://carleton.ca/pmc).

***Accommodation for student activities:*** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](http://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](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support).

## **Plagiarism**

The University Senate 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, 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.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work 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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 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.