

Winter 2021
Carleton University

FYSM / PSCI 1611
Politics on Netflix
Thursdays 10:00-11:25 EST (by Zoom)

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Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-2:30 pm EST (by Zoom)

I will send a sign-up sheet to you all that morning. If those times don't work for you, let me know and we can make an appointment at a mutually-agreed-upon time.

Course Description: In this course, we will examine various offerings on Netflix through a political lens. We will ask two main questions: how are political topics dealt with in these works of art and entertainment? And what kinds of political messages seep through even when the subject of the work isn't obviously political? 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 concise 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:

Attendance / Oral Participation: 25%
Weekly Discussion-Forum Posts: 50%
Op-Ed: 25%

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 formulating a question: a question which occurs to you from the course material but which the filmmakers/authors don't address.

Critiques/Questions are due on *Tuesdays (at 11 pm), starting Jan. 19 (You will start with the readings from Class 2)*

The other half of the class will respond to your classmates' questions. (Each of you should choose one classmate to whom to respond on any given week.) *The responses are due on Thursdays, starting Jan. 21 — by 11 pm.* Offer some answers of your own to the questions your classmates have proposed, and suggest how we might go about finding out the answers to these questions based on what we know theoretically and empirically. For example, how would we go about identifying the appropriate data to address the question your classmate posed? Are there any academic or news articles you can identify (via library or google search or on our existing syllabus) that can help us answer the question? (Weekly responses should be roughly 250 words.)

Responses to a classmate's question are due on *Thursdays (at 11 pm), starting Jan. 21.*

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. 21) at 11 pm. The following week, do the reverse. And so on, throughout the term.

Week	Group A (Surnames A-L)	[1]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 16 by 11 pm (upload through cuLearn).

Late Penalties: one percentage point deduction per day late.

Books and Media:

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

There are no required books for the course. You are, however, encouraged to consult the following title, if you wish, in preparation 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. 14): Intro

Class 2 (Jan. 21): Social Media / Social Capital

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

Academic Article: Kostka, Genia. "China's Social Credit Systems and Public Opinion: Explaining High Levels of Approval." *New Media & Society* 21.7 (2019): 1565–1593

Academic Article: Yang, Holden. "Emerging Adults' Social Media Self-Presentation and Identity Development at College Transition: Mindfulness as a Moderator." *Journal of applied developmental psychology* 52 (2017): 212–221.

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 (Jan. 28): Class Politics & The Politics of Resentment

Film: *Hillbilly Elegy*

Academic Article: Dowland, Douglas. "The Politics of Resentment in J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*." *Texas studies in literature and language* 61.2 (2019): 116–140

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

Popular Article: Adrian Horton, "How Hillbilly Elegy tries and fails to show the 'real' America," *The Guardian* (30 November 2020)
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/nov/30/how-hillbilly-elegy-tries-and-fails-to-show-the-real-america>

Class 4 (Feb. 4): Sexuality & Respectability Politics

Film: *Grease*

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

Academic Article: Borgstrom, Michael. "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. 11): Race & Society

Show: *Dear White People* (pilot). Watch more if you like

Show: *Black #AF* (pilot). Watch more if you like

Show: *One Day at a Time* (pilot). Watch more if you like

Academic Article: Norton, Michael I., Samuel R. Sommers, Evan P. Apfelbaum, Natassia Pura, and Dan Ariely. "Color Blindness and Interracial Interaction: Playing the Political Correctness Game." *Psychological Science* 17, no. 11 (November 2006): 949–53

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/>

*****Feb. 18 -- No class (Reading Week)*****

Class 6 (Feb. 25): Stand-Up Comedy and Social Change

WATCH THEM IN THIS ORDER:

Special: *The Age of Spin: Dave Chappelle Live at The Hollywood Palladium*

Special: *Hannah Gadsby: Nanette*

Academic Article: Green, Linders. "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/>

Popular Article: *Yasmin Nair, "No, No, Nanette: Hannah Gadsby, Trauma, and Comedy as Emotional Manipulation," Evergreen*

[https://evergreenreview.com/read/your-laughter-is-my-](https://evergreenreview.com/read/your-laughter-is-my-trauma/?fbclid=IwARovEn33bRoGqkkkBe04p_I3kkR7gu2EiZTpfwJs4MQR7QAPV6gK3CCll94)

[trauma/?fbclid=IwARovEn33bRoGqkkkBe04p_I3kkR7gu2EiZTpfwJs4MQR7QAPV6gK3CCll94](https://evergreenreview.com/read/your-laughter-is-my-trauma/?fbclid=IwARovEn33bRoGqkkkBe04p_I3kkR7gu2EiZTpfwJs4MQR7QAPV6gK3CCll94)

Class 7 (March 4): Local Threats; Local Policy

Film: *Jaws*

Academic Article: Christopher Neff, "The Jaws Effect: How Movie Narratives are Used to Influence Policy Responses to Shark Bites in Western Australia," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 50, 1 (2014): 114-127.

Op-Ed: Julian Zelizer, "What 'Jaws' Can Teach us about our Coronavirus Response," *CNN* (24 May 2020)

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/opinions/jaws-lessons-on-covid-19-response-zelizer/index.html>

Class 8 (March 11): Workplace Politics

Show: *The Office* (S1, e2, "Diversity Day"; S2, e2, "Sexual Harassment")

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

Show: *The IT Crowd* (S1, e1, "Yesterday's Jam")

Academic Article: Birthisel, Jessica ; Martin, Jason A, "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: 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>

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/>

Class 9 (March 18): Climate Change

Show: *Snowpiercer* (episodes 1 and 2)

Academic Article: Godfrey, Phoebe C. "Introduction: Race, Gender & Class and Climate Change." *Race, Gender & Class* 19, no. 1/2 (2012): 3-11.

Academic Article: Nisbet, Matthew. "LESSONS FROM CANADA'S CLIMATE WARS. (Sciences, Publics, Politics)." *Issues in science and technology* 36.2 (2020): 27-29

Op-Ed: Rhiana Gunn-Wright, "Think This Pandemic is Bad? We Have Another Crisis Coming," *New York Times* (15 April 2020)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/opinion/sunday/climate-change-covid-economy.html>

Class 10 (March 25: Counter-Terrorism and Occupation

Show: *Fauda* (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 (April 1): Pandemics

Film: *Contagion*

Academic Article: Kavanagh, Matthew M ; Singh, Renu, "Democracy, Capacity, and Coercion in Pandemic Response-COVID 19 in Comparative Political Perspective," *Journal of health politics, policy and law*, 2020-05-28, Vol.45 (6), p.997-1012

Academic Article: Henry Kwok (2020) Beyond the anti-racist reason: a postcolonial perspective on pandemic politics, *Health Sociology Review*, 29:2, 122-130

Op-Ed: Helaine Olen, "How Covid-19 is ripping us apart," *Washington Post* (14 November 2020)
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/11/14/how-covid-19-is-ripping-us-apart/>

Class 12 (April 8): The Food Industrial Complex & Animal Welfare

Film: *Okja*

Academic Article: Gunawan, Michelle. "Navigating Human and Non-Human Animal Relations: Okja, Foucault and Animal Welfare Laws." *Alternative Law Journal* 43, no. 4 (December 2018): 263–68.

Op-Ed: Scott Weathers, Sophie Hermanns and Mark Bittman, "Health Leaders Must Gocus on the Threats from Factory Farms," *New York Times* (21 May 2017)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/21/opinion/who-factory-farming-meat-industry-.html>

Accommodations during COVID

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor's note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to

complete the self-declaration form available here: https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf

Academic Accommodations

Pregnancy

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

Religious obligation

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

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, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its 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

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 compete or perform 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

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 can include:

- 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;

- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

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).