PSCI 4316A/PSCI5915F Contemporary Political Theory I

Mondays 11:35 am – 2:25 pm This course will be held in person

Instructor: Sophie Marcotte Chenard

Office: Loeb D690

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30am-3:30pm (link on Brightspace) or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is an enquiry into a specific moment in the history of 20th-century European thought: the interwar period (1918-1939). This period could be described as a period of *crisis*, or rather, of *crises*: political, social, economic, philosophical, and even existential. In Germany, the end of the First World War is met with the resentment of the defeat. But it is also a moment of great change: the beginning of the Weimar Republic, the attempt to create a new liberal regime in rupture with the old world, unprecedented innovation and creation in philosophy, literature, cinema, architecture, music and so on. In politics, the Weimar period represents a "laboratory of modernity", where all alternatives from far-left to radical far-right politics are represented as potentialities to be realized.

Our task in this course is to understand the diagnoses that various political thinkers pose with regard to the political and social situation in Europe in the interwar and postwar period. How to make sense of this new social and political world that offers no markers of certainty? How can we understand, in this context, the rise of Nazism and the growth of Anti-Semitism? Is there any meaning to the human tragedy that was the Second World War and the Holocaust? How is a belief in the solidity or legitimacy of democracy as a regime possible after the experience of total domination of totalitarianism?

This course is designed to provide a substantive overview of the major themes in continental thought in the first half of the twentieth century and an introduction to the works of the most important thinkers of that period, including Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Max Horkheimer, Simone Weil, Albert Camus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Provide an elaborate account of historical context of the interwar period and postwar periods in Germany and in France;
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the political theories and conceptions of totalitarianism, nihilism, liberty and democracy studied in the course;
- Draw parallels with our present-day use of these concepts;
- Develop analytical reading and writing skills and master interpretive tools in analyzing various textual forms;
- Formulate a clear and rigorous interpretation of the ideas seen in class through the assignments and discussions.

Contact Policy:

The best way to contact me outside of scheduled office hours is via email. You can expect a reply within 48 hours (weekends excluded). If your question cannot be answered by a short email, please drop by during online office hours or stay online after the seminar discussion. If your question is of general interest to the whole class, please post in the "Peer Help Forum".

When emailing:

- Include the course code in the subject line of the email
- Use your Carleton email account
- Sign off with your first and last name and include your student number.

Course Format

This course is delivered in person with some asynchronous activities (collaborative annotation of the readings on Perusall).

The structure of the course will be as follows:

- 1) Welcome and updates about the course (5 minutes)
- 2) Instructor's presentation of the weekly topic and readings (30-35 minutes)
- 3) Class discussion on the first text or excerpts
- 4) 15-minute break
- 5) Class discussion on the remaining texts or excerpts

Most required readings are available on the course page for each week, along with other materials, including additional academic articles and resources, editorials and newspaper articles that deal with topics related to this course.

Use of Brightspace: Course announcements, deadline reminders and course materials will be posted on the course page. Please ensure that you have access to the course on Brightspace and <u>consult it regularly</u>.

Required Texts (available for purchase at the University bookstore)

- Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, Hackett
- Simone Weil, On The Abolition of All Political Parties (New York: NYRB, 2013)
- All other readings will be available directly on Brightspace at no cost to you

Course Assignments

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade	
Attendance/Participation	Marked weekly	30%	
Critical Review	Once/Term	15%	
Research Essay Proposal	November 11	20%	
Research Essay	December 9	35%	
Create a Meme	Anytime before December 6	1% (bonus point)	

Course Assignments Overview

1. Attendance and Participation (30%) - Marked weekly

Your attendance and participation grade will be based on the evaluation of two components: a) Participation in class discussions and b) Annotation of texts through Perusall.

a) **Attendance and participation** in the weekly discussions is an <u>essential component</u> of this seminar, which is based on in-class conversations, debates and exchange of ideas.

Participation in class will **be evaluated according to the following criteria**: preparation ahead of the seminar; quality of interventions; ability to engage critically with the text and to make connections with other concepts/ideas covered in the course. To earn the full points, you are required to attend the seminar on a regular basis, demonstrate that you have read the texts in advance and contribute actively, positively and respectfully to the discussion.

b) **Perusall Annotation of Texts:** A percentage of your participation grade goes to your weekly contribution to a collaborative annotation of the readings. To earn the full points, you are required to **annotate and comment on a selection of readings on Perusall** (indicated by an asterisk in the course outline and on Brightspace). Your annotation of the text should be completed on Sunday before midnight. You should contribute a minimum of **one comment**

^{*} Any edition of the two books (new or used) can be used, provided that they are unabridged. Used copies can be found online or in bookstores (such as Black Squirrel)

(which can also take the form of a question about a specific passage or section of the text). There is no maximum, but it is preferable to avoid going on an endless rant at every page of the text. Further explanations and examples will be given during the first week.

Note about attendance: Excused absences include medical reasons, family emergencies and observance of religious holiday. Please make sure to notify me in advance and if necessary, to provide the necessary documentation (i.e. medical note).

Three or more unexcused absences will result in a change of one third of a letter grade (e.g. from B+ to B). Five or more unexcused absence will result in losing one full letter grade (from B to C).

2. Critical Review (15%)

Students are expected to submit one critical review during the term (min. 750 words – max. 1250 words) that will be based on the week and text of your choosing. The critical review should be **submitted on Monday before 11:35am** of the week in which we are discussing the thinker you have selected. The critical review should include a brief summary of the text that outlines the main thesis as well as a critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the argument alongside further questions that, according to you, the text raises. A document detailing how to write a critical review will be posted on Brightspace. There will be a sign-up sheet available during the first week of class.

3. Research Essay Proposal (20%) – Due Friday November 11

Your main assignment in this course is to write a research essay to be submitted at the end of the term. The initial step toward the completion of your paper is to draft a **research essay proposal**. Your proposal (approx. **1000 words** for 4th-year students, **1500 words** for graduate students) should include a presentation of your research question, a tentative thesis, a "roadmap" or outline of the organization of your essay and a justification of the main sources you will be using. Your research proposal should be accompanied by an **annotated bibliography** (minimum of 5 sources). Specific guidelines for the proposal will be posted on the course page under Assignments and Guidelines.

You can submit your outline in Word or PDF format. Please name your submitted assignment as follows: Lastname.Firstname.Proposal.

4. Research Essay (35%) - Due Friday December 9th

You will be required to write one research essay (max. 4000 words including footnotes for 4th-year students, max. 4500 words including footnotes for graduate students) that should be submitted electronically on Brightspace.

A document with detailed guidelines for the final paper will be available on Brightspace at the beginning of the term. Students will be given complete freedom with regard to the topic and authors studied, as long as it is related to the course theme. The bibliography should include **a minimum of 7 sources**, at least one of which should be a book and four of which should be peer-reviewed. You are encouraged to use the Further Readings document posted on Brightspace in preparation for writing your essay.

You can submit your outline in Word or PDF format. Please name your submitted assignment as follows: Lastname.Firstname.FinalEssay

5. Create a Meme (1% bonus points) – Anytime before December 6th

Using humour to express philosophical ideas and problems is a proof that you have understood those ideas and can mobilize them in various, creative ways. Anytime during the term, you can post a meme on the "Create a Meme Forum" and share your creation with the rest of the class to earn a 1% bonus. The memes have to be related in some way to the topics/concepts/thinkers covered in the course. We will collectively vote on a Top 5 at the end of the term. The authors of the winning memes will win absolutely nothing except public recognition of their exceptional sense of humour.

Summary

Students are required to:

- 1) Complete the readings before class;
- 2) Attend the seminars regularly;
- 3) Participate in class discussions and annotation on Perusall (total of 30%)
- 4) Submit a critical review of one reading (15%)
- 5) Write and submit a proposal for their research essay (20%)
- 6) Submit their final research essay (35%)

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1: Thinking in Uncertain Times: Political Philosophy in the Interwar Period (Sept 12)

Required readings:

- ♦ Syllabus
- ♦ Gordon and McCormick, "Introduction: Weimar Thought: Continuity and Crisis", in Weimar Thought. A Contested Legacy (Princeton: 2013), pp. 1-11.
- ◆ Rudiger Graf and Moritz Föllmer, "The culture of 'crisis' in the Weimar Republic", Thesis Eleven, 111(1), 2012, 36–47.

Optional:

- ◆ Babylon Berlin tv series (Netflix)
- ♦ Koselleck, "Crisis", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 67, Number 2, April 2006, pp. 357-400.

Week 2: The Crisis of the Weimar Republic (I) (Sept 19)

Required readings:

♦ Max Weber, The Vocation Lectures

Week 3: The Crisis of the Weimar Republic (II) (Sept 26)

Required readings:

- ◆ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (1932)
- ◆ *Carl Schmitt, Political Theology. Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, Chap.
 1: "Definition of Sovereignty", pp. 5-15.

Optional:

♦ Schmitt, The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy

Week 4: The German Émigrés (I): Leo Strauss and Karl Löwith (Oct 3)

Required readings:

- ◆ *Strauss, "German Nihilism" (1941)
- ◆ Strauss, "The Living Issues of German Postwar Philosophy" (1940)
- ♦ Löwith, "Nature, History and Existentialism"

Optional:

- ◆ Strauss, "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism" (1956)
- ◆ Löwith and Strauss, "Correspondence Concerning Modernity"
- ♦ Löwith, "Curriculum Vitae", in My Life in Germany Before and After 1933
- ♦ Löwith, "European Nihilism" in Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism, pp. 192-208.

Week 5: Statutory Holiday, University Closed (Oct 10)

Week 6: The German Émigrés (II): Hannah Arendt (Oct 17)

Required readings:

- ◆ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Chap. 10: Section I; Chap. 13
- ♦ *Arendt, "Postscript" to Eichmann in Jerusalem, pp. 375-388

Optional:

- ◆ Arendt, "Approaches to the 'German Problem'" (1945)
- ◆ Arendt, "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility" (1945) in Essays in Understanding
- ♦ Hannah Arendt (the movie)

Week 7 - Fall Break (Oct. 24-28)

Week 8: The German Émigrés (II): Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and the (Oct 31) Frankfurt School

^{*}Guest Presentation: Kyla Bruff (Department of Philosophy, Carleton University)

Required readings:

- ◆ *Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, Preface (1944 and 1947)
- ◆ Adorno and Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", p. 94-113
- ♦ Adorno, "Dedication", Minima Moralia, p. 15-18

Optional:

♦ Horkheimer, "The Revolt of Nature" in *The Eclipse of Reason* (1947), p. 63-86.

Week 9: Research Essay/Writing Workshop (Nov 7)

Required readings:

◆ Orwell, Politics and the English Language (1946)

Week 10: The French Intellectuals (I): Simone Weil (Nov 14)

Required readings:

- ◆ *Simone Weil, The Need for Roots. Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Toward Mankind, Part I: The Needs of the Soul
- ◆ Simone Weil, On The Abolition of All Political Parties (1943)

Optional:

♦ Weil, "Meditation on Obedience and Liberty" in Fragments (1933-1938)

Week 11: The French Intellectuals (II): Albert Camus (Nov 21)

Required readings:

- ◆ Camus, The Rebel (Selections)
- ◆ *Camus, "The Human Crisis" (1946)

Week 12: The French Intellectuals (III): Simone de Beauvoir (Nov 28)

Required readings:

- ◆ *Beauvoir, "Moral Idealism and Political Realism" (1945)
- Beauvoir, The Ethics of Ambiguity, Chap. 1: "Ambiguity and Freedom" (1947)

Optional:

- ♦ Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Introduction
- ◆ Beauvoir, "Existentialism and Popular Wisdom" Beauvoir, The Prime of Life, Chap. 6. Beauvoir, All Men are Mortal

Week 13: The French Intellectuals (IV): Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Claude Lefort (Dec 5)

Required readings:

- ♦ Merleau-Ponty, "The War Has Taken Place" (1948) in Sense and Nonsense
- ◆ *Lefort, "The Image of the Body and Totalitarianism" in *The Political Forms of Modern Society*

Optional:

- ♦ Lefort, "The Question of Democracy", in *Democracy and Political Theory*
- ◆ Lefort, "Hannah Arendt and the Question of the Political", in *Democracy and Political Theory*

Week 14: Conclusion: Politics and/in Crisis (Dec 9)

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Key Dates: Summary

Date	Topic	Assignment	
Monday, September 12	Introduction	Attendance/Participation	
		marked weekly	
Monday, September 19	Weber		
Monday, September 26	Schmitt		
Monday, October 3	Strauss + Löwith		
Monday, October 10	No class - Thanksgiving		
Monday, October 17	Arendt		
Monday, October 24	Fall Break		
Monday, October 31	Horkheimer + Adorno		
Monday, November 7	Writing Workshop		
Friday, November 11		Research Proposal due	
Monday, November 14	Weil		
Monday, November 21	Camus		
Monday, November 28	Beauvoir		
Monday, December 5	Merleau-Ponty + Lefort		
Friday, December 9	Conclusion	Research Essay due	

Course Policies

Citations and Bibliography

All written assignments should include a full list of sources used and avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity. For examples of what constitutes plagiarism and what could be the possible sanctions, consult this page on academic integrity: https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/

You must indicate all references to the texts in footnotes or with in-text references. You are free to choose the style of citation with which you are most comfortable, as long as it is consistent

throughout your assignment. For more details on how to cite properly, please consult the MacOdrum Library website: https://library.carleton.ca/help/citing-your-sources.

All assignments submitted should be **double-spaced**, formatted in **12-point font** and should include **page numbers**.

Copyright

Lectures and course materials (including all PowerPoint presentations, handouts, videos, and similar materials) are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial purposes without my express written consent.

Late Essays & Extensions

If you are ill or have any other legitimate reason for not being able to complete coursework or submit your assignments on time, **please advise me as soon as possible (preferably before the deadline)**. If an extenuating circumstance prevents a student from submitting an assignment on time, they should be prepared to provide proper documentation concerning the situation. Accommodations can be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that assignments in other courses **are not sufficient grounds** for an extension. As you dispose of several weeks to complete the assignments, it is your responsibility to start early in the term.

Late assignments will be penalized at the **rate of 4% of the student's assignment grade** per day. An assignment is considered one day late if it is submitted to Brightspace any time up to 23:59 hours after the deadline. Assignments that have **not been submitted seven (7) days** after the deadline will not be accepted.

There is an increased risk of depression and anxiety among students during the pandemic, so please make sure to seek help if you are experiencing mental health-related problems. Carleton offers a broad range of resources: https://carleton.ca/wellness/

Grade Appeal

Any suspicion of error on the part of the instructor should be brought up immediately to be corrected. You are more than welcome to drop by during online office hours to discuss your assignment. If you are concerned that your assignment was not assessed fairly, you can request a review by submitting a **one-page justification** explaining the reasons why the assignment should be reviewed. You should send the justification along with the original essay by email **no later than one (1) week** after receiving your grade. A request for review can involve the raising or lowering of a grade upon further examination.

Appendix

Covid-19 Pandemic Measures

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are a number of actions you can take to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you're sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you should follow Carleton's symptom reporting protocols.

Masks: Masks are no longer mandatory in university buildings and facilities. However, we continue to recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. We are aware that personal preferences regarding optional mask use will vary greatly, and we ask that we all show consideration and care for each other during this transition.

Vaccines: While proof of vaccination is no longer required to access campus or participate in in-person Carleton activities, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible and submit their booster dose information in <u>cuScreen</u> as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the University's COVID-19 website and review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

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 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.

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.

Plagiarism

Carleton's <u>Academic Integrity Policy</u> 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.

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. 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	Α	11	63-66	С	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	В	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.