Course Description and Objectives

Against the background of long-standing diagnoses of a crisis of Western modernity, this course examines conceptions of, and the relationship between, politics and the political in a selective survey of (mostly) continental political thought from the early twentieth to the early twenty-first century. Whether conceived in terms of “disenchantment” or a “dialectic of Enlightenment,” a “colonization of the lifeworld” or the violence of actual colonization, empire and patriarchy; a “rise of the social,” “disciplinary society,” “biopolitics” or “post-politics,” the crisis of modernity arguably exposes a chasm, and reconfigures the relationship between politics (understood as the “ontic” sphere of official political institutions and discourses) and the political (understood as the “ontological” problematization of community, subjectivity, truth, and ethics informing politics). The course investigates different configurations of this nexus as well as a number of related questions revolving around identity and difference, conflict and consensus, power and resistance, society and the state, and the national and the global in selected works of contemporary liberal, conservative, Critical-theoretical, neo-republican, feminist, poststructural, postfoundational, and postcolonial thought (albeit without much attention to these classifications). In conjunction with their intellectual merits, we will consider how different theorizations are situated in their historical settings, and how they may operate as interventions in contemporary political practice. Each week we will focus on a particular thinker, while keeping in mind the broader intellectual and political context in which his or her work emerged.

Apart from the critical consideration of its subject matter, the objective of the course is to familiarize students with important concepts, debates, and intellectual fault lines in contemporary political thought. In class discussions and assignments, students are expected to formulate their own views on the merits and limitations of different theoretical approaches. Doing so should hone students’ analytical, interpretative, and critical skills in speech and writing. Students are encouraged to draw on their broader knowledge of the history of political thought and contemporary social and political issues as a background for the theoretical discussions. As a
seminar, the course has a mixed format putting the main emphasis on class discussion but alternating this with student presentations and short introductory or synthetic presentations by the instructor.

**Readings**

You could consider purchasing all assigned books from your favorite seller, and especially the following ones (since we are reading substantial portions from them):


However, these books (with the exception of Schmitt) as well as all other books from which required readings have been assigned are also available as free pdf-files online. All books containing required readings have also been placed on reserve at the CU Library. The readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available through the CU Library’s E-journals.

**Requirements and Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Sets of Discussion Questions and Discussion Lead-offs</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>(Sign up for dates in the first class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Short Essays (800-1000 words each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Sign up for dates in the first class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper (4500-5100 words)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
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As per early feedback guidelines, the first of the two Short Essays will be returned by October 13.
**Attendance and Class Participation (20%).** Attendance is mandatory. Please notify me in advance (in person or by email), if you have to miss a class for compelling reasons (e.g. medical or family emergency, observance of a religious holiday). Absences incurred for these reasons will be excused. All other absences are unexcused. Unexcused absences will lower your grade for class participation. Three or more unexcused absences will additionally lower your grade for class participation by one third of a letter grade (e.g. from A- to B+). Six or more unexcused absences will additionally lower your grade for class participation by a full letter grade (e.g. from B to C). To benefit from the course, it is essential that you read the assigned texts prior to class meetings, and that you participate actively and regularly in class discussions. Your class participation will be evaluated based on the quality and frequency of your contributions, with greater weight given to quality. It is expected that you engage with other students’ and the instructor’s ideas constructively, critically, and respectfully. Quality contributions to class discussions (questions, comments) demonstrate that you have read and comprehended the assigned materials; that you can analytically reflect and critically comment on the central ideas of the readings; and that you can make connections between these ideas and other themes or readings in the course.

**Two Sets of Discussion Questions and Discussion Lead-offs (2 x 10% each = 20%).** Each student has to prepare two to three discussion questions for the required reading(s) of two class meetings. These questions must be circulated by email to the entire class at least 24 hours prior to our seminar (i.e. by Thursday, 11:30 a.m. at the latest). The students preparing the questions will also be responsible for leading off the class discussion by briefly explaining the intellectual, pedagogical, or political rationales of their questions. You will be asked to sign up for the two classes in which you will present discussion questions in the first class.

**Two Short Essays (2 x 10% each = 20%).** Each student has to write two short (800-1000 word) essays on the required reading(s) for a particular class; the first one for one of the classes from September 15 to October 6, the second one for one of the classes from October 13 to November 24. You will be asked to sign up for dates for the two essays in the first class. You cannot write an essay for the classes in which you are presenting discussion questions. The short essays are due in class on the day the reading(s) in question will be discussed. Late submissions of the short essays will not be accepted except in cases of an excusable absence (e.g. medical reason, family emergency, religious observance) for which you provide appropriate documentation. The short essays should identify central arguments or ideas of the assigned texts, elucidate their meaning, and assess their persuasiveness. This elucidation and assessment can take (or combine) different forms including (but not limited to)
- an “interpretation/analysis,” i.e. an analytical dissection, interpretative commentary, or “consistency test”/critique (e.g. discussion of internal tensions or contradictions) and assessment of the coherence of the text(s);
- a “contextualization” of the text(s) within a (or several) particular tradition(s) of political thought and an assessment of its/their contribution(s) to that tradition (e.g. pitfalls, improvements, refinements, etc.);
- a “critique,” i.e. a critical assessment of the normative status of the text(s) and/or critique of its/their political/practical, ideological, or ethical implications.
The essays should be coherent but do not require the use of any outside sources. However, when you refer to (or quote) specific points in the reading(s) you must provide the corresponding page reference(s).

**Term Paper (40%).** Each student is required to write a term paper on a topic of her or his choice in consultation with the instructor. The term paper is **due** as a hard copy on Monday, December 4 at the instructor’s office during office hours. The topic of the paper can either be

(a) a purely theoretical discussion elucidating the meaning and assessing the persuasiveness of a theoretical question, issue, approach, or debate broached by one or several of the course readings in greater depth; or

(b) a discussion of how the theoretical approach of one (or several) of the authors discussed in the course relates to a substantive political, social, or historical issue or phenomenon (whether in a global, national, transnational, or local context).

If you choose (a), you could rework and extend the discussion of one of your short essays into a longer paper (relying on some of the strategies for interpretation and assessment outlined above) or, of course, write a longer paper on another question, issue, approach, or debate related to the course material. Apart from an “interpretation/analysis,” “contextualization,” or “critique” (or some combination thereof), you could also interpretatively/analytically and/or critically consider two (or three) theoretical approaches or authors discussed in the course comparatively.

If you choose (b), you have to discuss how the chosen theoretical approach(es) allow(s) for thinking about the chosen issue or phenomenon, and/or what its/their implications might be for political practice. However, the focus of the paper should still be a theoretical discussion.

Whether you choose (a) or (b), the paper must present and defend a clear argument (i.e. a reasoned statement about the theoretical approach, question, issue, or debate at hand, or about the relationship between a theoretical approach and the substantive issue or phenomenon chosen for investigation). Depending on the particular topic chosen for the paper, it may or may not be necessary to draw on sources other than the class readings. The length of the paper should be 15-17 pages double-spaced (approximately 4500-5100 words) plus bibliography. All sources (class readings or outside sources including books, articles, internet sources, etc.) must be acknowledged and properly referenced in the text, with page citations where appropriate. Any recognized citation style is fine (parenthetical or footnotes), just be consistent. The paper should have an introduction which states your argument, a main part which develops the argument, and a conclusion which summarizes the analysis (and may point to its implications). It must include a word count. Evaluation of the paper is based on (in declining order of importance):

(a) the merits (originality, persuasiveness) of your argument;
(b) the logic and clarity of your argument;
(c) the appropriateness and relevance of the cited readings (including a consistent citation style);
(d) correct English grammar, spelling, and usage.

In preparation for writing the research paper each student is required to come to the instructor’s office hours, if necessary by appointment, (at least) once in the course of the semester to discuss the topic of the paper and how the student will approach the topic. To prepare for this meeting
you should write some notes stating the proposed paper topic, your tentative argument about this
topic, and how you will go about substantiating this argument (including a list of bibliographic
references if appropriate). It is strongly suggested that you hold this consultation with the
instructor in September or October to give yourself sufficient time to work on the paper.

There will be no extension of the deadline for submission of the paper, except in cases of a
documented medical or family emergency. Late submissions will be accepted but penalized by
one third of a letter grade per day (e.g. from A- to B+) for up to seven calendar days. In case of a
late submission you may send the paper as an email attachment (as a time stamp), but you must
provide the instructor with an identical hard copy the following business day or as soon as
possible thereafter. **In the absence of circumstances warranting an extension, failure to submit the Research Paper on the due date (or within seven calendar days of the due date) will automatically result in a failing grade (FND) for the course.**

**CuLearn**

The course has a CuLearn page which contains the course outline and electronic class handouts.
CuLearn will also be used for the distribution of students’ discussion questions.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

Sept. 8  Introduction

Sept. 15  *Required*


*Further Reading*


Sept. 22  Required


Further Reading


Sept. 29  Required

Oct. 6  Required

Further Reading


Oct. 13  Required
Further Reading


Oct. 20

Required


Further Reading


Oct. 27  Fall Break (no class)

Nov. 3  Required


Further Reading


Nov. 10  Required

Further Reading


Nov. 17  
*Required*

https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/chantal-mouffe/populist-moment.

*Further Reading*


Nov. 24  
*Required*


*Further Reading*


Dec. 1 Conclusion

Dec. 4 ***** Term Paper due *****

**Academic Accommodations**

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

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

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

**Plagiarism:** The 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.

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 and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

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:

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

Approval of final grades: 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 cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

**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. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, 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 numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit [https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencessociety/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencessociety/) or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.