Carleton University   Winter 2022
Department of Political Science
www.carleton.ca/polisci

SECRECY & POLITICS (PSCI4809b)

Source: Detail from Jenny Holzer, *Xenon for Bregenz* (2004)

Instructor: William Walters	**Office Hours**: Fri 10-11am or by appt.
Office: C673 Loeb	**Email**: william.walters@carleton.ca
Seminar: Weds. 8.30 – 11.30	**Location**: Zoom

Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing

> **DELIVERY FORMAT**
> This online course is *blended*: it combines *synchronous* ('live' seminar discussions on Zoom) and *asynchronous* elements (e.g., short lecture videos and forums). I anticipate that for most meetings the synchronous component (ie, the Zoom session) will be no more than 90 mins per week.

COURSE THEMES AND OBJECTIVES
Political science devotes much more time to questions of publicity, transparency, citizenship and voice than it does to issues of secrecy, opacity, obfuscation and silence. This course will place these latter questions at the centre of our inquiry. If secrecy has been somewhat marginal to political science, this perhaps reflects the ambiguous normative status of this category. How does secrecy shape power relations and politics? Is secrecy always a bad thing? Does secrecy have a history? Does the rise of the information society change the way states practice secrecy, and what does this mean for citizens? These are some of the questions we will address in the course. The course will focus primarily on the countries of the global North, and the role of secrecy within regimes of liberal democracy. However, we will also reflect on secrecy within authoritarian, colonial and postcolonial contexts. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, drawing on some of the most insightful work on secrecy whether written by political scientists, geographers, historians, artists or archivists. It will also be empirical and located: we will approach secrecy not as something generic but a complex of practices, ideas, and experiences that are best understood through cases, issues, and contexts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1.   understand how secrecy shapes power and politics in liberal and illiberal regimes;
2.   identify key concepts, methods and cases that scholars have used to explore questions of secrecy;
3.   design and write a research proposal, gaining skills and experience that could be used for work and especially for future applications for research funding (eg, OGS) and graduate school.

COURSE TEXTS

There is no textbook. All required readings will be available either through the regular journal links in the library catalogue, or as PDFs on ARES.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Readings and videos. Before class you are required to do the required readings for each module. In addition, for many weekly modules on Brightspace I will post short videos and links which you should also consult.

2. Seminar attendance and active participation (20%). You are expected to attend the weekly seminars and actively participate in the discussions. Your grade will reflect your attendance and the quality of your engagement with the diverse course materials.

3. Forum posts (20%). There are no formal student presentations of readings in class. Instead, we will use forum posts to shape classroom discussions. **Each week you are required to make (at least) ONE post on the Brightspace forum regarding the module of the week**. This should be posted by 10pm on the Tuesday night before class so that we can refer to some of these posts during class. **Posts should <u>not</u> be a precis of the reading.** Instead, your post could take the form of (a) a question or point of clarification about a particular reading (b) something you like about the reading and why (c) something you don't like and why (d) connections to other readings, events, current affairs etc (e) A response to someone else's post. You will be graded on the quality of your overall contribution to the forums. **LENGTH**: posts can be anything from a couple of sentences to a couple of paragraphs.

4. Take-Home Test (open book) (20%). This will test your understanding of the material covered in Part I. There will be two essay-style questions. To prepare you will need to do the required reading for Part I plus the further reading for at least one of the modules. **The questions will be posted on Brightspace at 8.30am on February 9. Your answers should be uploaded to Brightspace by 11.30am the same day.** Use Word format and name the file *Yourfamilyname_TEST_PSCI4809*

5. Short Essay (20%). Write a critical review essay based on the required and further readings from one module in Part II. Due: **March 15th, 11.59pm**. Word length: **1500 words** (the bibliography is additional to the word count). Upload via Brightspace. Use Word format and name the file *Yourfamilyname_ShortEssay_PSCI4809*

6. Research proposal (20%). Imagine a research project you would like to conduct. You might want to model it around one of the research strategies outlined in Part III and/or draw on the issues of secrecy covered in Part II. A guide for creating the research proposal will be posted on Brightspace and discussed at length in the seminar. Submit by: **Apr 12, 11.59pm on Brightspace**. Length: **2500 words.**

Late penalties: One half grade will be deducted for each day late. Hence, if your short essay #1 were submitted on Mar 16 instead of Mar 15, you would drop from, say, A to A-.

THEMES AND READINGS (MODULES)

1. Introduction (Jan 12)
Walters, William (2021) *State secrecy and security: Refiguring the covert imaginary*: Routledge, 1-26.

Part I. APPROACHES TO POLITICAL SECRECY

2. Secrecy: Structure, Agency, Norms (Jan 19)
Moynihan, Daniel Patrick (1997) 'Secrecy as government regulation.' *PS: Political Science & Politics* 30(2): 160-165.
Balzacq, Thierry and Benjamin Puybareau (2018) 'The economy of secrecy: Security, information control, and EU-US relations.' *West European Politics* 41(4): 890-913.

Further reading
Broeders, Dennis (2016) 'The secret in the information society.' *Philosophy & Technology* 29(3): 293-305.
Rittberger, Berthold and Klaus H Goetz (2018) 'Secrecy in Europe.' *West European Politics* 41(4): 825-845.
Thompson, Dennis (1999) 'Democratic secrecy.' *Political Science Quarterly* 114(2): 181-193.

3. Genealogies of Secrecy (Jan 26)
Birchall, Clare (2021) *Radical secrecy: The ends of transparency in datafied America*: U of Minnesota Press, 15-38.
Siddiqi, Asif (2021) 'Atomized urbanism: Secrecy and security from the Gulag to the Soviet closed cities.' *Urban History*: 1-21.

Further reading
Heide, Marlen (2021) 'From threat to risk: Changing rationales and practices of secrecy.' *Public Integrity*: 1-13.
Galison, Peter (2010) 'Secrecy in three acts.' *Social Research* 77(3): 941-974.
Nuttall, Sarah and Achille Mbembe (2015) 'Secrecy's softwares.' *Current Anthropology* 56(S12): S317-S324.

4. Practices and Dynamics of Secrecy and Disclosure: Social, Spatial, Cultural, Material (Feb 2)
Paglen, Trevor (2010) 'Goatsucker: Toward a spatial theory of state secrecy.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28: 759-771.
Hilgartner, Stephen (2012) 'Selective flows of knowledge in technoscientific interaction: Information control in genome research.' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 45(2): 267-280.
Brodie, Janet Farrell (2011) 'Learning secrecy in the early cold war: The RAND corporation.' *Diplomatic History* 35(4): 643-670.

Further reading

Stampnitzky, Lisa (2020) 'Truth and consequences? Reconceptualizing the politics of exposure.' *Security Dialogue* 51(6): 597-613.

Grey, Christopher (2014) 'An organizational culture of secrecy: The case of Bletchley Park.' *Management & Organizational History* 9(1): 107-122.

Gusterson, Hugh (1996) *Nuclear rites : A weapons laboratory at the end of the cold war,* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 68-100.

5. Take-Home Test (Feb 9)

Part II: ISSUES OF SECRECY

6. Immigration Control and the Politics of Secrecy (Feb. 16)

Borrelli, Lisa (2018) 'Using ignorance as (un)conscious bureaucratic strategy: Street-level practices and structural influences in the field of migration management.' *Qualitative Studies* 5(2): 95-109.

Sambor, Alyssa (2021) 'Disappeared in plain sight: ICE air deportation infrastructure and cycles of migrant (im) mobility.' *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 18(1): 76-84.

Further reading

Rossipal, Christian (2019) 'The black box of detention: Migration, documentary, and the logistics of the moving image.' *The Global South* 13(2): 104-129.

Maillet, Pauline, Alison Mountz and Keegan Williams (2017) 'Researching migration and enforcement in obscured places: Practical, ethical and methodological challenges to fieldwork.' *Social and Cultural Geography* 18(7): 927-950.

Vrābiescu, Ionna (2017) '"Studying up" and getting access to the deportation apparatus in France' https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2017/11/studying-and

McGoey, Linsey (2012) 'Strategic unknowns: Towards a sociology of ignorance', Economy and Society 41(1): 1-16.

7. Reading Week (Feb 23)

8. Whistleblowers and Other Truth-Tellers (Mar 2)

Ellsberg, Daniel (2010) 'Secrecy and national security whistleblowing.' *Social Research* 77(3): 773-804.

Bean, Hamilton (2009) '" A complicated and frustrating dance": National security reform, the limits of parrhesia, and the case of the 9/11 families.' *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12(3): 429-459.

Further reading

Walters, William (2014) 'Parrhesia today: Drone strikes, fearless speech, and the contentious politics of security.' *Global Society* 28(3): 277-299.

Gladwell, Malcolm (2016) 'Daniel Ellsberg, Edward Snowden, and the modern whistleblower.' *The New Yorker*, 11 December.

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/12/19/daniel-ellsberg-edward-snowden-and-the-modern-whistle-blower

Whitaker, Reg (2015) 'The failure of official accountability and the rise of guerrilla accountability.' *Law, Privacy and Surveillance in Canada in the Post-Snowden Era*: 205-224.

Krasmann, Susanne (2019) 'Secrecy and the force of truth: Countering post-truth regimes', *Cultural Studies* 33(4).

9. Colonial, Postcolonial, and Decolonial Secrecy (Mar 9)

Anderson, David M. (2015) Guilty secrets: Deceit, denial, and the discovery of Kenya's 'migrated archive'. *History Workshop Journal.* 80(1): 142-160.

Logan, Tricia (2018) 'Questions of privacy and confidentiality after atrocity: Collecting and retaining records of the residential school system in Canada.' *Genocide Studies International* 12(1): 92-102.

Further reading

Mainwaring, Sarah and Richard Aldrich (2021) 'The secret empire of signals intelligence: GCHQ and the persistence of the colonial presence.' *International History Review* 43(1): 54-71.

Demos, T.J. (2009) 'The right to opacity: On the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum*.' *October* 129: 113-128.

Fletcher, Robert (2012) 'The art of forgetting: Imperialist amnesia and public secrecy.' *Third World Quarterly* 33(3): 423-439.

Part III: RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES FOR SECRECY

10. Controversies, Scandals and Cover-Ups (Mar 16)

Balmer, Brian (2004) 'How does an accident become an experiment? Secret science and the exposure of the public to biological warfare agents.' *Science as Culture* 13(2): 197-228

de Goede, Marieke and Mara Wesseling (2017) 'Secrecy and security in transatlantic terrorism finance tracking.' *Journal of European Integration* 39(3): 253-269.

Further Reading

Hughes, Sarah and Philip Garnett (2020) 'Researching the emergent technologies of state control: The court-martial of Chelsea Manning'. In: Marieke De Goede, Esmé Bosma and Polly Pallister-Wilkins (eds) *Secrecy and methods in security research: A guide to qualitative fieldwork.* New York: Routledge, 213-228.

Thomas, Owen David (2020) 'Security in the balance: How Britain tried to keep its Iraq war secrets.' *Security Dialogue* 51(1): 77-95.

Walters, William (2015) 'Secrecy, publicity and the milieu of security.' *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(3): 287-290.

11. Aesthetics of Secrecy (Mar 23)

Birchall, Clare (2014) 'Aesthetics of the secret.' *New Formations* 83(83): 25-46.

Bailey, Robert (2012) 'Unknown knowns: Jenny Holzer's redaction paintings and the history of the war on terror.' *October*: 144-161.

Further reading

Leone, Massimo (2017) 'Silence propaganda: A semiotic inquiry into the ideologies of taciturnity.' *Signs and Society* 5(1): 154-182.

Kearns, Oliver (2021) 'Forget what you hear: Careless talk, espionage and ways of listening in on the British secret state', *Review of International Studies*, pp.1-25.

Beckman, Karen (2007) 'Telescopes, transparency, and torture: Trevor Paglen and the politics of exposure.' *Art Journal* 66(3): 62-67.

Potolsky, Matthew (2019) *The national security sublime: On the aesthetics of government secrecy*: Routledge, 1-29.

Hillenbrand, Margaret (2020) 'Selling the cryptosphere in China.' *Cultural Studies* 34(4): 625-655.

12. Secret Subjects: Biographies, Memoirs, and Oral Histories (Mar 30)

Gentile, Patrizia (2010) 'Resisted access? National security, the Access to Information act, and queer (ing) archives.' *Archivaria* 68: 141-158.

Mundy, Liza (2018) 'The women code breakers who unmasked Soviet Spies', *Smithsonian Magazine,* September. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/women-code-breakers-unmasked-soviet-spies-180970034/

Lundborg, Tom (2021) 'Secrecy and subjectivity: Double agents and the dark underside of the international system.' *International Political Sociology*. 15(4): 443-459.

Further reading

Van Veeren, Elspeth (2019) 'Secrecy's subjects: Special operators in the US shadow war.' *European Journal of International Security* 4(3): 386-414.

Walters, William (2019) 'Everyday secrecy: Oral history and the social life of a top-secret weapons research establishment during the cold war.' *Security Dialogue*. 51(1): 60-76.

13. Workshopping your research proposals (Apr 6)

Further reading on methods of secrecy research

Moore, Rowan (2018) 'Forensic Architecture: Detail behind the devilry', The Observer, 25 February. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/feb/25/forensic-architects-eyal-weizman

Rappert, Brian (2010) 'Revealing and concealing secrets in research: The potential for the absent.' *Qualitative Research* 10(5): 571-587.

de Goede, Marieke (2020) 'Secrecy vignettes'. In: Marieke De Goede, Esmé Bosma and Polly Pallister-Wilkins (eds) *Secrecy and methods in security research: A guide to qualitative fieldwork.* New York: Routledge, 261-272.

Gusterson, Hugh (1997) 'Studying up revisited.' *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropological Review* 20(1): 114-119.

Monahan, Torin and Jill Fisher (2014) 'Strategies for obtaining access to secretive or guarded organizations.' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 10.1177/0891241614549834: 1-28.

Walby, Kevin and Mike Larsen (2011) 'Access to information and freedom of information requests: Neglected means of data production in the social sciences.' *Qualitative Inquiry* 18(1): 31-42.

Gilbert, Emily (2016) 'From declassified documents to redacted files: Tracing military compensation'. In: Alison Williams, Neil Jenkings, Matthew Rech, et al. (eds) *The routledge companion to military research methods.* Routledge, 30-43.

Appendix

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 much 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

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.](#)

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.

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 information, please visit 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.

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

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.