**CARLETON UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

**SOCI 3006B**

**WINTER 2024**

**THINKING THE SOCIAL: CRITICAL THEORIES OF THE STATE**

**Instructor:** Azar Masoumi

**Email:** azar.masoumi@carleton.ca

**Method of Delivery:** In-person

**Course Description:** In this course, we will explore the field of political sociology to learn about critical theories of the state. Studying the state critically means two things. First, we will learn that the political institutions and processes that govern our lives are not benign phenomena that “have always existed” or that “obviously should exist the way they do now”. Rather, we will consider states as dynamic historical formations that are produced by specific ideological, economic, social and cultural values and interests. Second, we will examine how the values and interests that inform our political institutions both rely on and contribute to existing structures of inequality. We will consider states from an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-imperial and anti-colonial, queer and feminist perspective to learn how our policies systematically reproduce colonial dispossession as well as economic, racial, global, gender and sexual inequality.

By the end of this course, you will gain an understanding of how critical theorists think about states and political power. You will be able to identify specific ways our current political structures exclude, marginalize, or eliminate certain persons and populations. By learning about these theories, you will develop a critical perspective on existing political systems and learn to apply critical thinking to a wide range of political questions. What you will learn in this course, I would hope, will give you the theoretical tools to analyze and resist social and political injustice in your everyday life.

**Reading (s)/Textbook (s):**

All readings are accessible online. Please see course Ares on Brightspace.

**Course Requirements & Methods of Evaluation:**

Workshop on Academic Integrity: 5%

Lecture Responses: 20%  
Case Example Exercises: 30%

Class Activity- Attendance and Participation: 5%

Critical Analysis of the Canadian State: 40%

*Self-Guided Virtual Tour of the Parliament of Canada: 10%*

*Critical Analysis of Three Features of the Canadian State:15%*

*Critical Analysis of Your own Relationship to the Canadian State: 15%*

Bonus points- Participation in Relevant Outside Event or Activity: 5%