

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA  
CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

CSPT 501/601 A01 (CRN 13479/13498)  
Wednesday (every other week) 9:30-12:20, HSD A264  
Office Hours: Wed/Thur 13:00-14:00  
E-mail: [peymanv@uvic.ca](mailto:peymanv@uvic.ca) (I will not be available through e-mail Fri-Mon)

Peyman Vahabzadeh  
Office: Cornett A375  
Phone: (250) 721-6353

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is the required Core Course for all incoming CSPT students and it offers an in-depth survey of the major tenets of contemporary cultural, social, and political thought. The purpose of this course is to cover a breadth of key literature in contemporary theory in relative depth. As the wide range of readings and topics in this course indicates, the intention is to train the student in the “foundational” approaches in cultural, social, and political theory.

We will start the class by the instructor’s lecture (about an hour) followed by the (assigned) student reflections on the week’s readings (10-15 minutes) and class discussion (30 minutes). Then there will be the instructor’s lecture (over an hour). The students will then engage in group and class discussions with the purpose of clarification of the readings. As such, the students are required to have read the week’s assigned readings and be prepared to fully engage with the material and instructor. Participation is an important component of the course. Equally important is the student presentation and leading class discussion.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Please note that the excerpts and articles for this course are placed on online Library Reserves, available to students registered in the course. However, in case of larger excerpts from a book, some sources are only available as hard copy on Reserve.

Antonio Gramsci, “The Intellectuals” (3-23), “Notes on Italian History” (52-59, 104-114, 118-120), “Political Struggle and Military War” (229-238), “The Transition from the War of Manoeuvre to the War of Position” (238-239), “Some Problems in the Study of the Philosophy of Praxis” (323-343), “Structure and Superstructure” (365-366), “The Term Catharsis” (366-367), in Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (eds.), *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971). ISBN: 0-7178-0397

Georg Lukacs, “Class Consciousness” & “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” in *History and Class Consciousness* (Boston: MIT Press, 1968). 46-82, 83-222. ISBN: 9-780262-620208

Louis Althusser, “Contradiction and Overdetermination,” in *For Marx* (London/New York: Verso, 2005). 87-128. ISBN: 978-1-84467-052-9

- Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971). 85-126. ISBN: 978-1-58367-039-2
- Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance." Available at:  
<http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/60spubs/65repressivetolerance.htm>
- Herbert Marcuse, Ch. 5-6 of *One Dimensional Man* (London/New York: Routledge, 1991). ISBN: 978-0-415-28977-1
- Regis Debray, "Socialism: A Life-Cycle." *New Left Review* 46 (July-August 2007). 5-28.
- Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Chs. 3-4 of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985). ISBN: 0-86091-769-X
- Ernesto Laclau, "Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?" in *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso: 1996). 36-46. ISBN: 9-781859-841655
- Hannah Arendt, "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of Rights of Man," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958). 267-302. ISBN: 0-15-670153-7
- Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, 1969). ISBN: 978-0-15-669500-8
- Giorgio Agamben, *The State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). ISBN: 0-226-00925-4
- Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004). ISBN: 9-780804-747387
- Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991). 149-182. ISBN: 978-0-415-90378-5
- Vandana Shiva, "Mad Cow, Sacred Cow," in *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000). 57-78. ISBN: 089608-607-0
- Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). ISBN: 0-06-131969-4
- Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). 163-186. ISBN: 0-06-090430-5
- Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). ISBN: 0-226-32378-1
- Gianni Vattimo, Chs. 1-3, 5-8, 12, 14 in *Nihilism and Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, and Law* (Columbia University Press, 2004). ISBN: 0-231-13082-1
- Franz Fanon, "On Violence," in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004). 1-62. ISBN: 9-780802-141323
- Franz Fanon, "The Negro and Language," & "The Fact of Blackness," in *Black Skins White Masks* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1968). 17-40, 109-140. ISBN: 9-780802-150844
- Christopher Wise, Chapters 3 & 4 of *Derrida, Africa, and the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). 27-58. ISBN: 0-230-61417-5
- Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (351-370) in *Writing and Difference* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001). ISBN: 0-415-25383-7
- Jacques Derrida, "Différance" (3-27), "Signature Event Context" (309-330) in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) ISBN: 0-226-14326-0

- Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001). ISBN: 9-780415-227124
- Ranajit Guha, "Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography," in *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989). 210-309. ISBN: ISBN 13: 978-0195635362
- Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Cultures* (Basingstock: Macmillan Education, 1988). 66-111. ISBN: 978-0252014017
- Homi Bhabha, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in J. Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990). 207-22. ISBN: 978-0853157205
- Peyman Vahabzadeh, "The Conditions of Subalternity: Reflections on Subjectivity, Experience and Hegemony." *Socialist Studies/Études socialistes* 3:2 (Fall 2007). 93-113. ISSN: 1918-2821
- Peyman Vahabzadeh, "Ultimate Referentiality: Radical Phenomenology and the New Interpretive Sociology." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 35: 4 (2009). 447-465. ISSN: 0191-4537

### EVALUATION:

NOTE: Differential evaluation will be used for grading MA and PhD students in terms of the depth of analysis and engagement with the readings.

Presentation on the week's readings	10%
Participation	10%
Analytical Response paper, 8-10 pages ( <b>December 3, 2014</b> )	25%
Paper abstract, 1 page ( <b>March 4, 2015</b> )	5%
Term paper, 20 pages (MAs) or 25 pages (PhDs) ( <b>April 15, 2015</b> )	50%

### ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Student presentation involves a 15-20 minute **critical** engagement with the reading(s) of the week. The student(s) is (are) expected to show theoretical understanding and deep reading. The presenter(s) will then lead the 30-minute class discussion. The depth of your engagement and criticism will earn you the grade for this assignment.
2. Participation (10%) is not attendance!
3. The Reflection Paper involves a purely conceptual reflection with a set of readings of your choice in that they present a common thread. The reflection paper should show how a certain theme or concern is conceptually constructed or pursued by an author or a number of authors. Conceptual clarity and the depth of reflection will determine your grade.
4. The paper abstract is a one-pager that will explain to me what your term paper topic will be. You will receive the grade for it for submitting it, but you do need to come and see me as follow up and discuss your topic with me (mandatory!).

5. The Term Paper will offer a theoretical topic with a topic of your choice. The term paper will be graded based on the presentation of the theoretical problem, a journey into the various aspects of the theoretical problem, proper discussion, and an attempt at a solution. Proper citation and academic writing are also taken into account.
6. All assignments should include proper referencing style for any information borrowed from another source in any form or shape (paraphrase or direct quotes).

### **A Note on Late Assignments**

Assignment due dates are firm. Late assignments will not be accepted. Late assignments due to medical or extenuating circumstances are to be delivered along with proper documentation. In such cases, advance notification to the instructor is required. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor if they anticipate late assignments due to other reasons.

### **Course Experience Survey (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

<b>CSPT 501/601 Reading List</b>
----------------------------------

**Please read in the order described.**

#### **Week 1 (September 3)**

*Introduction to CSPT 501/601*

No readings for this week

#### **Week 2 (September 17)**

*Early Twentieth Century Hegelian Marxism*

Gramsci, sections from the *Prison Notebooks*

Lukacs, "Class Consciousness" & "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat"

#### **Week 3 (October 1)**

*Structuralist Marxism & the Frankfurt School*

Althusser "Contradiction and Overdetermination" & "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

Marcuse, Ch. 5-6 of *One Dimensional Man* & "Repressive Tolerance"

Debray, "Socialism: A Life-Cycle"

**Week 4 (October 15)**

*Rights and Exceptionalism*

Arendt, "Decline of Nation-State"

Agamben, *State of Exception*

**Week 5 (October 29)**

*Humanity, Animality*

Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"

Shiva, "Mad Cow, Sacred Cow"

Agamben, *The Open*

**Week 6 (November 19)**

*Epoch and Technology*

Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," "The Turning," "The Thing," & "The Age of the World-Picture"

**Week 7 (December 3)**

*The Ontological Difference*

Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*

**Week 8 (January 7)**

*Post-Heideggerian Thought*

Vattimo, chapters from *Nihilism and Emancipation*

Arendt, *On Violence*

**Week 9 (January 21)**

*Deconstruction*

Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference* and "Differance" and "Signature Event Context" in *Margins of Philosophy*

Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*

**Week 10 (February 4)**

*Postmarxism*

Laclau and Mouffe, chapters from *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*

Laclau, "Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?"

**Week 11 (February 18)**

*Aboriginal Thought*

Guest Lecture by Dr. Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (Department of Political Science)

READINGS: TBA

**Week 12 (March 4)**

*African Liberation Theory*

Fanon, "The Negro and Language," "The Fact of Blackness," & "On Violence"  
Wise, Chs. 3-4

**Week 13 (March 18)**

*Postcolonial Theory*

Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Ranjit Guha, "Dominance without Hegemony"

Homi Bhabha, "The Third Space"

Vahabzadeh, "The Conditions of Subalternity"

**Week 14 (April 1)**

*Summary and Conclusions*

Vahabzadeh, "Ultimate Referentiality: Radical Phenomenology and New Interpretive Sociology"