Poli 509/609: Political Theory Graduate Seminar  
Fall, 2019  
Fridays, 9:30-12:20  
DTB A357

Simon Glezos  
sglezos@uvic.ca  
Office: DTB A310  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:20

Course Overview

This is the “core” graduate course in political theory. As such, its purposes are broad: to help students get the breadth of understanding necessary for their research, as well as to refine their analytical skills; to expose MA students to the sort of work they will have to do if they go on to the doctoral level; to help doctoral students prepare for their comprehensive examination in political theory; to provide an opportunity to think about what political theory ‘is’ or ‘might be’; and, to give everyone the chance to fill in some gaps in their reading and reflect on what they have learned so far. The “core” of the undergraduate program in political theory at UVic is a set of courses – Poli 300A, 300B, and 300C – that take students through a series of classic texts in the history of political thought. There are similar courses at other universities. As you will see from the instructions we give to our doctoral students, we expect them to read a longer list of classics so that they will be well prepared to teach political theory at any institution. We also expect them to read a number of 20th century books that have influenced the way political theorists do their work in English-speaking universities today.

In this seminar, we cannot hope to deal with more than a fraction of this material, and it is pointless to attempt a survey of the whole field. As such, we will be engaging with a handful of important texts from the history of political thought (either in full, or through selected excerpts) and seeking to understand their vision of both ‘politics’ and ‘political theory’. Furthermore, to provide an analytical ‘hook’ for our discussions, the texts have been chosen around a particular theme: Fascism and Political Theory.

One of the central ‘problems’ of 20th century western political theory was explaining the nature and rise of fascism. Contemporary political trends show us that such an endeavour is of more than just historical importance. At the same time, the question of fascism intersects with a variety of other important themes within the history of political theory, including power, authority, community, and identity (not mention questions of race, gender, and colonialism). Over the course of this semester, we will read a variety of texts that speak to the question of fascism, from theoretical precursors (Hobbes, Schmitt) to attempts to grapple explicitly with the phenomenon (Adorno and Horkheimer, Arendt, Césaire, Deleuze and Guattari), to contemporary reflections on antidemocratic politics (Brown).

To be clear, fascism is not the only topic we will discuss in class. Students are expected and encouraged to engage with the material according to their own interests, and to bring in their own insights from reading the texts. But having a central theme provides us with common ground for class discussion, and a point of departure for analyzing the texts.
Assignments

Class Participation
Students are expected to show up to all classes, having done the readings, prepared to participate in discussion. If students have any concerns about participating in class discussions, they should talk to the professor to work out alternate arrangements.

In-Class Presentation and leadership
Each class, one student will be responsible for running the seminar for roughly the first half of the class. This will involve 4 components. 1) A 15-20 minute presentation on that day’s readings. A written version of the presentation must be submitted to the professor and discussants by midnight on the Wednesday before seminar. 2) Each class will have two designated discussants who will read the presenter’s comments before class and prepare some questions and responses. The presenter will be expected to respond to the discussants’ comments. 3) After engaging with the discussants, the presenter will be expected to take questions and comments from the rest of the class. 4) The presenter will then be responsible for leading discussion for rest of that portion of class. That will mean coming prepared with a list of questions to foster conversation (both related to their presentation, as well as more general questions to encourage discussion). My expectation is that during this first half of the class, the students will handle almost all of the discussion themselves.

Discussant
Each student will take on the role of a discussant twice, reading the presentation in advance, and preparing about 5-10 minutes of questions and comments in response.

Research Paper
An 8,000-10,000 word paper on a subject of your choosing. However, the professor must sign off on your choice of topic. The paper must connect in some way to the course material, either through the texts or the themes that we’ve engaged. If you wish, your research paper may incorporate elements of your in-class presentation.

Final Grade Breakdown
Class Participation 15%
In-Class Presentation 30%
Discussant 10%
Research Paper 45%

Incomplete Policy
Students who do not submit a research paper, or do an in-class presentation will receive an N for the semester.

Late Policy
Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day.
Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar. Please see the (revised) academic integrity policy: https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html

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.

Texts
- Hobbes *Leviathan*
- Schmitt *The Concept of the Political*
- Arendt *The Origins of Totalitarianism*
- Adorno and Horkheimer *Dialectics of Enlightenment*
- Césaire *Discourse on Colonialism*
- Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*
- Brown *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism*

Class Schedule
Week 1
Sept. 6: Introduction

Week 2
Sept. 13:
Hobbes *Leviathan* Part I: Of Man
Week 3
Sept. 20:
Hobbes *Leviathan* Part II: Of Commonwealth

Week 4
Sept. 27:
Schmitt *The Concept of the Political*

Week 5
Oct. 4:

Week 6
Oct. 11:
Adorno and Horkheimer *Dialectic of Enlightenment* “The Culture Industry”, “Elements of Anti-Semitism”

Week 7
Oct. 18:
Arendt *Eichmann in Jerusalem* Chs.1-8

Week 8
Oct. 25:
Arendt *Eichmann in Jerusalem* Chs. 8-15, Epilogue and Postscript

Week 9
Nov. 1:
Aimé Césaire *Discourse on Colonialism*

Week 10
Nov. 7: Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus* “Introduction: Rhizome”, “1933: Micropolitics and Segmentarity” “1837: Of the Refrain”

Week 11

Week 12
Nov. 22: Wendy Brown *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism* pp.1-88

Week 13
Nov. 29: Wendy Brown *In the Ruins of Neoliberalism* pp. 89-189