

ANTIPOLITICS

PLSC 21501: Winter Quarter 2015
Tuesday/Thursday 10:30am-11:50am – Pick 506

Instructor: Daniel Nichanian
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Office hours: Monday 10:30am-11:45am
Pick 428

Is there still a role for politics in an era of technical knowledge and administrative complexity? Fearful that politics is disappearing, that high-stakes decisions are being divested from ordinary citizens or that conflicts over values are being unduly discredited – and faced with arguments that politics is harmful to democratic commitments and to good government – some contemporary philosophers have sought to defend the importance of politics and to rethink its meaning. In this discussion-based course, we will explore these debates and we will discuss how critics of depoliticization have sought to theorize the role and value of politics. Plato, Weber, Schmitt, Foucault, Arendt, Rancière, and Pettit, among others, will help us cover themes like the role of experts, the relationship between means and ends, the effects of economic and juridical language, and the desirability of conflict and partisanship.

Required books (available at the Seminary Co-Op):

Plato, *The Statesman* (Hackett, translated by Christopher Rowe)

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political: Expanded Edition* (University of Chicago Press, translated by George Schwab)

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (Vintage, translated by

Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement* (University of Minnesota Press, translated by Julie Rose)

Other readings will be on Chalk.

Course requirements

You will write two papers: a midterm paper (approximately 5-6 pages) due on February 16th and a final paper (approximately 11 to 15 pages) due on March 18th. Every student will be responsible for writing a discussion question for one session. The question should be no longer than a paragraph and should highlight something that you find puzzling or meaningful in the readings. You should email it to the class by 8pm the night before the class you are responsible for, and I will invite you to share and discuss it with the class at some point during the session.

The midterm paper will represent **25%** of the final grade. The final paper will represent **50%** of the final grade. A participation grade, determined by your involvement in class discussion, your discussion question, and your attendance, will make up the remaining **25%**.

Participation: The one thing I cannot overstate is that this course, like all seminars, is a collective effort. The more people are active, the more we can work out the issues that you encounter. As such you are expected to attend every class and be an active participant in discussion.

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class, unless you have a medical reason or a compelling personal reason requiring you to miss it. If you do have such a reason, please contact me as soon as you know about it. An unexcused absence will lower your participation grade; repeated unexcused absences will severely affect it, up to a failing participation grade.

Other matters

Disability accommodations: Any student with a disability who may need accommodations having to do with the classroom, assignments, or any other matter, should discuss this with me.

Plagiarism: Academic honesty requires you to hand in your own original work and to cite any source you draw on while writing the paper, whether you quote it directly or not. Any breach of this requirement is a very serious matter. Plagiarism will lead to a failing grade for the course, as well as to disciplinary action by the College. Talk to me if you have any question about the appropriate standards and about what it means to properly cite sources.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

January 6: Introduction

Alan Blinder, "Is Government Too Political?" in *Foreign Affairs* (1997)

Chris Hayes, "The Pragmatist" in *The Nation* (2008)

Carol Hanish, "The Personal is Political" (1969) and the author's later "Introduction" (2006)

I: What is depoliticization?

January 8

Ran Hirschl, "The Judicialization of Politics"

Martin Shapiro, "The Problem of Independent Agencies in the United States and in the European Union"

Frank Vibert, *The Rise of the Unelected*, pp. 34-43

Alistair Roberts, *The Logic of Discipline*, pp. 3-14, 47-64

January 13

Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion*, Chapter 1

Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 66-81

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?* in *The National Interest*

II Statecraft, knowledge, decision

January 15: Plato (1)

Plato, *The Republic*, 472-491a (pp.153-170 in Alan Bloom's University of Chicago translation)

Recommended: Plato, *The Republic*, 514a-521b (pp.193-199)
Plato, *The Statesman*, beginning-279a

January 20: Plato (2)

Plato, *The Statesman*, 279a-end

January 22: Max Weber

Max Weber, excerpt from "Politics as Vocation," pp.88-95 of *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*

Max Weber, excerpt from "Science as Vocation," pp.140-153 (same)

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," pp.196-221, 224-240 (same)

January 27: Carl Schmitt (1)

Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, Chapters 1 and 2

January 29: Carl Schmitt (2)

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, pp.19-58

February 3: Carl Schmitt (3)

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, pp.59-96

II: Political reason, public action

February 5

Leo Strauss, "Notes on *The Concept of the Political*" in Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 108-122

Leo Strauss, *What Is Political Philosophy?*, 9-56

February 10

Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society*, pp. 62-70, pp. 74-85 and pp. 91-122

February 12: Michel Foucault (1)

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 51-73 and 81-102

Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality" (an interview), pp. 187-190

February 17: Michel Foucault (2)

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 133-150

Michel Foucault, "Governmentality"

February 19: Hannah Arendt (1)

Hannah Arendt, "Freedom and Politics"

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chapter 2 (excerpt)

February 24: Hannah Arendt (2)

Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics"

Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture," Part II

III. Democracy, conflict and politics

February 26: Conflict

Chantal Mouffe, "Introduction" in *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*

Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, pp. 1-34 and 64-82

March 3: Revisiting Administration and Democracy

Philip Pettit, "Depoliticizing Democracy"

Archon Fung, "Accountable Autonomy: Toward Empowered Deliberation in Chicago Schools and Policing"

March 5: Jacques Rancière (1)

Jacques Rancière, "Does Democracy Mean Something?" (in *Dissensus*)

Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement* (Chapter 1)

March 10: Jacques Rancière (2)

Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement* (Chapters 2-3)

Jacques Rancière, Theses 7 and 8 in "Ten Theses on Politics" (in *Dissensus*, pp.36-40)