

POLI 3427: The Sexualization of Western Political Thought



Department of Political Science/Gender & Women's Studies
Dalhousie University
September-December 2017
Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:05-2:25pm
Room: HENRY HICKS 212

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Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30 – 3:30pm

Course Description

This course will begin with the problematic relationship between desire and knowledge, considered as the core of the Enlightenment project, and explore the ways in which Western political thought positions the desiring subject as the locus of power. The readings will introduce students to two central French critiques of the modern focus on the erotic satisfaction of the political subject: Foucault's, and Deleuze & Guattari's. Their theories of desire and pleasure will provide students with the opportunity to think of sexuality as a process of production, and ultimately as a creative activity that exceeds the political subject.

Required Readings

- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*
- Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*
- All other required readings will be made available on Brightspace.

Final Grade Distribution

Attendance and participation: 10%
Wiki entries defining concepts: 20%
1st short paper: 20%
2nd short paper: 20%
Final paper: 30%

Course Format and Expectations

The course will be conducted in lecture format. Please be aware that the lectures will not simply repeat information provided in assigned readings, but will rather investigate in greater depth a number of questions and issues raised in the readings and introduce ideas not covered in these texts. The lectures and in-class discussions thus cannot be simply substituted by only reading the assigned materials.

To further their understanding of the subject, students are encouraged to work through all of the assigned texts before each class. To facilitate the aims of lectures, class discussions and activities, please bring your copies of the assigned readings to each class.

In the classroom, students are expected to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of everyone involved. Please avoid unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving on time and remaining silent while others are speaking. Students are welcome to use laptops to take class notes and to participate in other class-related activities. However, it is not appropriate to use technology in the classroom for non-classroom activities, since such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of electronic devices in class.

Assignments

Wiki Definitions

In order to improve your understanding of the central themes of the course, you will be asked to identify major concepts from class readings. After deciding on the meaning of these concepts, you will then be required to submit your definitions to the class wiki on Brightspace. You will also be required to comment on the definitions of classmates a number of times throughout the course. More information will be provided early in the course and discussed in class.

Short papers

During the course, students will write two short papers (about 3-4 pages long each), addressing a particular question from the assigned readings. The first paper will be based on Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, and the second paper will address a question from one of Deleuze & Guattari's texts. The questions and detailed instructions for these papers will be provided separately and discussed in class in advance of the due date.

Final Paper

Each student will have the opportunity to write a paper on a subject of their choice, which should be directly related to the themes of the course. Please confirm your topic with me well in advance. For the paper, you will be asked to:

- identify a problem related to a given theme(s) of the course
- based on original research, present a coherent argument and demonstrate your understanding of a the problem
- demonstrate a critical stance, identify areas of contention, as well as areas for further study

I will provide a handout with further details on the requirements of the paper separately and we will also discuss them in class. The paper will be due on the last day of class.

Course Themes and Reading Schedule

Week 1

September 6 – course introduction

Section I: Hegel

Week 2

September 11

- Kimberly Hutchings, "Philosophy as the Task of Comprehension," in *Hegel and Feminist Philosophy*, 31-55

September 13

- Robert Brandom, "The Structure of Desire and Recognition," *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 127-150
- Alexandre Kojève, "Desire and Work in the Master and Slave," in *Hegel's Dialectic of Desire and Recognition*, selections

Section II: Foucault

Week 3

September 18

- Sandra Lee Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in Diamond & Quimby, ed. *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*, 129-154
- Foucault, "The Gay Science," *Critical Inquiry* 37 (Spring 2011), 385-403

September 20

- Foucault, Lecture of 19 February 1975, in *Abnormal*, pp. 167-200

Week 4

September 25

- Foucault, "We Other Victorians," in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 1-14
- Foucault, "The Incitement to Discourse," in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 17-35

September 27

- Foucault, "The Deployment of Sexuality," in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 75-132

Week 5

October 2

- Foucault, Lecture of 17 March 1976, in *Society Must Be Defended*, pp. 239-264

October 4

- Foucault, "Right of Death and Power Over Life," in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pp. 133-159

Week 6

October 9 – no class

October 11

- 1st short paper due
- Maria Muhle, "A Genealogy of Biopolitics: The Notion of Life in Canguilhem and Foucault," in *The Government of Life: Foucault, Biopolitics, and Neoliberalism*
- "Science, technology and sexuality: Biopolitics, medicalization, and resistance," Sexuality Policy Watch,
<http://www.sxpolitics.org/sexuality-and-politics/pdfs/volume2/3.pdf>

Week 7

October 16

- Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, pp. 163-174
- Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, pp. 223-252

October 18

- Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, 281-302

Section III: Deleuze (& Guattari)

Week 8

October 23

- Wendy Grace, "Faux Amis: Foucault and Deleuze on Sexuality and Desire," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Autumn 2009), pp. 52-75

- Frida Beckman, "A Nonlinear History of Sexuality: Deleuze with Foucault," in *Between Desire and Pleasure: A Deleuzian Theory of Sexuality*, 16-29

October 25

- Deleuze, "Nomadic Thought," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, pp. 252-261
- Daniel Smith, "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics," *Parrhesia*, 2007, No. 2, 66-78

Week 9

October 30

- Deleuze, "Three Group Related Problems," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, pp. 193-203
- Deleuze & Guattari, "On Capitalism and Desire," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, pp. 262-273

November 1

- Gregg Lambert, "The 'Non-Human Sex' in Sexuality: 'What are Your Special Desiring-machines?'," in Frida Beckman, *Deleuze and Sex*, pp. 135-152

November 6-10 – no classes, study break

Week 10

November 13 – no class, 2nd short paper due

November 15

- Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Section 1: "The Desiring-Machines," pp. 1-50

Week 11

November 20

- Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Section 2: "Psychoanalysis and Familialism: The Holy Family," selections

November 22

- Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Section 3: "Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men," selections

Week 12

November 27

- Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Section 3: "Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men," selections

November 29

- Deleuze & Guattari, "The Molecular Unconscious," *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 283-295

Week 13

December 4 –

- Deleuze & Guattari, “1227: Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine,” *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 351-423

December 5 – course wrap up

General Information and Policies

Students are expected to carefully read the academic regulations in the University Calendar, and to make sure that they understand those that might pertain to them. In order to be fair to all students, all of the University’s regulations, and all of the course policies outlined below, will be strictly enforced.

E-mail communication

If you have any questions about the course, I encourage you to contact me. I will typically answer any e-mail you send within 48 hours (except on weekends). However, if you have substantive questions about the course or need help understanding a reading or topic, please come see me during my office hours.

Attendance and participation

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes in order to benefit from the discussions and to pass the course successfully. Students are allowed to miss one class without penalty to their final grade. Each subsequently missed class will result in a penalty against the attendance/participation grade. This does not apply to classes missed on medical grounds. Students who miss classes on medical grounds are required to inform me in advance of the missed class (if physically possible), and to provide appropriate documentation. If you think that you might require academic accommodation for medical or non-medical reasons, please discuss this with me as soon as possible.

Students are expected to have read the assigned readings by the dates listed below and to participate during the class by asking questions, voicing their opinions, and responding to the comments and questions posed by the instructor and classmates.

Citation style in written assignments

Please use Chicago Manual of Style 16th edition for all written assignments in this course. The Dalhousie University Bookstore and Library have copies of the Manual. You can also find Chicago Style Quick Citation Guide at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Style and grammar in written assignments

Students are responsible for ensuring that the written assignments they submit for evaluation and grading are free of significant grammatical errors. All students in the course are highly encouraged to review their written assignments with members in the Acadia Writing Centre before submitting them. Please note that the Writing Centre does not provide proofreading or editing services.

http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/writing-andstudy-skills.html

Library resources and general academic support

Books and journal articles from the library can improve your assignments, labs, and papers. Visit the library at <http://libraries.dal.ca>

General academic support and advising is available here:

http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/advising.html

Policy for late assignments

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in this syllabus. Late assignments are penalized 5% per day, including weekends/holidays. This will be strictly enforced. If you are submitting a late assignment, please email me a copy so I know when it was submitted and bring in a hard copy as soon as possible.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity demands responsible use of the work of other scholars. It is compromised by such practices as plagiarism and cheating.

Cheating is the copying or the use of unauthorized aids or the intentional falsification or invention of information in any academic exercise or the presentation of a single work in more than one course without the permission of the instructors involved.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or words of another as one's own. While it may be argued that few ideas are original, instructors expect students to acknowledge the sources of ideas and expressions that they use in essays. To represent them as self-created is dishonest and academically reprehensible. One may quote or paraphrase other writers if they have stated an idea strikingly, as evidence to support one's arguments or conclusions, or as a point against which to argue, but such borrowing should be used sparingly and always be indicated in a footnote. The aim of scholarship is to develop one's own ideas and research and only by trying to develop one's own thoughts and arguments will one mature academically. To provide adequate documentation is not only an indication of academic honesty, but also a courtesy enabling the instructor to consult sources with ease. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

Furthermore, a student who knowingly helps another to commit an act of academic dishonesty is equally guilty. A student who is uncertain whether or not a course of action might constitute plagiarism or cheating should seek in advance the advice of the instructor.

Penalties are levied in relation to the degree of infraction of academic honesty. They range from requiring the student to re-do the piece of work, through failure on that piece of work, to failure in the course, and to dismissal from the University.

Further information on what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and the penalties for failing to do so, are available at: http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.htm

Accessibility

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). (read more: http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/accessibility.html)

Student code of conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. (read more: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-lifepolicies/code-of-student-conduct.html)

Diversity and inclusion – Culture of respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported. (read more: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

Recognition of Mi'kmaq territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).