COURSE SYLLABUS
POLI 3440: The Politics of Fear

Department of Political Science
Dalhousie University
Winter 2014

Department of Political Science
Dalhousie University

Class Time: Friday 1:25-4:25
Location: Henry Hicks 217

Instructor: Dr. Margaret Denike
Office: 362 Henry Hicks Administration Building
Telephone: (902) 494-6298
Email: m.denike@dal.ca (Please use this Dal address, rather than the BLS or OWL system for any inquiries)

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30, or by appointment

Teaching Asst: Kristian Rafuse
kristian.rafuse@dal.ca (All essay assignments are to be submitted electronically as an MSWord document, and NOT in hard copy please, to this email address)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Focussing largely on post-9/11 US, this course will consider the instrumentality of fear and terror in public policy, and its role in fostering public opinion and managing social groups and populations. Drawing on interdisciplinary and theoretical analyses of sex and race discrimination, and working with documentary media, it will consider various ways in which nationalist and racist politics are implicated in the production and proliferation of ‘terror’ in contemporary western societies, in practices perpetrated or sanctioned by both state and non-state actors. It will look at the recent discourses of terrorism and its representation in the media; philosophical considerations of anti-immigrant fear-mongering; and political analyses of the economy of “security” industries. It will also address the role of both state and corporate interest in disaster relief, epidemics, and other social crises.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

• Some of the course materials are available electronically, either through web links to internet resources (provided on the syllabus) or PDF documents available through the OWL Black System (WebCT). **If the link to a suggested website is not working for any reason, please start by trying to locate the article via google to find an alternative link.**
• Some of the readings are available in on-line journals, for which students are expect to gain access through your Dal library account.

**EVALUATION PROFILE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Mar 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Profile:**

- 90-100 = A+
- 77-79.9 = B+
- 65-69.9 = C+
- 50-55.9 = D
- 85-89.9 = A
- 73-76.9 = B
- 63-64.9 = C
- 50 > F
- 80-84.9 = A-
- 70-72.9 = B-
- 60-62.9 = C-

**Participation:**

The preparation and participation of each and every student in the class discussions will determine the success of the course. Although there is no participation grade, students are expected to attend every class, and to have completed the readings and given themselves time to think about them in advance of each class.

**Overview of Written Assignments:**

This course requires you to write two short essays that address the leading themes and concepts of this course (specifically: the politics of fear and its relation to one (or more) of the following themes: nationalism, racism, Islamophia, sexual politics, imperialism, capitalism, neoliberalism, criminal accountability; media studies; studies in affect or emotion, or neuropolitics, while drawing on a) several (a minimum of four for each assignment) of the materials listed in the syllabus of this courses and, if appropriate, b) additional materials, ideally from peer-reviewed, scholarly journals and related sources.

Think of these assignments as a challenge to demonstrate your mastery of all (in not most) of the course materials and the questions that these materials give rise to, **AND**, for each essay, to demonstrate your mastery of the approach of at least one political theorist, whose general argument or critical approach should be set out and clarified, and/or extended and/or evaluated in the course of your essay. Below are a series of suggested essay topic questions, for you to choose. You may choose any of these topics for either essay.
Further instructions for each written assignment will be provided in class. The general objectives of these assignments are as follows:

**a)** Concerning comprehension, breadth of the materials that you cover, and accuracy of content. One objective of these assignments is for you to demonstrate your understanding and thoughtful analysis of a wide range of the readings that are listed on the syllabus for this course (a minimum of four for each essay), while supplementing your discussion and analysis of these readings with appropriate additional scholarly resources. It is also designed to assist you in developing and/or demonstrating the skills and practices of clearly and accurately representing, documenting, contextualizing, and contrasting the ideas and arguments of other writers (and particularly theorists) on a given topic.

**b)** Concerning style: Another objective is for you to demonstrate your ability to develop and properly document a coherent argument in academic essay format, with attention to a clear introduction or outline; relevant paragraph development, and accurate referencing and citations.

**c)** Concerning method/approach. Another specific objective of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your understanding and appropriate application of a political-theoretical argument made by one or more political theorists discussed in the course) about the politics of fear, or terror, or emotion, or affect,… in relation to race analyses, or analyses concerning capitalism and economic exploitation, exceptionalism, or media (for example. Consider how their critiques may clarify the way that fear has been deployed in the public domain.

**Essay Topic questions:**

1. What is ‘the politics of fear’, as understood by one or more contemporary political theorist, and how is it related to any of the following: a) neoliberal economic policies and their impact on poverty; b) Islamophobia; c) racial profiling and race discrimination; d) other relevant theme concerning different status of social groups.

2. Mythic monsters of various sorts (eg., witches, cannibals, savages, terrorists) have appeared in every historical era. Consider the ‘terrorist’ as a contemporary manifestation of such monster. Discuss the function(s) that are served by such a figures, socially, politically and/or psychologically. How does the terrorist serve the politics of fear? And with what implications for racial, religious or ethnic minorities?

3. Some commentators have said that 9/11 has radically transformed the world, and particularly the treatment of Muslim and Arabic racial and ethnic minorities in western countries. Others argue that 9/11 is an arbitrary marker of change, and that little has shift in the course of the laws, policies and practices that concern minorities. Discuss, using one or more of the political theorists covered in the course.

4. We have often heard it said that in times of crisis, such as the ‘war on terror’, we must make certain sacrifices and tolerate infringements on our rights and freedoms in order to
in order to achieve a measure of security. While drawing on one or more of the political theorists discussed in this course, provide a critical analysis of this line of argument?

5. The dominant stereotypes by which terrorist/enemies and patriotic allies (‘good and bad figures) are represented in the media and public policy both draw on and reinforce ideas of sex and gender roles, sexual and cultural difference, nationhood, proper citizenship, etc. Using your choice of any political theorist to orient your analysis, discuss how these representations operate in a specific context.

6. Several critical commentators have noted that the US-led war on terror is demonstrative of contemporary –though historically familiar—patterns of imperialist and colonial practices, reminiscent of the western occupation and exploitation of so-called ‘colonies’. Discuss.

7. A definitive feature of the U.S.-led ‘war on terror is marked the explicit attempts of the Bush administration to circumvent international laws of war (and particularly the Geneva conventions) in their treatment of arresting, detaining and deporting ‘enemy combatants. Using any contemporary political theorists’ argument to orient your analysis, discuss this ‘exceptionalism’ and its implications.

8. How has media and other technology been implicated in the way that fear is administered in contemporary western states? How and to what extent does it engage the politics of affect and/or emotion?

Schedule of Weekly Topics and Readings

Weeks and Topics

1. Jan 10
   Introduction and Overview of Topics and Readings
   Preliminary discussion

     re-start at 1:27…. (which picks up on Bernays…and relates him to the politics of fear; manipulation of fear as a weapon of the cold war; the desires and fears of crowds; how to represent the popular government of Guatemala…..
   - The Bush campaign ‘wolf ad’.: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU4t9O_yFsY

Some of the film resources related to the course (others are listed below):

   - How People are Manipulated by Fear and Propaganda (Youtube, 5 mins): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H86-JN2sRXQ&feature=fvwp&NR=1
Edward Bernays and the Art of Public Manipulation (youtube, 9 mins): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiKMmrG1ZKU

Documentary: Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11

Documentary: Century of the Self (first 10 minutes, as an intro to Edward Bernays, Freud’s nephew; the birth of public relations (at 28-30 minutes); the use of fear (of communism) to manipulate ‘the masses’ at 1:26:00: http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/the-century-of-the-self/


Documentary: A Virus Called Fear: http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/virus-called-fear/

Documentary: Fear, Anger, Politics: (45 mins)

YouTube Lecture: The Psychology of Politics. (Jan 2012) On the idea of emotions empowering political views: on how attitudes toward some issues can predict others; how conservatism is associated with a fear of uncertain): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sus0-3upvuA&feature=g-vrec


Documentary: Unconstitutional http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/unconstitutional-the-war-on-our-civil-liberties/ (on sweeping policy changes post 9/11; Patriot Act; i.e., exceptionalism)

Talk/lecture on Youtube, Michael Hardt, What to do in a Crisis: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66_W9h5dqy4

2. Jan 17
Fear Mongering, Myth-Making, and the Terror Industry


Additional recommended resources:


3. Jan 24
Theorizing Fear in Contemporary Western Politics and Media


Additional recommended resources:

• Documentary Film: Power and Terror: Part I available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7Mdi2v9__8
(it takes until 3:00 for Chomsky’s talk to begin; it is prefaced by a series a quotations and footage of the hundreds of people assembling for his lecture on’ power and terror’)
Power and Terror Part 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEwLOQx_PHE
One way to stop terrorism: to stop participating in it?; US war vs. south Vietnam; On the hypocrisy of western imperial war crimes ; self-righteousness, etc.

• David Altheide, “Terrorism and the National Security University” (available on YouTube)
4. Jan 31
   Theorizing Fear as Movement, Speed, Technology, Propaganda

Additional resources:

- See John Ebert’s explication of Virilio, available as ½ on youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKPHLH88vf4
- See John David Ebert, *The New Media Invasion* (his book and interview, which is also on youtube in 5 parts or so)

5. Feb. 7 Munro Day


Additional recommended resources:

- For a current interview on the role of social media, western relationships with Islamic ideology; and the impossibility of an ‘us vs. them’ mentality that fuelled the war on terror, see: Interview by Tavis Smiley of the comparative religions scholar Reza Aslan: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/tavi ssmiley/interviews/#top

7. Feb 21
   Spring Break
8. Feb. 28
Emotion and the Affective Politics of Terror
Power, Terror and the Limits of the Law


Additional Recommended Readings:

- John T. Jost and David M. Amodio. Motivation and Emotion, 2012, Volume 36, Number 1, Pages 55-64. (use library access)

9. Mar 7
States of Emergency and Legal Exceptionalism
When does International Law Apply?

- Military Order of November 13, 2001: Detention, Treatment and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism. Available at: [http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/eo/mo-111301.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/eo/mo-111301.htm)
- Summary of the “Torture Memos”. Available at: [http://www.lawofwar.org/Torture_Memos_analysis.htm](http://www.lawofwar.org/Torture_Memos_analysis.htm). See also the introduction to Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel, *The Torture Papers*, (a few pages excluded) at: [http://books.google.ca/books?id=fVD8aTISzD4C&dq=torture+papers&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=2fiMTPnSG8G78gbs-ty6CQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCUQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q&f=false]

See, in particular, the Memorandum for the President of Roberto Gonzales (January 25,
2002). At: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/02.01.25.pdf

Additional recommended resources:

- Documentary: Unconstitutional. A decent documentary on the sweeping changes following 9/11 introduced instantly through the Patriot Act, ie provisions to expand law enforcement powers that were previously rejected by congress) http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/unconstitutional-the-war-on-our-civil-liberties/

10. Mar 14

Fear and Contagion: Racism and Public Policy
National Identity and Racial Purity

- Sherene Razack, “Race thinking and the Camp”, Casting Out: The eviction of Muslims from Western law and Politics (University of Toronto Press, 2008).

Additional recommended resources:

- Documentary: Fear, Anger, Politics (on stereotyping and demonizing Muslims) http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/fear-anger-politics/

11. Mar 21
Accountability under Domestic and International Law

• Materials on the work of Francis Boyle, and Lawyers Against War, using international law to pursue and indictment against Bush.: “Bush to the Hague”: Available at : http://www.bushtothehague.org/
• Lawyers against the War: letter campaign to Canadian MPS to ban Bush’s entry to Canada (under intl law): Available at: http://www.lawyersagainstthewar.org/letters/LAW_letter_re_George_Bush__20110825.pdf
• Public Hearings on State Responses to 9/11: Discussion

12. March 28  Test

13. April 4

• Film and discussion