

**Graduate Liberal Studies
LS 811: Tradition and Modernity**

On Political Violence and the Right to Move

Instructor: Am Johal Spring Semester 2024
6:30pm, Monday nights
Zoom

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DESCRIPTION

On Political Violence and the Right to Move

Political violence as a condition involves a failure of politics, deliberation and the rise of militant intervention by state or non-state actors. How is political violence used to meet political objectives and ends? Where does it originate and how can we make sense of its proliferation? Additionally, the human right to move freely is dependent oftentimes on a passport or a permit or determined by the accident of birth, ethnicity or culture. In a world of hardening borders, fences and the regulation of the freedom of movement, how is political violence and regulatory limitations on movement deployed?

This course explores the intersection of political violence and the right to move through different philosophers, writers and historical contexts in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Selected Readings and Schedule (Subject to Change):

Week 1 – January 8th

Introduction

Walter Benjamin – Critique of Violence:

<https://criticaltheoryconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Benjamin-Critique-of-Violence-1.pdf>

Simone De Beauvoir – An Eye for an Eye

Week 2 – January 15th

Malcolm X

Angela Davis

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Excerpts will be made available on Canvas.

Week 3 – January 22nd

Watch the film Hiroshima, Mon Amour

Alberto Toscano – Late Fascism (Verso, 2023)

Judith Butler – The Compass of Mourning – London Review of Books;

<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v45/n20/judith-butler/the-compass-of-mourning>

Jacques Derrida – On Forgiveness:

http://www.columbia.edu/itc/ce/s6403/jacques_derrida.pdf

Guest Speaker – Alberto Toscano

Week 4 – January 29th

Frantz Fanon - The Wretched of the Earth

Selected articles and interviews of Achille Mbembe

Watch the film The Battle of Algiers

Guest Speaker – Glen Coulthard

Week 5 – February 5th

Hagar Kotef – Excerpt from Movement and the Ordering of Freedom (Canvas)

Hannah Arendt – Excerpt from: On Violence (Canvas)

Edward Said – circulated on Canvas

Short Story – Sadat Hasan Manto - Tobha Tekh Singh:

<http://www.sacw.net/partition/tobateksingh.html>

Watch the film Lizzie Borden – Born in Flames

Week 6 – February 12th

Joe Sacco – Footprints in Gaza (excerpt distributed in class)

Eyal Weizman – excerpt distributed on Canvas

Carl von Clausewitz – excerpt on Canvas

Svitlana Matviyenko - Cyberwar – interviews and excerpts will be circulated

Watch – 20 Days in Mariupol:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvAyykRvPBo&t=1s>

Guest speaker – Svitlana Matviyenko

Week 7 – February 19th Reading Week – Class Cancelled

Week 8 –February 26th -

**Excerpt from Chris Oliveros (Canvas) – Are You Willing to Die for the Cause?
Ernesto Che Guevera – Guerilla Warfare
Napoleon – Excerpt from ‘How to Make War’**

Week 9 – March 4th

**Basharat Peer - Curfewed Nights
Franz Kafka – In the Penal Colony
http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~raha/793CA_web/PenalColony.pdf**

Week 10 – March 11th

John Vaillant – Fire Weather

Week 11 – March 18th

**Elsa Dorlin – Excerpt from A Philosophy of Violence (will be shared on Canvas)
Howard Caygill – Excerpt from On Resistance (will be shared on Canvas)**

Week 12 – March 25th

Peter Sloterdijk – Terror from the Air

Week 13 – April 1st – Cancelled – Easter Monday

Week 14 – April 8th

TBD

Grading:

Participation 30%
Bi-Weekly Reflections 20%
Presentations 20%
Final Paper 30%

Disclaimer: This course will involve extensive writing so if this is a deterrent, this class may not be for you. These writing requirements range from the informal and casual to the rigorous and scholarly and are frequent throughout the semester. So it is important not to fall behind at any point throughout the duration of the course.

The school expects that the grades awarded in this course will bear some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distribution of grades. In addition, The School will follow Policy S10.01 with respect to Academic Integrity, and Policies S10.02, S10.03 and S10.04 as regards Student Discipline. [Note: as of May 1, 2009 the previous T10 series of policies covering Intellectual Honesty (T10.02) and Academic Discipline (T10.03) have been replaced with the new S10 series of policies.] These policies, procedures and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade in the course, and be reported to the proper university office. If you have any doubts about any of these practices, you must confer with the professor or the teaching assistant.

Attendance is mandatory.

The syllabus is subject to change week to week and there will be additional materials added as conversations unfold in the seminar.

This seminar involves a heavy subject matter so it may not be for all students.

Attendance/Participation—30%

This is a graduate level seminar course that relies heavily on student participation and class discussions to generate ideas about the subject matter. This portion of the grade will be a composite of all participation in the class and includes contribution to class discussion and mini-presentations.

Bi-Weekly Write--Up—20%

You will be asked for three bi-weekly reflection assignments (between 250 and 500 words) on some aspect of readings, discussion, guest speakers and questions related to the course content. These will be assigned bi-weekly.

Write-ups should be submitted before the assigned class.

Presentation – 20%

There will be a sign up opportunity to present on one of the readings in the semester. This will involve preparing a one page summary to share with the class and to orally present on the author and some of the main themes in the book and leading the class in a discussion of the book/reading.

Final Research Paper and Presentation– 30 %

This is the most substantive portion of the class and much of the work you do through the coming weeks should lead up to this assignment. Hence, be particularly mindful of this project early by consciously and actively exploring possible research topics from the outset. I will be available to assist you during office hours or by appointment. In the last meeting of the course, each student will be expected to give a short presentation of their research paper to the class.

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